



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Neighborhood Rallies to Save Our Lady of Pompeii Senior Center

BRAD HOYLMAN November 3, 2014

| ISSUE: **SENIOR CENTERS**



*Greenwich Village seniors, elected officials and community leaders demand Our Lady of Pompeii renews beloved senior center's lease*

New York, NY — Seniors, elected officials and community leaders gathered today to demand that a venerable senior center located in the basement of Our Lady of Pompeii Church in Greenwich Village not be evicted. Members of the community recently learned that Greenwich House, the 112-year old settlement house that operates the center, has been advised to begin looking for alternative space in which to house the center once its lease

expires in June 2015.

The senior center, located at 25 Carmine Street, has its roots in the Golden Age Club started in 1971 at the behest of the church's pastor by late parishioner Lucy Cecere. For more than 40 years, the senior center has been a crucial resource for the community. It provides 1,400 lunches monthly, as well as vital social, cultural and educational activities and access to health and social services, such as flu immunizations and legal services. The group urged the church to continue negotiations with Greenwich House in order to come to a mutually beneficial solution that allows seniors to remain in their current location.

"The Greenwich House senior center is crucial resource for seniors in West Village and surrounding neighborhood. Throughout New York City, seniors rely on their neighborhood senior centers for access to social services and community, and Greenwich House has been a vital place for downtown senior citizens for over forty years," said **Congressman Jerry Nadler**. "I am committed to working with my elected colleagues, Our Lady of Pompeii and all of the stakeholders to help find a solution for this center."

"The eviction of the Greenwich House Senior Center from Our Lady of Pompeii's basement in favor of renting it for film and TV productions is more than unfortunate," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "This center is used by hundreds of seniors regularly and to abandon their needs in favor of random film rentals seems like an abandonment of a Parish mission."

**State Senator Brad Hoylman** said: "For more than four decades, since it was started by members of this parish, the senior center at Our Lady of Pompeii Church has served the most vulnerable seniors in Greenwich Village. I'm confident that new lease terms can be negotiated that will enable both the church and the senior center to continue to thrive. We

owe nothing less to the generations of Villagers who depend on this senior center every day and helped build our wonderful community.”

"I applaud Senator Hoylman's leadership in fighting for the senior center at Our Lady of Pompeii Church. It provides a resource to seniors, and if it closes, some of the Village's most vulnerable residents will be left with less access to vital social services," said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. "I join Senator Hoylman and my colleagues in urging all stakeholders to find a solution that ensures the neighborhood's seniors can continue to receive the support they need."

**Assembly Member Deborah Glick** said: "For over 40 years, Our Lady of Pompeii has played an essential role for seniors in the West Village and beyond. To even consider for one moment that this location will be shut down is unfathomable. For many seniors, the guarantee of a hot meal and good conversation is a vital part of their daily life. We hope that there is a path forward with Our Lady of Pompeii. We will be looking for a solution that is of mutual benefit to the seniors who need this center, and the Church."

"The Senior Center at Our Lady of Pompeii Church has been a pillar of the Village community since 1971," said **Councilmember Corey Johnson**. "The services offered are at the core of what the Catholic Church is about, providing routine, enrichment, and community – and yet Father Walter's proposal to close this facility is the very opposite. Closure of this senior center will further alienate seniors from their community, force many to go hungry or travel further for meals, and eliminate social programs to help people age healthily and stay in their homes. As the community organizes and the choir of voices grows louder, I hope a solution is reached to make sure this neighborhood gem stays in place."

“Neighborhood senior centers play such a deeply vital role in enabling older New Yorkers to comfortably and securely age in place, and the Our Lady of Pompeii Senior Center is no different,” said **Council Member Margaret Chin**, chair of the City Council’s Committee on Aging. “Thousands of seniors rely on this center for valuable social services and programs — and these are often the very men and women who pioneered the community and helped make it great. The Our Lady of Pompeii Senior Center must not be evicted, and the seniors who attend the center must not be denied the services they need.”

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