

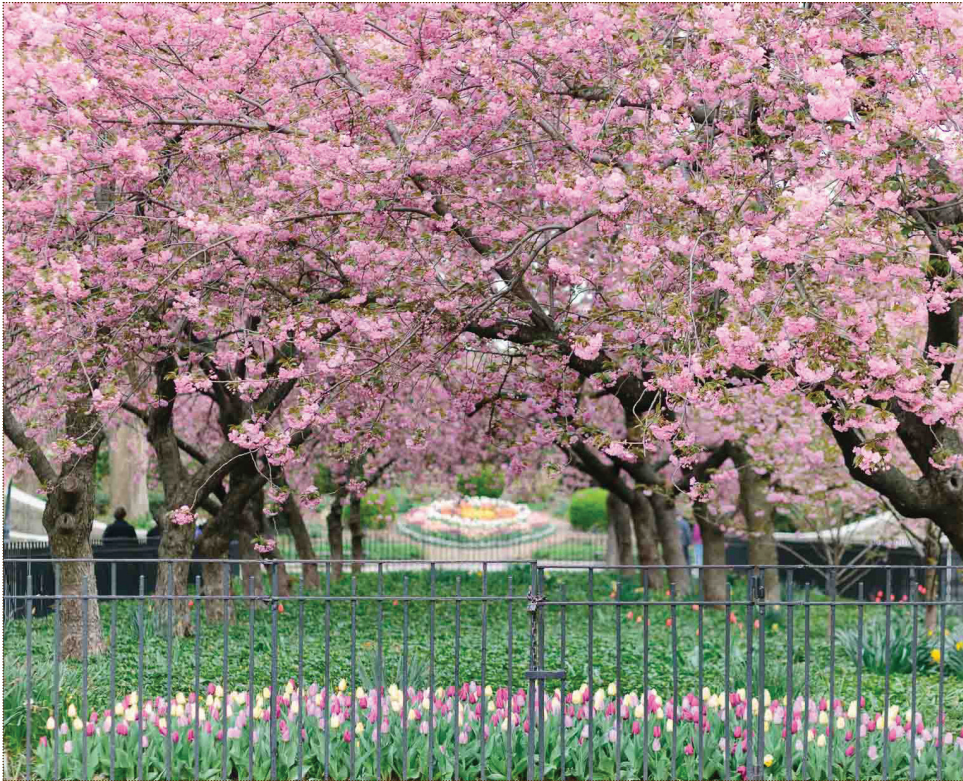


SAY GOODBYE TO HIDDEN HOTEL FEES, Page 3

SUMMER AT THE DAVIS CENTER, Page 8

EXPLORE UPPER EAST SIDE GREEN SPACES, Page 9

» CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF CIVITAS



Cherry blossoms bloom in Carl Schurz Park

Roseanne Morrison, CIVITAS Board Member

WE ARE PLEASED TO announce that the 45th anniversary of CIVITAS will be celebrated on May 12, 2026 at 6:00 P.M. The event will once again be held at the **Dominican Academy**, 44 East 68th Street, a high school for young women located on the Upper East Side. To purchase tickets visit www.CIVITASnyc.org.

This year, we are proud to honor long-time board member Jeanne McAnaney, as well as our esteemed honoree, Andrew A. Davis, President of Davis Selected Advisors and renowned philanthropist.

We are excited to welcome our guests upon arrival with a performance by students from Opus 118 Harlem School of Music, an East Harlem based organization providing musical study and experience to neighborhoods as well as nationally. Opus 118 has collaborated with premiere world musicians through Fiddlefests, with acclaimed musicians such as Joshua Bell, Yo-Yo Ma, Wynton Marsalis, Bobby McFerrin, and Mark O'Connor joining the students in performance. This school believes that every child deserves access to quality music education.

