

Dept. for the Aging, Elected Officials Celebrate National Senior Center Month

NEW YORK (September 9, 2019) – For National Senior Center Month in September, Department for the Aging (DFTA) Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez, State Senator Robert Jackson, and Assembly Member Al Taylor visited two senior centers to celebrate the diversity, activities, and health and wellness services that the City's network of nearly 250 centers offers.





Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez also presented certificates to the Riverstone Senior Life and Washington Heights Senior Centers for their service to older New Yorkers in the community.

"I am thrilled to spend National Senior Center Month with members of the Riverstone Senior Life and Washington Heights Senior Centers," said **DFTA Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez**. "Older adult centers serve as a second home for so many New Yorkers, providing vital services and preventing social isolation. These hubs of connectedness should be celebrated year-round!"

About 30,000 New Yorkers attend older adult centers daily across the five boroughs. Membership is free and open to anyone age 60 or older. Immigration status and income are never barriers to membership. Centers provide meals with a nominal suggested donation, educational and wellness workshops, technology classes, recreational outings, falls prevention classes, and more. Members are also screened for benefits and entitlements.

For older adults suffering with depression, anxiety or other mental health ailments, clinicians provide on-site group and individual counseling sessions in multiple languages at dozens of centers.

"Senior centers are the building blocks of New York City's older adult service system, and I am proud to do my part to tap into their power as safe spaces that battle social isolation, provide daily nutrition, and connect seniors to lifesaving services, enriching programs and volunteer opportunities in their communities," said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin, Chair of the Committee on Aging**. "This year, I am proud to work hand-in-hand in with advocates to secure a historic \$15 million in permanent funding for meals, save NYCHA social clubs, create new NORCs and expand NYC Council's senior initiatives. I thank Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez for her visionary partnership on these victories and the ongoing work to ensure that the endless positive impacts of senior centers are seen and felt year-round."

"There are more than 1.5 million seniors across New York, and it remains critical that we continue our work to address the issues and challenges they face daily related to housing, health care, quality of life," said **Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13)**. "I commend Commissioner Cortés-Vázquez and the NYC Department of Aging following today's visits to the Riverstone Senior Life and Washington Heights Senior Centers to hear firsthand from residents and the DFTA's continued work to develop innovative solutions to address ongoing needs."

State Senator Robert Jackson said, "I'm proud to represent over a dozen Manhattan senior centers from Marble Hill to Chelsea. Riverstone Senior Life and Washington Heights Senior Centers are two of these excellent community spaces — vital resources for aging residents of our great city and social hubs of activity for our neighborhoods. Keeping our senior centers well-funded and accessible is so important as more and more New Yorkers choose to age in place. I support these outstanding institutions in my work as a legislator and a community member."

"Our seniors represent a vital part of our community, and any opportunity to celebrate them and the people and centers who care for them is welcomed," said **Assembly**

Member Taylor. "After spending a lifetime working hard, raising families and giving back to their communities, it is our duty to make sure the people who came before us are well cared for. Older adult centers provide invaluable services and social opportunities for our seniors, and I am honored to join my colleagues in highlighting them."

The Administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio and the City Council have made possible an increase in funds for food purchases and fair wages for food service workers at senior centers. In fiscal year 2020, \$10 million is being made available; this will increase to \$15 million beginning in fiscal year 2021 and onward. The increases will allow the centers to prepare high-quality meals and retain well-trained kitchen staff.

To find a senior center, call 311 or [search online](#) for a nearby center.

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The New York City Department for the Aging works to eliminate ageism and ensure the dignity and quality of life of New York City's diverse 1.6 million older adults. DFTA also works to support caregivers through service, advocacy, and education. DFTA is the largest area agency on aging in the U.S.

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