



EDWARD GIBBS
Assemblyman 68th District

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May 15, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the Joint Emergency Community Warehouse (the “Warehouse”), an innovative solution to decades of disinvestment in the East Harlem community that included the neglect of residents who local, county or state emergency planning failed to provide the critical PPE and cleaning supplies during the 3 years of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Rhonda Roland Shearer’s Cut Red Tape 4 Heroes.org (a project of Art Science Research Laboratory, a 501c3) , brought 25 million items of free vital supplies to First Responders and Community-Based Organizations in the five boroughs from March 2020 through today. Her goal now is to have free health and safety supplies readily available to local residents and first responders 365 days a year and at the same time, be fully ready as an already existing and community accessible stockpile for when another emergency occurs.

This readily available, free supply of health, safety and cleaning supplies, PPE, diapers and other household items will be a living stockpile, carefully curated to address the needs of our community members, managed so no product exceeds its expiration date run by volunteers from the NYPD Hispanic Society and the FDNY Vulcans among other affinity groups.

Ms. Shearer has proven this concept works. In a 2021 pilot of the Warehouse concept 5.8 million items were distributed over a 60-day period to more than 100 Community-Based Organizations, FDNY, NYPD first responders and health care workers. Powered by Ms. Roland Shearer’s organizational system design and with support from her vast network of volunteers and in-kind donors, the team was able to accept donations from large corporations worth millions of dollars which would typically not be made available to New Yorkers, due to limited available warehouse space and the lack of a pre-planned distribution system.

As we witnessed during the Pandemic, underserved communities in NYC are more prone to experience price gouging and shortages during emergencies. The Warehouse concept solves for inequities that exist today for the most overburdened New Yorkers, because it eliminates financial barriers and transportation requirements, since all products will be free of charge and available in our own backyard, “El Barrio”.



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As the NY State Representative of the 68th Assembly District, in which the Joint Community Warehouse will operate, I believe the opportunity of having this unmatched resource within this Assembly district will provide much needed relief to not only our families, but to those who

work as First Responders serving our community. City and state resources unfortunately do not always move with the speed and flexibility to address our greatest needs and so we rely on community partners to help fill the void.

As a lifelong resident of East Harlem, "El Barrio", I grew up with limited financial resources and prospects for the future, as was the unfortunate norm for many in my community. Disparities in education, employment, housing and healthcare options have long plagued our district and so, the time for leveling the playing field is now.

I wholeheartedly support the Joint Community Warehouse and am proud for East Harlem to be a key, chosen location to house the first permanent Joint Community Warehouse in New York City.

By working with non-profit leaders like Rhonda Roland Shearer that have demonstrated commitment, innovation and vision, we are making progress towards building a stronger East Harlem. Please feel free to reach out to my office at 212-828-3953 if further information or assistance is needed.

Sincerely,

Assembly Member Ed Gibbs