

June 20, 2003

Hon. Bernadette Castro  
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation  
Agency Building #1, Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12238

**Re: West 59<sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Center Rehabilitation**

Dear Commissioner Castro:

We are writing in support of the application by City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation for a grant under the Environmental Protection Act of 1993 for the expansion of Manhattan's West 59<sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Center. This project is a high priority for the Parks Department and for Manhattan Community Board No. 4, as well as for our neighbors at Manhattan Community Board No. 7. At a time of fiscal difficulty and shrinking capital budgets in New York City, it is very important that this essential and historic community center not be forgotten.

In recent years, our neighborhoods of Clinton and the Upper West Side have seen tremendous growth in both residential and commercial development, thereby increasing the demand on existing recreational facilities within the area. Since 1999, the community, in cooperation with local elected officials and the Parks Department, has been exploring options to expand and renovate the existing West 59<sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Center, which serves nearly 70,000 users annually. The first phase of our redevelopment plan is the expansion of the building to include a new fitness center, the installation of a handicapped-accessible elevator and bathrooms, renovation of the building interior, and conversion of the derelict outdoor pool into a new playing field. This facility will benefit a community of nearly 100,000 residents, several public schools, a low-income housing population, and a growing senior population.

We hope you agree that an investment in this facility would be a great service to the population here. We would greatly appreciate your support for this grant application.

Sincerely,



Simone Sindin

Chair

Manhattan Community Board No. 4