

SPEAK UP NYC! Youth Violence Prevention Campaign Honors Bronx Student With Times Square Billboard

July 12, 2011: This morning, New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn joined with the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Jeanne Mullgrav and The Center to Prevent Youth Violence (CPYV) at MTV studios in Times Square to unveil a new digital billboard, designed by Bronx teen Nina Rivera to promote SPEAK UP NYC, a citywide youth violence prevention program funded by the City Council.

“CPYV has been instrumental in ensuring young people have a safe and confidential way to talk about threats to their public safety,” Speaker Christine C. Quinn said. “This billboard will advance those critical goals and represents a creative and innovative mechanism to communicate to the youth of our City that they can and should speak up against threats of violence in their schools and communities.”

SPEAK UP NYC is part of a nationwide initiative developed by the Center to Prevent Youth Violence (formerly PAX), empowering young people to prevent violence by reporting threats. The program features a national hotline and a public awareness and education campaign. In New York City, young people can anonymously report threats of violence 24 hours a day by calling 1-866-SPEAK-UP or by texting the keyword “NYC” to 847411.

Daniel Gross, CPYV Co-Founder and Executive Director, said, “SPEAK UP engages and inspires young people to take a stand against violence in their communities. Today’s event highlights just one of the strategies we use to educate and inspire youth. I wish to thank Speaker Christine C. Quinn, the City Council, DYCD, MTV and all our partners for their continuing support in advancing neighborhood safety for our future leaders.”

Today’s celebration marked the culmination of a series of workshops conducted by CPYV at DYCD-funded Cornerstone Community Centers about SPEAK UP NYC’s life saving message and hotline. Ms. Rivera, 18, participated in the program at BronxWorks Betances Community Center, where she serves as Youth Council Secretary.

DYCD Commissioner Jeanne Mullgrav saluted Ms. Rivera for her artistic contribution to the skyline of the City and said, “We are proud of her accomplishment and the achievements of all our youth who participated in SPEAK UP NYC.”

Ms. Rivera acknowledged Speaker Quinn, CPYV, DYCD and friends and family who were in attendance. “SPEAK UP has an important message to send out to young people in New York City—that we can take a stand against violence and help keep our friends and families safe,” Ms. Rivera said. “Young people are strong and we can make an impact.”

The climax of the event was the appearance of Ms. Rivera’s SPEAK UP design on MTV’s giant digital billboard in Times Square. Her design will appear every 30 minutes during the week of July 11th-17th.

Other event attendees included City Councilmember Elizabeth Crowley, who is Chair of the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services, and Jackie Rowe Adams, Co-Founder of Harlem Mothers SAVE.

ABOUT THE CENTER TO PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE

Founded in 1998, The Center to Prevent Youth Violence (CPYV) is an innovative and uniquely effective organization working to end the crisis of youth violence in America. CPYV develops focused and empowering public health and safety campaigns that promote the simple steps parents, kids and others can take to prevent violence affecting youth in their schools and communities.