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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT DEDICATION AND RIBBON-CUTTING OF THE MICHAEL KORS BUILDING AT GOD'S LOVE WE DELIVER

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Karen, I know you have had to lead and persevere and keep the vision going. You've been a fearless leader as this extraordinary building was built.

Let's thank Karen Pearl for her leadership.

[Applause]

This is – this is an exciting day for the city. Michael, I know it's an exciting day for you, and we thank you for all you have done.

But it's an exciting day for this whole city. It represents the best of us. And you represent the best of us.

I'm going to say a few words later about Michael, but I have to say this is one of the moments when you feel particularly proud to be a New Yorker. Because behind our rough exteriors beats hearts of gold, as is evident today.

This space is going to allow for a doubling of the number of meals served and delivered every year and that is extraordinary.

[Applause]

And success has many fathers and mothers. One of the great mothers of this success isn't with us today and we feel her absence deeply. New York City is just not the same without Joan Rivers. We all feel that.

[Applause]

I think if anyone ever captured the personality of this place, it was your mother. And she, in her own inimitable fashion, not only brought us joy, but she brought a lot of spirit to the great work of God's Love We Deliver – and pushed it forward as a volunteer, as a board member. And we miss her. We miss her commitment and her drive and her belief. But if she were here, she would be overjoyed today. So, let's all give a round of applause that can be heard up in heaven for Joan Rivers.

[Applause]

The partners in government who help make this happen – they deserve our applause as well. Council Members Corey Johnson and Jimmy Vacca – the City Council was so much a part of this. Let's thank them.

Our Commissioner for the Department of the Aging, Donna Corrado; our Director for Food Policy, Barbara Turk. Let's thank them for all they do every day.

[Applause]

And a different and very important partner for us all – I mentioned Joan – well, Joan would be very, very proud of her daughter, Melissa, who carries on the work and carries on the commitment. We thank you.

[Applause]

This is about kindness. This is about compassion, and doing something even when we don't know the road forward.

In 1985, the AIDS epidemic was a confusion and a pain and a challenge to all of us in this city. And two women, Ganga Stone and Jane Best, they started acting.

They started creating. They started doing something that didn't need a roadmap or a plan – they just did it. And we have to remember that what they started now has been built into something great for so many New Yorkers in need. Let's thank both of them.

[Applause]

Now to the point where God's Love prepares and delivers 1.4 million meals a year – what an extraordinary impact on the people of this city.

So many hungry, so many living with HIV and AIDS. So many dealing with profound challenges, cancer, and other illnesses – and yet, God's Love is a constant in their lives. It's there for them. And not just with food, but with heart, with soul, with love that uplifts people. You know, we go through so many challenges in life and the physical part of it is one thing, but the emotional is at least as challenging. And God's Love fills – so beautifully – that place in people's heart where they need to know they will be supported, they will be cared for.

Each year over 8,000 volunteers. And what's extraordinary is that people who became volunteers that didn't just leave it at a simple act – one time active volunteering. So many volunteers here make it their life's work.

And one of them was Michael Kors. Michael, I think you got in kind of deep – and that is a good thing.

[Laughter]

I have heard stories. The work you've done as a volunteer before we came to this day, when you have done so much to bring this beautiful building into creation.

I heard a story about a senior you delivered meals to – a woman named Natalie. And she is described in my remarks as a “sassy senior”. I'm sure you've all met the “sassy seniors”. They have an opinion on everything and are full of life, and they remind us what life's supposed to be about.

Well, Michael and Natalie hit it off and shared each other's lives stories. And Michael was there for her – didn't matter if he's a famous name or invited to all the right parties. He wanted to spend time with Natalie. He wanted to support her and he was there with her every step of the way, even last year when she got to her 100th birthday. Michael was there to support and uplift her.

[Applause]

And I'm sorry to say Natalie is no longer with us, but I can tell you one thing – her life was enriched by God's Love We Deliver and by Michael Kors. And now, we are all enriched by Michael Kors. Thank you for volunteering, thank you for serving on the Board of Directors, and thank you for creating a company that believes in philanthropy to its core.

And your commitment has led us to the day where this building will lead so many people to a better life, because they'll have the food they need and the support they need. It wouldn't have been possible without this place from which to do it.

Michael, I know you looked at the situation and you said something just had to happen. You're the kind of guy who makes something happen. On behalf of all New Yorkers, let's thank Michael Kors.

[Applause]

Congratulations to everyone at God's Love We Deliver. This is a great day. Congratulations, all.

[Applause]

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