CIVITAS JOINS LENOX HILL ARTICLE 78 LEGAL CHALLENGE

James T. B. Tripp, CIVITAS Board

CIVITAS HAS JOINED an Article 78 lawsuit that the Committee to Protect the Lenox Hill Neighborhood has initiated contesting the approval by the Department of City Planning and the City Council through the ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) process of the zoning variances that Northwell has sought regarding its proposed massive expansion of the Lenox Hill Hospital.

The existing hospital structure occupies the block bounded by Lexington and Park Avenues and 76th and 77th Streets. The zoning variances allow for a two-thirds increase in the allowable FAR and would result in a 400-foot tall bulky mass occupying half the block that would loom over the Park Avenue historic district and Lexington Avenue, the narrowest avenue in Manhattan. It is clearly designed to appeal to a wealthy international client and obliterates any intention to serve a health equity goal. A principal argument is that this approval constitutes spot zoning. "If this isn't spot zoning, it is hard to imagine what would be," commented Williams Brothers, co-chair of CIVITAS' Land Use and Zoning Committee.





CIVITAS

WORKING FOR QUALITY
IN URBAN LIFE

(212) 996-0745
info@CIVITASnyc.org
www.CIVITASnyc.org

www.facebook.com/CIVITASCitizens
www.twitter.com/CIVITASnyc

FOUNDER

August Heckscher
1914-1997

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sharon Pope-Marshall

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Chair

Genie Rice

President

Mark S. Alexander

Executive Vice President

Joanna Delson

Vice President

James T. B. Tripp

Co-Treasurers

Conrad Foa, Evgenia Belyavskaya

Secretary

Natasha S. Brown

Nicholas Alexander

Richard Harris

William Bateson

Jeanne G. McAnaney

Lucienne S. Bloch

Kevin McLaughlin

Margit S. Bluestein

Roseanne Morrison

Jeffrey N. Bluestein

Fran Pomerantz

William Q. Brothers

T. Gorman Reilly

Sari Chang

Diana Rice

Charles Devigne

Kevin Simek

M. Sava Thomas

ADVISORY BOARD

Chair, Genie Rice

Hunter Armstrong

Robin S. Rivera

David Beer

Geoffrey Roesch

William Bernhard

Cynthia Sculco

Richard Eaddy

Charles Warren

Elise Frick

John S. Winkleman

Jamie Gibbs

Frederic G. Withington

Roberta Hodgson

Anthony C. Wood

Stephen S. Lash

Joanne Woodward

CIVITAS Citizens Incorporated is a not-for-profit organization focused on the quality of life within the Upper East Side, in East Harlem and neighborhoods along the East River. Since 1981 CIVITAS has worked to improve the urban environment, advocating for appropriate land use/zoning, transportation, landmarks, the environment, and waterfront access.

From The PRESIDENT



CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF ADVOCACY ON THE UPPER EAST SIDE AND EAST HARLEM

DEAR FRIENDS,

This year, CIVITAS proudly marks 45 years of service to the Upper East Side and East Harlem—championing thoughtful planning, environmental stewardship, and civic engagement. As our community continues to evolve, we remain dedicated to ensuring that growth enhances the quality of life for all.

» Lenox Hill Hospital Expansion

Northwell Health's proposed Lenox Hill Hospital redevelopment; approved by the City Council, was scaled down but remains controversial. Residents have filed a lawsuit citing environmental and neighborhood concerns. CIVITAS continues to push for a plan that modernizes the hospital while minimizing disruption and preserving neighborhood character.

» Second Avenue Subway

Phase 2 of the Second Avenue Subway—extending service to 125th Street—is now underway, with contracts issued for tunneling and station work. The project promises

long-term benefits for East Harlem, and CIVITAS is engaged to ensure that construction impacts are managed responsibly.

» The Davis Center at Central Park

The newly opened Davis Center at the Harlem Meer has transformed the park's northern end, replacing Lasker Rink and Pool with a year-round recreation and community hub. CIVITAS applauds this investment in equity, access, and green space.

