



June 20, 2025

Hon. Yusef Salaam  
New York City Council Member District 9  
163 W. 125th Street, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10027

Dear Council Member Yusef Salaam,

At its General Board Meeting held on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, Manhattan Community Board No. 9 passed the following Letter of Support re: **St. Nicholas Park Playground at West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street and Chloe Day School** by unanimous consent with 36 members present.

St. Nicholas Park is one of Harlem's Historic Parks in Manhattan Community Board 9 (MCB9) situated on more than 22 acres that border St. Nicholas Terrace to the west and St. Nicholas Avenue to the east and extends from 127th Street to 141st Street. Its significant features include playgrounds, swings, basketball courts, the James Baldwin lawn on a high hill, stairs protruding from rugged rock formations, and numerous gardens. St. Nicholas Park is the primary green space for many of the residents in Central and West Harlem, and generations of Harlem families have built memories in its embrace.

New York City Parks are vital to the community, environment, and the City's health and well-being. For many years MCB9 and Friends of St. Nicholas Park have advocated for capital improvements to this park in the Mayor's Preliminary Budget District Needs Statement. Although the NYC Parks Department recognizes the critical necessity of capital improvements to St. Nicholas Park, which has been underfunded for decades, ongoing budget constraints have made it increasingly difficult to secure the necessary funds to complete urgent improvements, especially to the West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street St. Nicholas Park Playground, directly from NYC Parks' budget. In fact, while the NYC Parks Department stewards more than 14% of New York City's land, it is allocated significantly less than one percent of the New York City Budget.

We are therefore writing in earnest to request Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget allocation to fund the renovation of the West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street St. Nicholas Park Playground from our elected officials including, but not limited to, our council members and Manhattan Borough President, Mark Levine who have been instrumental in funding many uptown park and green space improvements such as the newly opened Davis Center at the Harlem Meer. MCB9 comprises



primarily marginalized populations with disparate health outcomes that will continue to be underserved relative to renovated green spaces without your financial assistance.

In addition to the general public enjoyment of St. Nicholas Park, it is frequented by our neighborhood children and utilized for local school programming. During the May 7, 2025 MCB9 Landmarks Preservation and Parks Committee and April 9, 2025 MCB10 Parks and Recreation Committee meetings, Dr. Sanayi Beckles-Canton, CEO and Loida Valentin, PTA representative for the Chloe Day School located at 300 West 134<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10030 in MCB10 alerted the Harlem community to the further deterioration of the West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street Playground. Other Early Childhood Education (ECE) Providers include Round-the-Clock Nursery Inc., Little Learners Daycare/Preschool- Free or low-cost Daycare Services, and Bright Kids Family Daycare are also within a four to five block radius of St. Nicholas Park Playground and utilize its equipment. These school programs comprise at maximum enrollment and capacity an estimated 1,000 children, and 500 children at minimum enrollment who use the Playground. Children between the ages of 2 - 4 years old are unable to walk far distances and must have safe streets and pathways to reach destinations. Moreover, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Group Childcare Article 47 Nutrition and Physical Activity Regulations mandates that ECE Providers must provide appropriate physical activities tailored to the developmental age of children. Whereas “children 1-3 years old must receive 60 minutes of physical activity per day. While children older than 3 years old must receive 60 minutes, including 30 minutes of guided and structured physical activity. Furthermore, children shall not be allowed to remain sedentary or sit passively for more than 30 minutes continuously except during scheduled rest or naptime.” Moreover, neighborhood parks and playgrounds are vital to the development of our children.

Chloe Day School Parents through its PTA are disseminating petitions, engaging community partners, elected officials and community boards to advocate for improved park and playground conditions. Unfortunately, we were disheartened to learn about the significant safety concerns that are negatively impacting the enjoyment of this park and playground for our youngest and most impressionable parkgoers. Photographic and oral evidence was presented that details the unhoused sleeping in the park requiring staff to clear the playground for children to play; used needles and drug paraphernalia; used condoms with wrappers; and cigarette butts nearby piles of leaves. Additionally, there is unsafe street access due to missing safety fencing and gates near the busy street intersection and bus route. Trip and fall risks are exacerbated by uneven tiles near play structures; including the bottom of climbing structures; uneven pavement near the entrances and exits; potholes and cracked pavement; and exposed metal rebar from potholes and pavement. Other lowlights include chipped paint on playground structures, swings and sculptures (the “Camel”); pooling water which attracts mold, mosquitos and odors; and a broken water fountain.

In conclusion, the St. Nicholas Park Playground at West 133rd Street and St. Nicholas Avenue needs a full renovation and without your financial support, this urgently needed renovation is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future. This vast park is named for St. Nicholas of Myra who



is also known as the patron saint of children. It is therefore fitting that we all urgently prioritize the repair of the Park's facilities that support the emotional, physical and social well-being of Harlem's children. The state of disrepair of St. Nicholas Park and especially the Playground at West 133rd Street requires immediate care, and we respectfully request your attention to assist in the revitalization of this Manhattan Community Board 9 resource through funding support, but especially to invigorate the physical activity of our children and instill in them the lifelong adoration of green spaces.

