

Black Lives Matter

As we acknowledge the 155th Anniversary of Juneteenth, the recognition of the day of freedom for enslaved peoples of African descent in America. Manhattan Community Board 9 (MCB9) recognizes the systemic injustices that this country inflicted and continues to inflict upon people of African American descent, the Black Community. From Slavery to Jim Crow to harmful policies of Stop n Frisk, America has often treated its African American citizens unjustly and sometimes in a horrific manner. Much like Juneteenth itself when news of the end of slavery arrived in Texas two years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed, our country's journey toward full freedom and equality for Black Americans has been continued fitful and incomplete.

Our commitment to fairness is therefore not only because many of our Community 9 Board Members who have experienced this injustice, or have had family members that have lived through the injustices but because we know it is the right thing to do. As Dr. King said, "No one is free until we are all free."

As one of the voices for West Harlem, MCB9 has long fought for fair and equitable treatment for the Black community and all its residents as demonstrated by our commitment to:

- **Affordable Housing** –Advocating for fair, affordable, quality housing for all, including our NYCHA residents and our seniors, and by leading the fight to preserve HDFCs, which remain an important path to Black homeownership and generational wealth.
- **Youth Development** – Engaging with local agencies and programs that serve our youth: including Columbia University, The Boys & Girls Club of Harlem, NYCHA and the West Harlem Development Corp.; with the specific aim of encouraging youth involvement and empowerment and developing programs to encourage youth to see beyond their immediate neighborhoods and the ways in which they can change their own lives, their communities, and the world.
- **Addressing Recidivism** - Championing the West Harlem Re-Entry Program and working with CBOs spanning back from partnering with Fortune Society, to engaging in action addressing mass incarceration and supporting

reentry of citizens back into West Harlem with groups such as the Tayshana “Chicken” Murphy Foundation, the Fortune Society, and the Manhattan District Attorneys Offices office

- **Community Policing** – Cultivating and maintain lines of communication with neighborhood police precincts to ensure that the officers entrusted with protecting the safety and liberty of community members are connected to the communities in which they serve and build relationships with residents on the street, while supporting additional and alternative safety programs like violence interruption and prevention efforts.

- **Police Reform** - Working with local police precincts to foster better relationships and improve communication between residents and police so that those entrusted with protecting the safety and liberty of community members do so in an effective and respectful manner that does not infringe on the rights of community members. As part of these longstanding and ongoing efforts, MCB 9 recently convened a Town Hall Conversation with Deputy Inspector Soto of the 30th. Pct. to openly discuss community issues including violent crime, police-community interactions, use of force protocols, and police discipline and accountability.

Community Board 9 commits to facilitating dialogue and education around Black lives and the structural racism in our society and government that puts those lives at risk, and works tirelessly to encourage understanding between peoples of different backgrounds. Race is a construct that has been willfully used to divide and conquer people for centuries. MCB9 steadfastly denounces this concept and encourage that we all see each other as one race – the human race. In service of that goal, we are proud to state loudly and without hesitation:

BLACK LIVES MATTER !!!

To all in our community of West Harlem, regardless of whether you are in Morningside Heights, Manhattanville, Hamilton Heights, or Sugar Hill, we encourage you to enjoy and celebrate this holiday that marks a milestone in the still-incomplete path to freedom for Black Americans and all Americans.