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Dromm Brings Anti-Bullying Program to IS 61

*In Response to Bullying, Dromm Finds a
Creative Solution to Address the Issue*

Corona, NY, March 10, 2011 -- NYC Council Member Daniel Dromm has partnered with Principal Joseph Lisa and his staff and PTA, Queens Congregations United for Action (QCUA), the NYPD, and the business community to form a historic School-Community Task Force to address bullying at I.S. 61 in Corona, Queens.

The first program carried out by this task force was a 6-week anti-bullying drama program implemented by ENACT and funded by the Council Member. On Wednesday, he and members of the task force visited one of ENACT's workshops where professional artists worked in classrooms using theater to teach social emotional skills. The workshop was followed by a performance in the school's auditorium.

Students participated in an interactive play entitled "2:45", which explored themes of peer pressure, bullying, and responsible decision making. The performance offered a very realistic and entertaining look at the pressures of Junior High and provided a starting point for discussion about the role of personal choice and responsibility in conflicts.

Before the performance, Dromm, himself a former NYC public schools teacher, spoke about the importance of teaching tolerance and providing the resources necessary to combat bullying in schools.

"I have seen first-hand how students and communities have been negatively affected by bullying," said Dromm. "We all share a responsibility to ensure a safe learning environment that is necessary for our youth to succeed and I firmly believe in teaching children at an early age to be tolerant of our differences. I commend Principal Joseph Lisa for his leadership on this issue and for involving the community on a matter that requires broad support in order to fully confront the problem."

"At IS 61, we pride ourselves on being an open, inclusive environment where parents, teachers and students are heard and respected," said Principal Joseph Lisa. "Bullying is a problem that impacts both our school and community and we are so pleased to be able to bring the two together to address this problem here. This wouldn't have been possible without our QCUA Parents In Action committee and the generous funding by Council Member Dromm, which enabled us to bring the ENACT program you see today to our school. We thank him for supporting all our anti-bullying efforts."

"ENACT has had the honor to respond to a community need to end bullying and discrimination at IS 61," said Johanna Creswell, Director of Long Term Programs at ENACT. "The students and staff at IS 61 have been able to build invaluable bullying prevention skills through a six-week ENACT program including, speaking up against bullying, using assertive communication,

and building responsible decision making skills. IS 61 is a model school that has really shown what a collaboration between community members, community based organizations and government officials can do around promoting a safe and respectful school environment. Specifically, Council Member Dromm has been instrumental in identifying this community need and bringing the necessary services, such as ENACT, into our schools to promote a safe and respectful community in Queens."

Queens Congregations United for Action (QCUA) was also instrumental in involving parents and bringing this program to IS 61.

"I want to thank Principal Joseph Lisa and his team and Council Member Dromm for doing an excellent job in this effort to eliminate bullying from the school," said Federica Martines, member of the QCUA Parents in Action committee at IS 61. "I ask Council Member Dromm to continue supporting us during the school year and for him to tell City Council speaker Christine Quinn about this historic effort so that IS 61 can serve as a model for other schools."

"After working with the ENACT Program, I was able to see a real difference in the way my students were able to articulate their feelings," said Christina Maiorana, Guidance Counselor at IS 61. The Program has given them the tools they need in order to make better choices. One student in particular was a bully in the 6th grade and then bullied other students later on. This student was able to implement and act out appropriate behavior in such a wonderful way during one of ENACT program's acting scenarios. I was so proud of her and I am confident that she will be able to implement these new skills in the real world."

The school will continue to provide anti-bullying programming and resources to students and parents throughout the school year.

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