



COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
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Nilsa Orama
Chair

Angel D. Mescaín
District Manager

September 28, 2020

Cicely Harris
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 10
215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10027

Dear Chairperson Harris,

Community Board 11 supports your Parks and Recreation committee in the call for an installation of a permanent exhibit to commemorate the Exonerated Five to be located in Central Park.

The Exonerated Five, formerly known as The Central Park Five, are five black and Latino teenagers from Harlem who were wrongfully convicted and prosecuted for the brutal and vicious raping of a white woman in Central Park in 1989. The five teenagers; Antron McCray (15), Kevin Richardson (15), Raymond Santana (14), Korey Wise (16), and Yusef Salaam (15) were subjected to life devastating consequences as a result of this miscarriage of justice. The minors were detained for hours before their parents were called. They were coerced into making confessions to the rape and beating of the female jogger Trisha Meili, after many hours of aggressive interrogation at the hands of seasoned homicide detectives. The youth later recanted, pleaded not guilty and insisted on their innocence. The youth were tried as adults under New York laws of the day and convicted, despite inconsistent and inaccurate confessions, DNA evidence that excluded them, and no eyewitness accounts that connected them to the victim. The five youth served their complete sentences; between 6 and 13 years, before another man, serial rapist Matias Reyes, admitted to the crime. DNA testing substantiated Reyes' confession. The experience not only impacted the lives of the youth and their families but had resounding ramifications throughout the Harlem community which are still being felt today.

The Community Board 10 Parks and Recreation Committee has been addressing a community-based advocacy, first voiced by the community on October 2nd, 2019, for the installation of an educational exhibit based on social justice and a commemoration to the resiliency of the Exonerated Five to be located in Central Park. Since then, their Executive committee authorized the formation of a Parks and Recreation subcommittee on March 25th, 2020 to facilitate the process to install an educational and permanent exhibit, based on social justice and commemorating the resiliency of the Exonerated Five.

Community Board 11 stands with Community Board 10 in the creation of this permanent exhibit and asks that Community Board 10 provide updates as to the progress of this effort and how the committee can be of support.

If you have any questions, please contact Carly Wine, our Assistant District Manager, at 212-831-8929 or cwine@cb11m.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nilsa Orama". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nilsa" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Orama".

Nilsa Orama
Chair

cc: Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President (via email)
Hon. Diana Ayala, New York City Council (via email)
Hon. Bill Perkins, New York City Council (via email)
Hon. Ben Kallos, New York City Council (via email)
Hon. Keith Powers, New York City Council (via email)
Hon. Ines Dickens, New York State Assembly (via email)
Hon. Jose Serrano, New York State Senate (via email)
Hon. Brian Benjamin New York State Senate (via email)
Hon. Robert Rodriguez, New York State Assembly (via email)
Commissioner Mitchell Silver, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (via email)
Steve Simon, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (via email)
Denilyn Arciaga, Community Board 11 (via email)
Jessica Elliott, Community Board 11 (via email)
Karren Horry, Community Board 10 (via email)
Lane Addonizio, Central Park Conservancy (via email)