If you have any questions and/or further information is needed, please do not hesitate contacting me, or our District Manager, Eutha Prince at the board office (212) 864-6200.

Sincerely,

Victor Edwards  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 9

cc: Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor  
Hon. Brad Lander, NYC Comptroller  
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, NYC Parks Commissioner  
Hon. Tricia Shimamura, Manhattan Borough Commissioner for NYC Parks & Recreation  
Hon. Cordell Cleare, NYS Senator, 30th Senatorial District  
Hon. Micah Lasher, NYS Assemblyman, 69th Assembly District  
Hon. Jordan J.G. Wright, NYS Assembly Member, 70th Assembly District  
Hon. Al Taylor, NYS Assemblyman, 71st Assembly District  
Hon. Shaun Abreu, Member of the NYC Council, 7th Council District  
Hon. Heather Jason, Co-Chair MCB9 Landmarks Preservation and Parks Committee  
Hon. Maurice Franklin, Chair MCB10 Parks and Recreation Committee  
Ms. Karen Asner, Friends of St. Nicholas Park  
Mr. Steve Simon, Chief of Staff-Manhattan Parks  
Mr. Zead Ramadan, Executive Director, West Harlem Development Corporation



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**COMMUNITY BOARD 9**  
MANHATTAN

Morningside Heights  
Manhattanville  
Hamilton Heights  
Sugar Hill

June 23, 2025

Ms. Marianne Pizzitola  
President, NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees Inc.  
Retirees@nyc retirees.org

Dear Ms. Pizzitola,

Manhattan Community Board 9 voted at its unregularly scheduled General Board Meeting on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, in favor of presenting this letter of support - in a unanimous consent, with 36 of its 50 members in attendance - to the City Council and the Organization of NYC Public Service Retirees expressing strong support for passing Intro. No. 1096-2024 to amend the and ensure New York City continues to offer Medicare Eligible NYC Retirees and their Dependents Premium-Free Public Healthcare Medicare and at least one Premium-Free MediGap Plan with benefits equivalent or better than those available to NYC Retired Medicare Eligible Retirees and their Dependents as of December 31, 2021, if they have fulfilled the vested Public Service Requirements during their active years of Service.

Retired New York City Community Board 9 Manhattan Members and Constituents have dedicated their careers to serving New York City, contributing significantly to the well-being and operation of our communities. They made these contributions with the understanding that their health benefits, a core component of their retirement security, would remain intact. That commitment is not just a matter of policy but a matter of fairness and integrity. We stand in full support Passing Intro. No. 1096-2024 and encourage its swift adoption by the City Council of the City of New York.

If you have any questions and/or further information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me or District Manager, Eutha Prince, at the board office (212) 864-6200.

Sincerely,

Victor Edwards  
Chair

cc: Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor  
Hon. Brad Lander, NYC Comptroller

Ms. Marianne Pizzitola

Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Cordell Cleare, New York State Senate  
Hon. Micah Lasher, Assembly Member  
Hon. Jordan J.D. Wright, Assembly Member  
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member  
Hon. Shaun Abreu, City Council Member  
Hon. Yusef Salaam, City Council Member  
Hon. Chris Marte, City Council Member  
Hon. Justin Brannan, City Council Member  
Hon. Adrienne Adams, City Council  
Mr. Zead Ramadan, Executive Director, West Harlem Development Corporation  
Marianne Pizzitola, President Organization of NYC Public Service Retirees  
Ann Anesta, Representative for the Organization of Public Service Retirees  
Camille Dee, Representative for the Organization of Public Service Retirees  
Jennifer Rajkumar, Public Advocate, Assembly District 38  
Henry A. Garrido, Executive DC37  
Henry D. Rubio, President Council of School Supervisors and Administrators  
Mitra Lutchman, CSA Retiree Chapter Legislative Liaison  
Mark Brodsky, Director of the CSA Retiree Chapter



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**COMMUNITY BOARD 9**  
MANHATTAN

Morningside Heights  
Manhattanville  
Hamilton Heights  
Sugar Hill

June 23, 2025

Ms. Patricia O'Reilly  
Program Director  
**New York State Homes and  
Community Renewal**  
620 Erie Blvd. West, Suite 312  
Syracuse, New York 13204

Dear Patricia O'Reilly,

At its fiscal year-end General Board Meeting, held in person and hybrid on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, the Manhattan Community Board 9 passed this Letter of Support re: **Heritage Health and Housing, Inc. New York State Main Street Grant Program** by unanimous consent, with 36 members in attendance.

On behalf of Manhattan Community Board 9, we write to express our support for the 2025 New York Main Street Grant Program offered through Housing Trust Fund Corporation Office of Community Renewal submitted by Heritage Health and Housing, Inc. as a Downtown Anchor Project applicant. The organization's public service to the community is positioned to receive state grant funding for their project at 1649 Amsterdam Avenue so that they may renovate this landmark building to host the new site for their health center. This Center has serviced our community and is a staple that provides care in a medical desert.

