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Richard A. Brown

District Attorney

March 25, 2019

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Dr. Selena Rodgers
City University of New York (York College)
90-24 Guy R. Brewer Boulevard
Jamaica, New York 11451

Dear Dr. Rodgers,

Thank you for accepting the invitation from our **Star Track** partners at the **Queens Legal Aid Society** for you and your students to visit one of our Star Track schools in Far Rockaway. Without a doubt, the students in the program can benefit from the message that you bring to them. The young people that you bring with you from York College will also be able to share their experiences and reinforce the non-violence message that we have discussed during this school year.

We would be happy to receive you on **Friday, May 17, 2019** at the Academy of Medical Technology High School located in Far Rockaway, Queens at 8-21 Bay 25th Street. The class begins at 11:31am and ends at 12:16pm. We would be happy to provide transportation for you and the students, if there is a need. I have taken the liberty to include some information about the program in the body of this letter.

In 1993, a pilot anti-violence program called **STAR TRACK**, jointly developed by Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown, the United Federation of Teachers, the Division of School Safety, and the New York City Department of Education, was initiated in five schools in Far Rockaway. Today, the program is active in nine (9) Rockaway schools: Queens High School for Information and Technology (QIRT), Academy of Medical Technology Middle School, Village Academy, Middle Schools 53 and Public Schools 333, 197, 106, 104, and 43.

STAR TRACK began following a series of discussions brought about by concerns regarding the significant numbers of gun-related and other violent incidents in Far Rockaway. Many school children expressed a fear to go to and from school. What came out of those discussions was an idea for a project aimed at reducing the number of such incidents by coordinating and integrating the efforts of school officials and local law enforcement into a unified, comprehensive plan.

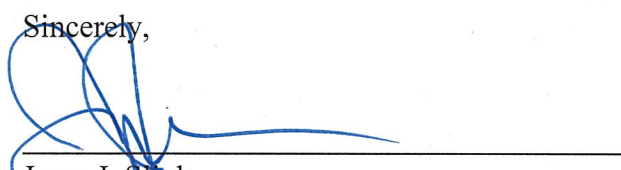
Originally our classroom teams consisted of assistant district attorneys, and members of the New York City's Law Department Office of the Corporation Counsel who reported twice a month to their assigned school to teach students from fifth through twelfth grades about the risks of drugs, gangs and guns. In past years we have been joined by teams of lawyers from the Queens Legal Aid Society. They have actively helped us to get the important message out to our students.

Each year, in the spring, students participate in **“SAY NO TO VIOLENCE WEEK.”** This special week is designed to help every child realize the dangers of gun violence and drugs. It is a week-long event that provides our students with the opportunity to meet and listen to a variety of guest speakers ranging from ex-gang members who have turned their lives around, to judges, elected officials, past and present sport figures, as well as television personalities. In addition, each school conducts special activities, which includes assemblies, and a poster and essay contest. The contest winners are selected by school officials, and the Queens District Attorney's Office provides each winner with a certificate signed by District Attorney Brown and a gift card.

Finally, **“SAY YES TO TENNIS AND NO TO VIOLENCE DAY”** marks the end of the school year and is a celebration for all students who participate in the Star Track Program. On this day, approximately 750 students attend the National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows Park. The United States Tennis Association and the New York Junior Tennis League professionals provide students with hands on experience on the court. This annual fun-filled event shows students that sports can be a positive alternative to violence and also reinforces the ideas of cooperation, team work and good sportsmanship.

Again, we thank you for your participation in the program. Please feel free to reach out to me at 718-286-6400 or by email at jjsligh@queensda.org.

Sincerely,



Jesse J. Sligh
Executive Assistant District Attorney
for Special Prosecutions

JJS/cmb

cc: Joel L. Andre Watson, Esq.