



Community Newsletter

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DANIEL O'DONNELL

Manhattan Valley ■ Morningside Heights
Upper West Side ■ West Harlem

SPRING 2010

■ SERVING NEW YORK'S 69TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT ■

Dear Neighbor,

As this publication goes to print, the Governor and the Legislature continue to work towards a consensus on how to close the estimated \$9.2 billion state budget gap. This newsletter includes some details about the Assembly's proposal which would restore significant funds to education, healthcare, parks, and other critical programs. While I and my colleagues understand the immediacy of the fiscal challenge facing our state and the tough decisions that are necessary, I am also committed to protecting the most vulnerable New Yorkers and our state's working families.

I am proud to announce that I was recently appointed Chair of the Assembly's Committee on Ethics and Guidance. I am the first member of my class appointed to head a standing committee and am looking forward to playing a key role in the review and passage of ethics reform legislation.

In these pages, I have included updates about Community Board support for my Charter School Siting legislation, the upcoming repair and repainting of the 125th Street Viaduct, my advocacy on behalf of Riverbank State Park, and some early legislative victories including the passage and signing of three important health, environmental, and housing bills.

Following my successful Manhattan Valley Visioning Forum, Community Reading Challenge, and session on legal issues for seniors, I am hosting a number of events in the coming months. Those events include Health Service Days at both Frederick Douglass and Grant Houses, a forum for rent controlled tenants, and an information fair for seniors.

My community office is located at 245 W. 104th Street, just off Broadway. My staff and I are always available to assist you. I encourage you to call, write, or visit us, Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM. For those with specific housing problems, I have a dedicated housing specialist on staff and host monthly legal clinics for tenants.

I hope you will find this latest newsletter informative and useful. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call my community office at 212-866-3970.

Very truly yours,

O'Donnell Appointed Chair of Ethics Committee

On March 4, 2010, Assembly Member O'Donnell was appointed to serve as Chair of the Assembly's Ethics and Guidance Committee. O'Donnell is looking forward to playing a key role in shaping future ethics proposals and is proud to be the first among members who joined the Assembly in 2003 to head a standing committee.

O'Donnell remains chair of the Subcommittee on Criminal Trial Procedures and maintains his appointments on the Education, Environmental Conservation, Arts and Tourism, Codes, and Judiciary Committees.

**Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell
& Jane Wisdom, President of the
Frederick Douglass Tenants' Association**

present

A Community Health Fair

Organizations that provide FREE health services, screenings, and information about CPR, nutrition, mental health, diabetes, cancer, foot health, and organ donation have been invited.

**Saturday, May 22nd
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

hosted by

**Children's Aid Society's
Frederick Douglass Center
885 Columbus Ave. @ W. 104th Street**

¡Atención!

La oficina de la comunidad del asambleísta O'Donnell tiene disponible empleados que hablan español para asistir al público tiempo completo, lunes a viernes de 9:00 AM a 5:30 PM. La oficina está localizada en el 245 West 104th Street, cerca de Broadway. También pueden llamar a la oficina en horas laborables al (212) 866-3970.

Recuerden que nuestro noticiario está disponible en español. Para obtener una copia favor de comunicarse con la oficina del asambleísta Daniel O'Donnell.



Congressman Charles Rangel and Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell congratulate Jane Wisdom, Frederick Douglass Tenant Association President, on being honored by Dominican Sunday at the organization's International Women's Month Celebration.



O'Donnell kicks off his "Future of Manhattan Valley" community visioning event.

Manhattan Valley Stakeholders Discuss Neighborhood's Future

On March 6th, nearly 140 participants attended Assembly Member O'Donnell's Manhattan Valley Visioning event, including representatives of small businesses, not-for-profit organizations, block and tenant associations, and individual community activists.

Following a brief presentation on the neighborhood's history, attendees worked in small groups, facilitated by staff of The Municipal Art Society and students from Pratt Institute, to catalog the neighborhood's strengths, opportunities, and challenges. The Saturday afternoon program wrapped up with each group reporting back to the whole.

Eva Hanhardt, a Pratt professor who attended the visioning, noted the diversity and high level of engagement of those who attended. She remarked, "There are no greater experts on the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of Manhattan Valley than those who live and work there. Their ideas and visions will serve as the best guide for the future of the neighborhood." Assembly Member O'Donnell couldn't agree more.

In early May, the Pratt students presented a report that summarized the small group discussions and outlined possible actions to improve the quality of life in this community. Participants were also linked to trainings on neighborhood-based decision making and activism.

Assembly Member O'Donnell will continue to work closely with Manhattan Valley stakeholders to ensure that this unique and diverse neighborhood gets the attention it deserves.



Small groups, facilitated by students at Pratt Institute and Municipal Art Society staff, brainstormed Manhattan Valley's unique opportunities, challenges, and strengths.

