



Community Newsletter

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DANIEL O'DONNELL

Manhattan Valley ■ Morningside Heights
Upper West Side ■ West Harlem

FALL 2012

■ SERVING NEW YORK'S 69TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT ■

Dear Neighbor,

I hope you have had a wonderful and relaxing summer. As this newsletter goes to print, the weather finally seems to be cooling down, and our community is gearing up for the bustle of fall.

The past few months have been exciting ones for me. I held a number of community events, including the first of my two annual Community Health Fairs, my Community Reading Challenge for children in our neighborhood, and my cell phone drive to benefit the elderly and victims of domestic violence. I was thrilled with the turnout and want to thank all the community members and organizations who contributed to the great success of these events!

With fall on its way, I have more community events to watch out for. My second Community Health Fair will be held at Frederick Douglass Houses on November 3rd (see later in this newsletter for more details). I will also be hosting a flu shot clinic to help our community stay healthy during flu season. Watch out for information about these events in future newsletters!

This summer I was honored to be recognized for my work as a legislator, including receiving a "Legislator of the Year" award from the New York Association for Pupil Transportation, as well as an invitation to speak at the nationally televised "Band Against Bullying" rally. Both of these invitations were a result of my work to combat bullying in our schools. My anti-bullying Dignity for All Students Act is now in effect in schools across New York, making them safer for all our students. Finally, to honor my leadership in getting last year's Marriage Equality Act passed and signed into law, I was invited and served as a Grand Marshal for the Hudson Pride Parade.

I hope you will find this newsletter informative and useful. My staff and I are always available to assist you in my Community Office located at 245 W. 104th Street, just off Broadway, or by phone at 212-866-3970. I encourage you to call, write, or visit us, Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. For those with specific housing problems, I have a dedicated housing specialist on staff available to help every day.

Very truly yours,

¡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 A.M. a 5:30 P.M. La oficina está localizada en el 245 West 104th Street, cerca de Broadway. También pueden llamar a la oficina en horas laborales al 212-866-3970.

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

Assembly Member O'Donnell's Anti-Bullying Law Is In Effect!

This September New York's children will return to schools that are newly equipped to protect them from bullying and harassment. On July 1st of this year, Assembly Member O'Donnell's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) went into effect, giving New York educators and students new tools to combat the harmful bullying epidemic our state faces.

O'Donnell spent the 18 months between the bill's passage in 2010 and its implementation in 2012 collaborating with the Dignity Task Force to develop guidelines consistent with the legislative intent: that schools foster an inclusive culture rather than focus on punishing bullies. This technique has been proven effective by several rigorous studies. In early May, O'Donnell also worked to ensure that charter school students, originally excluded by the Board of Regents, were included under the new curriculum provisions designed to reduce discrimination, so that every child in New York public schools is protected.

Assembly Member O'Donnell then spent the end of June successfully advocating for an amendment to DASA that would explicitly combat cyberbullying. This amendment passed both the Assembly and the Senate in June, and Governor Cuomo signed it into law July 9, 2012. With the prevalence of technology in most New Yorkers' lives, this amendment ensures that students will enjoy protection from bullying not just in the schoolyard but wherever they go.

Both DASA and its amendment aim to provide all students with an environment free of harassment and discrimination based on any category, including but not limited to actual or perceived race, national origin, ethnic group, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex. O'Donnell believes that it is of paramount importance that New York protect each of its students from the damage of bullying, and these new bills help to bring that goal closer to reality.



Assembly Member O'Donnell asking attendees at the "Band Against Bullying" rally who among them has experienced bullying first-hand.

PHOTO CREDIT: Randee St. Nicholas



As Grand Marshal of the Hudson Pride Parade, Assembly Member O'Donnell speaks to the crowd about the continuing fight for LGBT rights.