As we look ahead, CIVITAS will continue to advocate for balanced development, vibrant parks, and a livable city—values that have guided our work for 45 years and will continue to do so for decades to come.

Mark Alexander, President

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

CIVITAS CELEBRATES 45 YEARS

Annual Benefit Features Opus 118 » PAGE 1

NO MORE HIDDEN HOTEL FEES

» PAGE 3

MAMDANI TO CUT COSTS

Aims To Help Small Businesses » PAGE 4

JUDGE CLEARS SALE:

Summit Properties Allowed to Sell » PAGE 5

CIVITAS 2026 HONOREE:

A Tribute to Jeanne McAnaney » PAGE 6-7

CIVITAS MILESTONES & PUBLICATIONS:

45 Years of Accomplishments » PAGE 6-7

GREEN SPACES:

Davis Center & East Side Parks » PAGE 8-9

GETTING AROUND:

Update on Second Ave Subway » PAGE 10

OPUS 118 HARLEM SCHOOL OF MUSIC:

Stalwart Fixture in East Harlem » PAGE 11



East Harlem Esplanade: East 113th Street

THE EAST HARLEM ESPLANADE

FOR 45 YEARS, CIVITAS has championed context-sensitive urban planning and waterfront policies to enhance the quality of life across the Upper East Side and El Barrio/East Harlem. This commitment to visionary design was perhaps most visible in 2011, when we hosted our global competition, Reimagining the East River Waterfront. The winning proposal, a bold system of canals, was designed by Syracuse University student Joseph Wood. Our competition did more than just spark the imagination—it inspired a City to invest in waterfront upgrades, resiliency projects, greenway connectivity, and park rehabilitation.

However, these investments are about more than just aesthetics. At its core, urban planning is a vital form of public health policy. When we advocate for equitable land use, we are addressing the social determinants of health, directly linking the physical environment to community well-being. A walk along the water is not merely a stroll; it is a necessity that lowers heart rates, clears lungs, and fortifies mental health.

This connection between environment and health is nowhere more urgent than along the East Harlem waterfront. Specifically, the stretch between East 107th and East 114th Streets has been left behind, currently lacking any funding for vital upgrades or sustainability improvements. For too long, access to this section of the esplanade has been treated as an afterthought, despite the clear need for green space and safe recreation in the neighborhood.

To bridge this gap, CIVITAS has partnered with WE ACT for Environmental Justice, the New York League of Conservation Voters, the Waterfront Alliance, Community Board 11, and local elected officials to bring overdue attention to this section of the coast. By securing a vibrant, accessible esplanade, we are creating the environment every New Yorker needs to thrive.

I look forward to continuing this conversation with you and hope you will join us in advocating for this essential piece of our city's infrastructure.

sharon@civitasnyc.org



» NO MORE HIDDEN HOTEL FEES IN NYC!

NEW YORK CITY is saying goodbye to sneaky hotel “junk” fees. A new rule from the Mamdani administration will make sure the price you see is the price you pay—no surprises at checkout.

Here's what it means for travelers:

- » **Upfront Pricing:** Hotels must include all mandatory fees—like resort, destination, or service charges—in the advertised price.
- » **Applies Everywhere:** The rule covers all hotels in NYC and even those advertised to NYC residents, no matter where they're located.
- » **Clear Details:** You'll know about any required credit card holds or deposits before you book.
- » **More Transparency:** No more “bait-and-switch” pricing—just honest, upfront costs.

Whether you're planning a staycation or visiting from out of town, this new rule helps make booking a hotel in New York City fairer and more straightforward.





MAMDANI MOVES TO CUT COSTS FOR NYC SMALL BUSINESSES

» *New executive order slashes fees and fines to ease pressure on local entrepreneurs*

Greg McCarthy



IN A MAJOR MOVE to support New York City's small business community, Mayor Zohran Mamdani recently signed Executive Order 11, directing city agencies to review, reduce, and simplify the thousands of fees and fines that local entrepreneurs face. The order fulfills a central campaign promise aimed at easing the regulatory burdens on small business owners. Including those operating food carts and other neighborhood staples.

