



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pedro Espada Jr.

Espada, Community Organization Launch Anti-Obesity Campaign

PEDRO ESPADA, JR. February 19, 2010

| ISSUE: **HEALTH, NUTRITION, CONSTITUENTS CORNER**

Press Contact: Steve Mangione 914-403-4072 (mobile)

"Throughout New York City, and more so in the Bronx, record numbers of children are being diagnosed with obesity and related chronic illnesses..."

-Senator Espada

Two days after unveiling proposed legislation that would provide an historic rent freeze for three-quarters of a million tenants of rent-stabilized apartments over the next ten years, State Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada, Jr. has turned his attention to the obesity epidemic in the Bronx, where incidence of juvenile and adult obesity is the worst in New York City and among the worst in the country. Sen. Espada went to Davidson Community Center, Inc., where he and the organization's executive director, Angel Caballero, distributed fresh fruits and vegetables to dozens of Bronx families during a press conference launching a major nutrition education and outreach initiative.

Called the Farmer's Market Initiative and based at the Davidson Community Center, free fresh produce will be distributed regularly to thousands of Bronx residents. In addition, the

initiative will provide free nutrition workshops and screenings to educate children and adults about alternative healthy food options.

“Obesity, unfortunately, is winning. However, starting today we are going to change that,” said Sen. Espada, as he handed out bags filled with broccoli, carrots, bananas, apples and other fresh produce to Bronx residents at the Davidson Community Center (2038 Davidson Ave.) during the 11 a.m. press conference.

“Throughout New York City, and more so in the Bronx, record numbers of children are being diagnosed with obesity and related chronic illnesses such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and high cholesterol. Studies conclude that our present generation of children is the unhealthiest in history and, alarmingly, will have a life expectancy seven years less than their parents,” Sen. Espada said. “Medical intervention alone is not the answer. If we are going to succeed in reversing this trend, we must integrate education and nutrition with medicine. Reaching our children at a young age is paramount to prevention, but we also must educate parents, senior citizens and all adults.”

He added, “This initiative will provide healthy alternatives, replacing processed foods, which are heavy in fat and sugar content, with fresh vegetables and fruits.”

The initiative will be funded by a portion of a state grant secured by Sen. Espada for the Davidson Community Center, a community-based, not-for-profit advocacy organization that has provided housing, job placement/job readiness, after-school/tutoring, nutrition, youth and many other assistance programs to Bronx residents for nearly three decades.

“Senator Espada is helping us reach thousands more Bronx residents and giving us the ability to provide healthy fruits and vegetables to those most in need, as well as the

resources to educate children and adults on simple changes that can impact their health,” Mr. Caballero said.

In addition to purchasing fresh produce for distribution at its own food pantry program, the Davidson Community Center plans to use some of the grant funding to purchase a van that would allow the organization to deliver fruits and vegetables to other Bronx food banks.

“Food distribution agencies are having a difficult time in this economy. Resources are scarce but greater numbers of people line up for food. Sen. Espada’s effort is a huge boost for Bronx residents because we can assist other organizations and battle chronic obesity at the same time,” Mr. Caballero said.

For more information on the Farmer’s Market Initiative, call Sen. Espada at 718-220-5480. #