Mandatory Medicaid Changes Affect Some Community Residents

A number of constituents have contacted Assembly Member O'Donnell regarding changes to their Medicaid coverage, specifically new mandatory enrollment in a Managed Long Term Care (MLTC) plan. The changes come as a result of Governor Cuomo's Medicaid Redesign Program.

New York Medicaid Choice has notified Medicaid recipients in the community who receive housekeeping services or home attendant services through the Community Alternative Systems Agency (CASA), as well as Medicare benefits, that they must enroll in one of three MLTC plans.

Affected Manhattan residents should have received this notification letter in July. If you have any questions concerning your or a family member's mandatory enrollment in Managed Long Term Care, do not hesitate to contact Assembly Member O'Donnell's Community Office at 212-866-3970.

District 3 Schools Update

- School started on **September 6th**! For families new to the area or to the school system with children in grades 6-12, Enrollment Centers have opened around the city to help them register and learn about their educational options. The closest Center for Assembly Member O'Donnell's constituents is the Philip Randolph Campus High School at **443 W. 135th St.** It is open **8 a.m. – 3 p.m. on weekdays until September 14th.** NOTE: The Joan of Arc Complex at 154 W. 93rd Street is no longer an Enrollment Center, although it has been in the past.
- **Ilene Altschul** has replaced **Esther Friedman** as District 3's Acting Superintendent. Fresh from 11

years as a successful and beloved principal in Sheepshead Bay, Ms. Altschul is eager to take on her new role and shepherd District 3's students and schools.

- Bilingual students may now be eligible for a **state seal of biliteracy** when they graduate from high school! Students who attain proficiency in one or more languages other than English will receive this seal on their high school diplomas, in accordance with standards now being developed by the Board of Regents. New York is the second state after California to provide such a seal, where it is clearly popular: 10,000 students in California's class of 2012 earned the honor.



Assembly Member O'Donnell speaking with young readers at one of his Reading Challenge Celebrations.

TENANTS' CORNER: Tenants' Rights in "Heating Season"

Over his 10 years in office, Assembly Member O'Donnell has found that tenants too often go for extended periods of time without heat or hot water services in their apartments because they do not know their rights as tenants.

The "heating season" begins on October 1st and runs until the end of May. During this time, landlords are required to keep apartments heated at no less than 68 degrees from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. if the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees. In the nighttime hours (from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.), landlords must keep apartments heated to at least 55 degrees if the outside temperature falls below 40 degrees.

All year round, landlords are required to supply their ten-

ants with hot water 24 hours a day at a minimum temperature of 120 degrees.

If your landlord fails to maintain these essential services, call him or her and follow up immediately with a letter. If you do not get a response that same day, call 311 to request an inspection. During that phone call, request a tracking number—this number will be very useful in follow-up phone calls with the city.

If the problem persists for more than two or three days, encourage your neighbors to make additional calls to 311 and call Assembly Member O'Donnell's office. The staff will work with you to ensure that essential services are restored quickly.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER O'DONNELL'S UPCOMING

COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR

*co-sponsored by Jane Wisdom,
President of the Frederick Douglass
Tenants' Association*

Organizations that provide FREE Health Services, Screenings, and Information about CPR, nutrition, diabetes, cancer, foot health, eye health, and organ donation have been invited.

Saturday, November 3rd

11:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

hosted by

**Children's Aid Society's
Frederick Douglass Center**

885 Columbus Ave. @ W. 104th Street



Community members receiving free information and services at Assembly Member O'Donnell's 9th Annual Community Health Fair at Grant Houses on August 18th.

An Update on "Hydrofracking" in New York State

As many of you are aware, the fight against allowing the hazardous drilling practice of hydraulic fracturing, or "hydrofracking," in New York State is far from over. Recently, Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) released plans that would allow hydrofracking in the Southern Tier of New York, the region comprised of Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Delaware, Steuben, and Tioga counties.

