



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Local Officials Rally to Save the 117-Year-Old Harriman Clubhouse

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL September 29, 2018



NEW YORK, NY - Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Senator Brad Hoylman, Assemblymember Harvey Epstein, Councilmember Carlina Rivera and Manhattan Community Board 3 held a press conference today to urge the Board of Trustees of the Boys' Club of New York to postpone the sale of the historic Harriman Clubhouse in the East Village until it consults with the community in good faith.

For 117 years, the Boys' Club of New York has operated the Harriman Clubhouse on East 10th and Avenue A, in an effort to give boys in the East Village and Lower East Side an

opportunity to “rise above their conditions of social and economic poverty.” Approximately one million boys and young men have benefitted from the Clubhouses’ programming throughout the years, including Joseph Lauder, co-founder of the Estee Lauder Companies.

The Club’s Board of Trustees has decided to place the Clubhouse up for sale with scant input from the community, claiming a years-long decline in attendance. However, minutes from the Trustees show that attendance at the Harriman Clubhouse has actually increased in recent years, particularly from boys and young men from lower- income families.

The Harriman Clubhouse, named after the family of New York’s 48th Governor, would become the latest casualty in the battle against gentrification in the East Village. A historic church a block from the Clubhouse sold for \$41 million dollars in 2012, with neighboring condominiums priced upwards of \$4 million. There is widespread concern that the Harriman Clubhouse would meet a similar fate if it is put up for sale.

**Senator Brad Hoylman said:** “More than a quarter of Lower East Side residents live below the federal poverty level. Clearly, families in the East Village and Lower East Side still need the services and programs offered at the Harriman Clubhouse. I urge the Boys’ Club of New York to identify the needs of boys and young men in our community and meet with us to try to find a solution to save this precious neighborhood resource.”

**Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney said:** “The Harriman Clubhouse plays a critical role in educating and mentoring young men. I have been to the Clubhouse and I’ve seen firsthand how wonderful the programming is. It is essential that we allow its programs to continue, and we must listen to the needs and desires of the community. I thank Senator Hoylman and my colleagues for their efforts to save the Harriman Clubhouse and advocate for its members.”

**New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer said:** “The Harriman Clubhouse is a historic institution. For 177 years, this Club has been a major support system for Lower East Side families. We need more of these local institutions that lift their communities up – not luxury condos for the few. The community should be involved in every step of this process, as we work on a solution that saves the Boys Club.”

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer said: “The Boys Club provides crucial services for many children, including many from low-income families, and the Harriman Clubhouse provides a crucial nonprofit and cultural anchor,” said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer. “Properties owned by nonprofits are more than assets on a ledger, and nonprofits should engage with communities before putting them up for sale and potential conversion to purely private uses. The community deserves an opportunity to engage meaningfully with the Boys Club before any sale, both to understand the effects on programs that so many children and families rely on, and to explore alternatives – like the clubhouse’s sale to one or more other nonprofits – that might benefit everyone.”

Councilwoman Carlina Rivera said: “As a lifelong resident of the Lower East Side, I consider the Harriman Clubhouse a neighborhood treasure. For over a century this Boys Club has provided a safe place where boys can learn and grow. I am joining my colleagues in calling for a postponement of the sale of this building while we seek partnerships and resources for this facility. Our ask is simple – work with the community to keep the building a place that generations of Lower East Siders can continue to call a second home.”

Assemblymember Harvey Epstein said: “The Lower East Side Boys’ Club is an invaluable institution that provides a family to so many members of our community. We must do everything within our power to make sure that the clubhouse building can continue to be a resource for youth in our community. We cannot allow our community assets to be sold to the highest bidder and turned into market rate housing that gentrifies our neighborhood.”

Alyssa Lewis Coleman, Chair of Community Board 3 said: "Families in community board 3 are being displaced in their homes and also in needed services. Our sons and brothers and cousins all depended on the Boys Club. When the Boys Club on Pitt Street closed, we were told we still had the Harriman facility.

Thirty six percent of children in our community district live in poverty. We see an increasing gap among higher income residents and lower income residents who have always called the Lower East Side home. Community Board 3 has the second highest gap in incomes of all community districts in the city. We cannot lose the Boys Club and abandon the boys in our community who need this program."