

Nydia Velázquez, a Determined Leader

Congresswoman for New York's twelfth district, Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) announced \$400,000 in federal funding for the Lower East Side Girls Club of New York, \$750,000 for a transportation project in Chinatown, and \$500,000 for Betances Health Center for a total award of \$1,650,000.

A result of Velázquez's unwavering perseverance, the \$400,000 in funding for the Lower East Side Girls Club will be used for edification in a building that will house a 59,000 square foot facility, as well as commercial, retail, and community space, on Avenue D between 7th and 8th streets in Manhattan. The new facility will contain a gymnasium, a theater, classrooms, art studios, a darkroom, a computer technology and educational support center, guidance and holistic health care facilities and more.

"The Lower East Side Girls Club serves as a place for women of many different backgrounds to come together and build strong networks and relationships," said Congresswoman Velázquez. "By providing this type of support within the community, the girls club encourages the well-being of women on the Lower East Side. Its commitment to helping local residents requires dedication and compassion, and for this, the Lower East Side Girls Club should be recognized for the great work they do each and every day."

The Lower East Side Girls Club

serves more than 300 girls, ages 8 to 18, by providing them with a place to have fun, grow, learn, and develop confidence in themselves. The Girls Club offers arts, athletic, cultural, life-skills and career-oriented programming, which provides girls with the vision to plan and the tools to build a bright future.

Another federal award of \$750,000 secured by Congresswoman Velázquez will be used to evaluate transportation access and property renovation in order to alleviate parking conditions in Chinatown.

Due to its proximity to Ground Zero, this area has suffered from property damage, which has significantly affected parking availability. Many streets have been temporarily or permanently closed to the public. The new study will help determine how to maximize the space available to best accommodate the number of visitors and employees coming into Chinatown.

"This study will hopefully result in better access to the Lower East Side while more parking will ensure this vital economic and cultural section of our community continues to thrive," Congresswoman Velázquez said.

"The advancement of transportation plans will impact the lives of many New Yorkers and will enhance economic development in Chinatown."

In addition, Congresswoman Velázquez successfully secured \$500,000 for Betances Health Center

in another spending bill.

These federal funds will be used to offset the facility's revenue shortfall after the attacks of September 11, which had a devastating effect on its financial stability.

Due to its close proximity to Ground Zero, the Betances Health Center did not have access to many of its patients, and was without phone, fax and e-mail for two months. It also suffered from opportunity costs resulting from the necessary investment in a new professional staff and the construction of expanded physical and occupational therapy facilities that could not be opened due to the chaos resulting from September 11. These circumstances combined resulted in a net operating deficit exceeding \$950,000. "Betances Health Center provides extremely critical services to the residents of Lower East Side and this funding will help to stabilize its financial situation," said Congresswoman Velázquez. "Without Betances, thou-



sands of local residents would have no place to turn for quality, affordable health services. I want to make sure this center is able to thrive."

Betances Medical Center has provided health care services to the residents of the Lower Eastside for over 30 years. 65% of Betances' patients are Medicaid Managed Care recipients, almost 20% are Medicare recipients, and 10% are uninsured. The Center services over 4,500 patients annually through a wide range of primary and specialty programs. ■

Una Luchadora Incansable

La congresista Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), luchadora incansable del duodécimo Distrito de Nueva York anunció la asignación de \$400 mil dólares en fondos federales al Club de Niñas del Bajo Manhattan, \$750 mil para un proyecto de transporte del barrio chino y \$500 mil para el Centro de Salud Betances, los que sumados totalizan un millón seiscientos cincuenta mil dólares.

Los \$400 mil asignados al Club de Niñas del Bajo Manhattan serán utilizados en la construcción de un edificio que constará de una facilidad de 59 pies cuadrados, espacio comercial y comunitario. Estará ubicado en la Avenida D, entre las calles 7ma y 8ava de Manhattan. La nueva construcción tendrá un gimnasio, teatro, salones de clase, estudio de arte, cuarto oscuro,

un centro de apoyo educacional y de tecnología de computación, recintos para guía y cuidado de salud holístico, entre otros.

"El Club de Niñas del Bajo Manhattan sirve como lugar donde mujeres de diversas procedencias se reúnen y construyen redes, y relaciones", expresó la congresista Velázquez, agregando: "Al entregar este tipo de apoyo comunitario, el Club de Niñas alienta el bienestar de las mujeres del Bajo Manhattan. Este compromiso en ayudar a los residentes locales requiere dedicación y compasión, y son estas las razones por las que el Club de Niñas del Bajo Manhattan debe ser reconocido por un trabajo realizado día tras día".

El Club de Niñas del Bajo Manhattan sirve diariamente a más de 300 jóve-

nes entre los 8 y los 18 años, aportándole un lugar para crecer, aprender, divertirse, y para desarrollar confianza en sí mismas. El Club de Niñas ofrece programas de arte, culturales, atléticos, de desarrollo de talentos y de orientación profesional, los cuales les proveen la visión para planear y las herramientas para construir un futuro brillante.

Otros fondos federales asegurados por la congresista Velázquez por un monto de 750 mil dólares, serán utilizados para evaluar el acceso al transporte y renovación de propiedad con el objeto de aliviar la falta de estacionamiento en el barrio chino.

Debido a su cercanía a la Zona Cero, esta área ha sufrido daños a la propiedad, lo que ha afectado grandemente la disponibilidad de estaciona-

miento. Varias calles han sido temporal o permanentemente cerradas para dar cabida al creciente número de turistas y empleados del barrio chino. Sumado a lo anterior, la congresista Velázquez ha asegurado 500 mil dólares para el Centro de Salud Betances, los que serán usados para balancear las grandes pérdidas económicas sufridas después de los ataques del 11 de septiembre. El Centro Betances ha entregado servicios de salud a los habitantes del Bajo Manhattan por más de treinta años.

La congresista ha dicho que "Sin Betances, miles de residentes locales no tendrían donde encontrar servicios de salud de calidad y a bajo costo. Quiero asegurarme que el Centro pueda salir adelante". ■