While New York City's watershed does not lie in this area and therefore is not directly threatened, residents of the area face the potentially devastating impacts of hydrofracking on their land, water supply, and health. Fortunately, the Cuomo administration has said they will respect the municipal "home rule" right of New Yorkers to decide for themselves through town ordinances whether or not to allow hydrofracking in their community. However, without a statewide ban it appears there are locales where the process will be allowed.

Assembly Member O'Donnell continues to fight to protect New Yorkers from the possibly grave dangers and damage caused by hydrofracking. In the Assembly, he has supported and advocated for a number of bills to stop hydrofracking in its tracks. Most recently, as a signatory to Assembly Member Barbara Lifton's (D – Ithaca) open letter to Governor Cuomo, Assembly Member O'Donnell called on the governor to address the serious issues in the DEC's revised draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (rdSGEIS) on hydrofracking. O'Donnell firmly believes that hydraulic fracturing remains too dangerous and too unknown a process to allow in New York State. Our health, environment, and water supply are simply too precious to sacrifice for energy when there are far better and far safer alternatives.

Welcome!

Assembly Member O'Donnell welcomes a new staff member, **Aodhan Beirne**, to his community office. Aodhan will be serving as a Community Liaison.

Assembly Member O'Donnell's Upcoming Free Legal Clinics

For constituents who need help with legal issues related to housing but are unable to come to Assembly Member O'Donnell's Community Office during the workday, Assembly Member O'Donnell hosts a monthly evening opportunity for constituents to consult with a volunteer attorney.

Call **Joyce** at **212-866-3970** to make an appointment.

Upcoming clinic dates: September 20th / October 25th / November 15th / December 20th

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY EVENTS

9th Annual Community Reading Challenge

This year, hundreds of students participated in Assembly Member O'Donnell's **9th Annual Community Reading Challenge**. The 2012 challenge was "Explore New York City," featuring local books and authors and lots of opportunities to get out into the community. Pre-K through eighth grade readers submitted drawings and photos of their favorite books and/or places, 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, as well as the businesses whose time and generosity made this year's reading challenge a success. Westside Market, Gristedes, and Citarella sponsored healthy snacks and **Book Culture**, **Square Fish** publishing house, and the **Museum of the City of New York** donated door prizes for participating children. Reading lists and reading maps of the area can still be found online at www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?ad=69.

Cell Phone Drive

Assembly Member O'Donnell wishes to thank all those who participated in his spring cell phone drive to benefit **Secure the Call**! With **over 50 phones** donated during the one-month drive—nearly twice the number **Secure the Call** considers a success—the community's response continues to be incredible. All donated phones are wiped of data, refurbished, and distributed to senior citizens and domestic violence victims in need of emergency cell phones.

Community Health Service Day at Grant Houses!

Assembly Member O'Donnell's annual Community Health Service Day at Grant Houses was a great success again this year! Attending groups provided health information on a wide variety of topics, as well as free services such as blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol screenings, eye and tooth checkups, and more. Hundreds of community members were able to take advantage of these opportunities. Thanks to all the groups who sent representatives and shared their information or services with the community!

An additional special thanks to **Whole Foods**, **Amsterdam Restaurant**, and **Toast Uptown** for donating valuable gift cards to our Health Fair Raffle, and to **Lucille Roberts Women's Fitness** for donating free one-week gym passes to everyone who signed up for the raffle. Watch for news about our upcoming fall health fair shortly!

Internships Available

Assembly Member O'Donnell's Community Office is now accepting applications for the fall internship program from individuals who are high school age or older. To apply, please fax or email a cover letter and resume to 212-864-1095 or wilsonc@assembly.state.ny.us.

For more information, please call **212-866-3970** and ask for **Callie**.

E-Newsletters

Do you want more frequent updates about interesting community events, important government information, and what Assembly Member O'Donnell has been working on? Sign up to receive his monthly electronic newsletters by sending an email to odonnell@assembly.state.ny.us.

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
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odonnell@assembly.state.ny.us