



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF DANIEL DROMM

37-32 75TH STREET
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY 11372
(718) 803-6373

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Contact: Alex Florez (646) 831-9835 aflorez@council.nyc.gov

**Council Member Dromm and LGBT Activists Gather
for a Candlelight Vigil to Mark the
20th Anniversary of Julio Rivera's Anti-Gay Murder**

Jackson Heights, NY, July 2, 2010 -- On Friday, New York City Council Member Daniel Dromm, LGBT activists, and the Julio Rivera family gathered for a candlelight vigil to mark the 20th Anniversary of Julio Rivera's anti-gay murder. In 1990, Rivera was beaten to death in the playground of a Jackson Heights elementary school by three men simply because he was gay. The night he was killed, Rivera had been returning from a friend's house in Rego Park to his apartment in Jackson Heights.

The story soon became national news and City Council Member Daniel Dromm, then a public school teacher, helped organize the Jackson Heights community's response to the murder and galvanize the LGBT community into action.

"The tragic murder of Julio Rivera 20 years ago sparked an outrage and a determination in our community to speak up and send a powerful message against anti-LGBT hate and bias crimes," said City Council Member Daniel Dromm (D-Jackson Heights). "Today, we must continue to educate our population in order to truly fight the two sources of discrimination: fear and ignorance."

"I'm grateful for the continued attention Council Member Daniel Dromm and the LGBT community continues to give to hate crimes," said Jennifer Rivera, Julio Rivera's niece. "Marking the 20th Anniversary of my uncle's murder is very important to us, especially so we can continue to raise awareness on this issue, send the message that acts like these are not tolerated and ensure that this never happens to another family."

Deeply committed to civil rights and social justice, Dromm established himself in the 1990s as a fighter against prejudice, discrimination and violence. He founded the Queens Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee and later organized the first Queens LGBT Pride Parade and Festival in 1993. He has played a critical leadership role in the borough's LGBT community ever since.

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