

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YWCA of Queens Students Deliver Support Cards to Police Precinct 109

FLUSHING, New York (January 14th) – In the wake of the tragic murders of Officer Rafael Ramos and Officer Wenjian Liu, YWCA of Queens students in our high school equivalency (HSE) ¹ preparation program presented handmade condolence and support cards to Deputy Inspector Comforti and his team at local Flushing Precinct 109 on Wednesday, January 14th. The project was inspired by NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)—the city agency that funds YWCA’s HSE programs—who urged community leaders like the YWCA of Queens to express gratitude to the local law enforcement we count on each day to make our communities a safe place.

HSE students spent over a week crafting these unique 10 paged cards, gathering poems, special messages, and inspiring pictures that expressed both sympathy for the fallen officers and appreciation for our local Precinct’s daily service to our community. **Executive Director Helen Kim said, “As a community based organization, we rely on the support of our local officers to create a safe community where our students can thrive. All of us at the YWCA of Queens deeply appreciate the service each and every officer provides to the Flushing community each day.”**

Director of Education and Career Service Ken Ross “Like all New Yorkers, the YWCA of Queens family was shocked and saddened by the tragic loss of Officers Liu and Ramos. Our staff and students wanted to convey our solidarity with and condolences to the men and women who serve and protect our neighborhood. At the YWCA of Queens, we strive to support our students in achieving their academic and career goals and in being concerned, compassionate members of this community. We are very proud of the work of the NYPD, and of our students who eagerly worked on this project.”

Director of Development Stacy McKelvey commented, “At the YWCA, we strive to develop our students into leaders because the strength of any community depends on the commitment and care of its residents. I was impressed how many of our students volunteered to participate in this project and the thoughtfulness they put into every detail, including researching poems and song lyrics that expressed their sentiments of appreciation and support.”

YWCA students hand delivered cards to Deputy Inspector Comforti and his team, giving them the opportunity to express their support in person. **Deputy Inspector Comforti commented, “We appreciate you coming and taking the time to show us thanks. It is comforting when we are acknowledged for our time and hard work. We do get support from the community, however, it is rare that people actually come in off the streets to show their**

¹ HSE stands for “high school equivalency” and is the term that replaced GED in 2014. The YWCA of Queens offers free HSE programs to the community for anyone over the age of 17 that prepare students for the exam.

support.” When asked by project leader and student Katerina Perakis how he felt about the loss of his fellow officers, Deputy Inspector Comforti responded, **“It’s upsetting when there is an innocent death, especially around the holidays. It’s a harsh and unfair reality we have to face. It’s part of our job and our daily life.”**

Student and project leader Katerina Perakis commented on the experience: **“I see a lot of negative feedback on the news about police officers. I think it’s important we take the time to recognize the positive contributions and sacrifices officers make every day.”**

YWCA students participating in this project expressed how rewarding it was to see how big an impact a small token of appreciation can have, and encourage the community to follow their lead in saying thank you.

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About YWCA of Queens

The YWCA of Queens, founded in 1978, is a multi-tiered community organization with a wide range of education, career services, home health, and social services programs located at the center of one of the most diverse communities in the country. The YWCA of Queens’ mission is to eliminate racism and empower women through education and advocacy. Visit www.ywcaqueens.org for more information.

for every woman