Welcome!

Assembly Member O'Donnell welcomes two new staff members, **Gideon Martin** and **Nicholas O'Neill** to his community office. Both will be serving as Community Liaisons.

Early Legislative Highlights

This year, a number of important health, environmental, and housing bills have been passed and signed into law.

In late January, the Assembly passed the Family Health Care Decision Act (A7729), which enables a patient's family member—including a domestic partner—to make healthcare decisions when the patient is unable to do so. The Governor signed this bill into law, bringing New York's statutes in line with a majority of other states.

On February 9th, the Assembly once again passed A7557, legislation that would encourage greater use of solar and wind energy generation systems among non-residential utility customers. Governor Paterson signed this important piece of environmental legislation into law on March 16th. Assembly Member O'Donnell is a proud co-sponsor of A5785, which would similarly increase the benefit of installing renewable energy systems for residential utility customers.

And, in early March, the Governor signed A9487 into law, a bill which had been passed by the Assembly on February 22nd. The legislation makes a number of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments eligible for direct federal subsidies and repair funds. Wise Towers and Manhattanville Houses are just two of the local communities that will benefit from this legislation.

Repair and Repainting of W. 125th Street Viaduct

Assembly Member O'Donnell is pleased to announce that MTA is moving forward with the repair and repainting of the 125th Street Viaduct. This means you should begin to see work being done to upgrade the viaduct this summer.

Work is scheduled to be performed at two sections (each location is approximately one block long) at a time, including all above-ground trestles from La Salle Street to West 137th Street. Work is scheduled to begin in July and is expected to take approximately 10 months to complete. MTA NYC Transit is not anticipating any interruption in service due to this project.

During the paint removal and structural repairs, the work areas will be enclosed in tarps. O'Donnell has been assured that all precautions will be taken to ensure proper containment of removed material while the work is being done. Both the city and the state oversee the paint removal process to ensure the utmost in safety for all neighborhood residents.

Please do not hesitate to contact Assembly Member O'Donnell's Community Office if you have any further questions or safety concerns as this project progresses.

O'Donnell Celebrates St. Patrick's Day at the White House

Assembly Member O'Donnell and his partner John Banta were honored to receive an invitation to celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the White House with President Barack Obama. They joined a Supreme Court Justice, Cabinet members, U.S. Senators and Representatives, as well as foreign dignitaries at a Red Room reception.



Assembly Members Keith Wright and Daniel O'Donnell address attendees of their "Legal Issues for Seniors" forum in Central Harlem.

O'Donnell Advocates Against Riverbank Park Cuts

One of the most alarming cuts included in the Governor's proposed 2010-11 spending plan was a \$15 million reduction in funding to state parks and historic sites. Notably, that reduction included significant cuts to Riverbank State Park's hours as well as the closing of the park's outdoor swimming pool and elimination of all senior programming.

Riverbank's unique history makes it an inappropriate target for state budget cuts. Created as a public amenity for a community forced to deal with the impacts of a sewage treatment plant in its backyard, the park is already much smaller than originally promised.

Assembly Member O'Donnell authored a letter to Speaker Silver, co-signed by Assembly Members Herman Farrell and Keith Wright, making the case that these cuts were simply unacceptable. New York State must keep its promise to West Harlem and upper Manhattan by maintaining Riverbank hours and programming.

Community Boards Support O'Donnell's Charter School Siting Bill

At its full board meeting in April, Community Board 7 passed a resolution in support of A9845, a bill introduced by Assembly Member O'Donnell which would subject the siting of charter schools in public school buildings to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP).

ULURP is required when city-owned properties are to be sold, transferred, or leased and includes a specific timeline, review by the local community board, and approval by the City Council. Current law excludes public school buildings from the ULURP process.

A9845 would in no way preclude charter schools from using, leasing, or purchasing a Department of Education or other city-owned property, but it would allow parents, the community board, and the City Council their proper role in reviewing and approving these changes.

As of the date of this publication, Community Board 9's Education Committee had passed a similar resolution which will be forwarded to the full board. Central Harlem's Community Board 10 has expressed interest in discussing the bill's merits.

The resolutions state the need for structured public input and review of these important decisions. Assembly Member O'Donnell is thrilled to have this support for his proposal and will continue to engage the community on this and other education issues.

TENANT'S CORNER: An Invitation to Rent Controlled Tenants

Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell will host a workshop for all of his rent controlled constituents. At this workshop, experts on rent control will explain how rent increases are calculated under the Maximum Base Rent (MBR) system, how fuel cost adjustments are determined, and the difference between the maximum base rent and the maximum collectible rent.

If you are a rent controlled tenant with questions regarding the complicated set of papers you receive every two years, this workshop is for you.

