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FROM COUNCIL MEMBER

HIRAM MONSERRATE



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Press Release

Monserrate Announces \$100,000 to Combat Domestic Violence in Growing Immigrant Communities

Funding to Create Programs and Partnerships with Local Cultural and Immigrants Rights Groups

JACKSON HEIGHTS -- Council Member Hiram Monserrate today joined with domestic violence survivors, local community leaders and local domestic violence prevention groups to announce \$100,000 in funding to create programs specially designed to end domestic violence in the large and growing immigrant communities of Queens.

“Today we begin the countdown to the end of domestic violence in our families and communities,” said Monserrate. “I am proud to stand united with our community leaders and service providers in a coordinated campaign to target our resources how and where women need them the most. By working with our local libraries, schools and cultural groups, we can ensure that all women have access to the support they need in a safe, trusted environment.”

Monserrate secured DoVE grants, in the amount of \$50,000 each, for two organizations working locally in northwest Queens, the Urban Justice Domestic Violence Project and Latin Women in Action. Monserrate led the effort in the City Council to secure \$4 million in the Fiscal Year 2006 city budget for a city-wide Domestic Violence and Empowerment (DoVE) Initiative.

Monserrate noted that the DoVE Initiative was created to link services to high incidence areas and empower the most vulnerable communities by strengthening neighborhood-based services and developing community-appropriate solutions, which is

especially important in diverse city where victims can face specific barriers-to-services such as foreign-born survivors of domestic violence who may have language barriers or concerns about immigration status.

Both Latin Women in Action and the Urban Justice Domestic Violence Project are working with the many local cultural and immigrants rights groups in the area. With such diverse communities in Corona, East Elmhurst, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Lefrak City and Woodside, the area is home to many community-based non-profit organizations that provide culturally relevant and multi-lingual services to immigrants and families from Central and Latin America and East and South Asia.

Both groups are are working to establish referral networks through existing – and non-threatening – public and civic organizations that women already frequent, such as libraries and schools. The programs will then provide direct education and support programs through local and easily accessible forums on how to prevent and end domestic violence.

According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Health, domestic violence accounted for about 30 percent of all homicides among New York City women and New York City's Domestic Violence Hotline has received on average about 400 calls per day. Among the 78 family-related homicides in 2002, however, there had been no prior police report in 65 percent of these cases. Experts cite specific factors such as economic vulnerability, immigration status, social isolation and language barriers as preventing the most vulnerable groups from receiving critical domestic violence services, reporting abuse, or seeking police protection.

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