Manhattan Community Board 9 (MCB9) encompasses Morningside Heights, Manhattanville, Hamilton Heights and Sugar Hill. In other words, we are West Harlem. Our purpose is to ensure that services are accessible and responsive to the needs of all residents, organizations, businesses, and institutions in West Harlem. The New York City Charter mandates that all community boards advise and inform their respective constituencies on matters relevant to their immediate neighborhood. Heritage Health Center as a target area building renovation is key to our local revitalization efforts as this area's census tracts, and LMI % is greater than 50%. We encourage Heritage's pronouncement of protocol through its "Good Neighbor Policy" to be practiced by its residents and clients that promises the practice of civility, neighborly well-being and environmental care.

For more than 52 years, Heritage Health and Housing, Inc. has been providing services with housing programs, health care services and comprehensive care to low-income and underserved

Ms. Patricia O'Reilly  
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individuals throughout targeted neighborhoods and has served underserved and vulnerable populations throughout Manhattan and the Bronx. Heritage Health and Housing, Inc. currently owns and operates residential facilities throughout Northern Manhattan and these facilities allow them to provide housing and on-site services for individuals that were previously homeless.

The current health center renovation project at the **Harry Simmons Building** located at 1649 Amsterdam Avenue will house the new medical center relocating it from its current home at 1727 Amsterdam Avenue. The Health Center will utilize the basement, ground floor (storefront), second and third floors.

Let us state that this project is being carefully managed with consideration of the community within which the property is positioned – the landmark area of Hamilton Heights. The HHH executives have duly followed the process of working with the landmarks commission which required them to present their plans to Landmarks and Parks Committee of Manhattan Community Board 9. Their presentation with renderings notably featured above the first story limestone surrounds with keystones on the second story, flat-arched lintels with sculpted keystones on the third and fourth stories, flat-arched lintels on the fifth story, and molded drip lintels on the sixth story. Across the seventh floor are arched windows, linked by a continuous limestone band. Individual striped awnings have been installed. Front of each non-historic storefront along Amsterdam Avenue. A rectangular brick structure was built on the roof during the 1980s that contains existing elevator bulkhead. Air conditioning units have been installed in various windows. The north and south facades are similar, but not identical. It was noted that these relatively narrow building facades at 30 feet and 35 feet wide respectively make it difficult to mask the proposed roof additions. Both facades have painted brick bases and non-historic fire escapes across the center windows. It is further noted that a narrow alley extends along the rear façade.” The building's style, scale, materials, and details are among the features that contribute to the special architectural and character of the historic district.

The applicant seeks to implement the following property restorations:

- Build two new stucco façade bulkheads with painted steel cornices to match existing cornices. This bulkhead will be visible from the street.
- Approximately 60 Solar panels for energy efficiency utilization will be installed on the roof for residential energy efficiency utilization. The 4th through 7th or top four floors will be dedicated to housing the single room occupancies that will have a separate entrance, elevator, bulkhead and stairs.
- Remove the non-historic fire escapes and build inner stairs to each bulkhead in addition to a new elevator for the residential entrance. The existing center bulkhead elevator will remain. Other work scheduled to be performed consists of the following:
  - Install a new precast cornice above the storefront to match existing.
  - Install a new center entrance door with transom and sidelights.

- Replace several new storefront windows and entrance doors.
- New aluminum dark bronze anodized lower infill panels will be installed at the storefront. Existing storefronts must be painted to match new. The storefront glass will be clear. The new storefront awnings will be burgundy in color.
- Patch spalled stone in Lintel.
- Repair cracked sill.
- Repair step crack in brick and repoint brick.

HHH contribution and dedication have been beneficial to the community. We look forward to HCR supporting this project with the necessary funds. These resources will help the district continue to flourish with better health treatments, employment opportunities, and sustainable and economic development. The project will add vibrancy to the corridor and bring new life into the facility to support the Harlem neighborhood. It will assist in creating a modern state-of-the-art medical center facility that will continue improving the health outcomes for the residents; and support their current care.

If you have any questions and/or further information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me or District Manager, Eutha Prince, at the board office (212) 864-6200.

Sincerely,



Victor Edwards

Chairman, Manhattan Community Board 9

cc: Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor

Hon. Brad Lander, NYC Comptroller

Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President

Hon. Cordell Cleare, New York State Senate

Hon. Micah Lasher, Assembly Member

Hon. Jordan J.D. Wright, Assembly Member

Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member

Hon. Shaun Abreu, City Council Member

Hon. Yusef Salaam, City Council Member

Mr. Zead Ramadan, Executive Director, West Harlem Development Corporation

Adrienne Thomas, Board Chair, Heritage Health & Housing, Inc.

Sandra Blundetto, CEO, Heritage Health & Housing, Inc.

Douglas Blomberg, CFO, Heritage Health & Housing, Inc.

Patreinnah Acosta-Pelle, Heritage Health & Housing, Inc.

Ms. Patricia O'Reilly