Thursday, June 3rd 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Red Oak Apartments/Community Room
135 West 106th Street

Please RSVP by calling 212-866-3970.

Successful Community Events

In March, Assembly Member O'Donnell hosted an opportunity for seniors and their caregivers to hear a seasoned attorney speak about **wills, healthcare proxies, and medical directives**. The lively discussion was led by local attorney **Patricia Maniscalco**.

During the months of April and May, hundreds of students participated in the Assembly Member's **7th Annual Community Reading Challenge**. This year's challenge went green, featuring environmental- and nature-themed reading lists, and relied less on printed materials. Pre-K through eighth grade readers submitted book reviews and drawings and attended reading parties at the district's three branch libraries—George Bruce, Morningside Heights, and Bloomingdale.

Assembly Member O'Donnell especially wishes to recognize the hard work of the **New York Public Library** staff and businesses whose time and generosity made this year's reading challenge a success. **Westside Market, Whole Foods, and Citarella** sponsored healthy snacks and **Book Culture** donated door prizes. **Bank Street College** contributed a list of tips to help encourage a lifelong love of reading. Reading lists, book reviews, and drawings can be found online at www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?ad=69.

Assembly Member O'Donnell also wishes to thank all those who participated in his spring book drive to benefit **Project Cicero**. The community's response has consistently been incredible and all of the donated books will be distributed to New York City public school classrooms.

State Budget Update

As this newsletter went to print, a conference committee was shaping the details of a spending plan to bridge our state's \$9.2 billion deficit.

On March 24, 2010, the Assembly passed its budget resolution which restored significant portions of deep cuts that had been proposed by Governor Paterson. Details of the Assembly's budget resolution can be read here: www.assembly.state.ny.us/Press/20100324.

O'Donnell is pleased to report that the Assembly's budget, if enacted, would restore more than \$475.4 million in critical funding for New York City schools, senior centers, adult homeless shelters, and the summer youth employment program.

Statewide, the Assembly's budget plan restored \$600 million in school aid, reduced health care cuts by \$126 million, averted the closure of 91 state parks and historic sites, and re-instated a contribution to student MetroCards.

While the Assembly Member understands the immediacy of the fiscal challenge facing our state and the tough decisions that are necessary, he is also committed to protecting the most vulnerable New Yorkers and our state's working families.

Free Legal Clinic for Tenants

Assembly Member O'Donnell will host opportunities for constituents with housing issues to consult a volunteer attorney. To make an appointment for one of these evening events, please call 212-866-3970 and speak with Joyce Goodman.

May 27th / June 24th / July 29th / August 26th

Community Health Service Day

sponsored by
Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell

Receive important health information and free services including screenings for blood pressure, glucose levels, HIV, cholesterol and dental health.

This event is co-sponsored with Grant Houses and all are welcome!

**Saturday, August 21st
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

**La Salle Street
(bet. Broadway and Amsterdam Ave.)**

Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing

The New York City Rent Guidelines Board, a nine member body chosen by the mayor, votes every year on the increases for the city's rent stabilized tenants.

Think rents are too high?

Come to the hearing, and let the board members hear your story.

**Public Hearing—Thursday, June 17th
10:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Cooper Union, 7 East 7th Street**

For more information, to confirm the date, or to register to speak, please call the Rent Guidelines Board at 212-385-2934 or see www.housingnyc.com or www.metcouncil.net.

CPR Classes*

sponsored by
Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell

CPR can make a difference between life and death. American Heart Association Certified CPR instructors from the New York City Fire Department will teach the core skills of CPR in less than an hour. The classes feature hands-on participation and everyone will take home a CPR kit which includes the training DVD and an inflatable mannequin.

Saturday, May 22nd

**Two classes will be offered: 12:00 Noon & 1:30 PM
Children's Aid Society's Frederick Douglass Center
885 Columbus Ave. @ W. 104th**

To reserve a spot, please call 212-866-3970.

**This class is not designed for a certification. It was created to provide a working knowledge of CPR for the non-professional.*

Senior Information Fair

Local senior organizations will share information on the services they provide.

**Friday, June 11th
9:30 AM – 11:00 AM**

**Goddard Riverside Community Center
593 Columbus Ave.
(bet. W. 88th & W. 89th Streets)**

E-Newsletters

Sign-up for monthly e-newsletters with the latest event and community calendar information by e-mailing:
odonnell@assembly.state.ny.us.

Graffiti-Free NYC

The New York City Economic Development Corporation is offering free graffiti removal services. The program removes over 10 million square feet of graffiti each year.

Please report graffiti to 3-1-1 or visit www.nycedc.com/graffiti.

245 West 104th Street, New York, New York 10025

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COMMUNITY OFFICE INFORMATION:

Open Monday through Friday

9:00 AM - 5:30 PM

212-866-3970

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