The executive order requires all city agencies to inventory and analyze existing fees and penalties, identifying which can be reduced or eliminated. With over 6,000 regulations currently affecting small businesses, the initiative's goal is to streamline the system and make compliance easier and more affordable.

Under the new directive, agencies have 45 days to identify potential reductions, 90 days to propose rule changes, and up to a year to recommend amnesty programs or

legislative reforms. A special focus will be placed on the high costs of permits, licenses, and inspections. These areas have long been cited as obstacles for small and immigrant-run businesses.

Mayor Mamdani, who built his campaign around helping local entrepreneurs, described the order as "a shift from treating small businesses like ATMs to treating them like partners." The administration hopes the streamlined process will boost economic growth, encourage entrepreneurship, and strengthen neighborhood economies across the five boroughs.

City agencies will now begin implementing the order, with initial findings and proposals expected in late spring. CIVITAS believes that our local merchants and small businesses are integral parts of our community, support the local economy and provide goods and services for residents and workers. ●

» JUDGE CLEARS SALE OF 5,100 NYC APARTMENTS AMID CONTROVERSY

Kevin Simek, CIVITAS Board Member



IN A DECISION THAT HIGHLIGHTS the tensions between tenant protections and market driven solutions, a federal bankruptcy judge approved the \$451 million sale of 5,100, mostly rent-stabilized apartments, to Summit Properties. U.S. Bankruptcy Judge David S. Jones of the Southern District of New York issued the ruling, finalizing the transfer of a 93-building portfolio from bankruptcy court. The approval came despite objections from City officials and tenant advocacy groups, who sought to delay the transaction or impose stricter, legally binding commitments for repairs.

The portfolio, spanning buildings in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and the Bronx, has long been plagued by tenant complaints of neglect. Court records show more than 6,500 open housing code violations across the properties. Pinnacle Group filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection after defaulting on over \$560 million in debt, much of it owed to Flagstar Bank. Summit Properties emerged as the winning bidder following a court supervised auction. Summit Properties testified that the firm would address serious violations within two months of closing and resolve



remaining issues within six months, backed by millions in committed capital. City officials argued that Summit had failed to demonstrate the properties could support the proposed sale price, maintenance needs and costs, given the regulated rents. The bankruptcy would need to secure enforceable repair timelines and prevent further deterioration of affordable housing stock. City officials also emphasized that rent-stabilized units remain a cornerstone of affordability for low and middle income New Yorkers amid soaring market rents.

Private sector participants and industry observers argue that government intervention risks deterring investment in distressed assets. Adding layers of public mandates could prolong proceedings, inflate costs, and discourage buyers will-

ing to inject capital for renovations. The cost dynamics of renovations further fuel the debate. Private landlords renovating rent-stabilized units face strict limits, often around \$30,000 per unit. Major capital improvements can justify only modest rent increases, with caps on costs for certain recoverable work. Realistically, full gut renovations in older buildings can range from \$100,000 to over \$200,000 per unit, depending on size and condition, with expenses constrained by regulated rental income. By comparison, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), which manages public housing, estimates their average full renovation costs at around \$485,000 per unit. Summit has pledged significant investments, but advocates remain watchful, vowing continued pressure for accountability. ●

CIVITAS 2026 BENEFIT HONOREE JEANNE MCANANEY

Genie Rice, CIVITAS Board

IN 1982, AT THE INAUGURAL CIVITAS BENEFIT, August

Heckscher persuaded the multi-talented Larry Rivers—American painter, musician, and filmmaker—to play his saxophone at the Church of the Heavenly Rest. Jeanne’s daughters, Katie and Margot, joined other board directors in “dragooning” local children to pass homemade hors d’oeuvres while a vocalist sang at the altar alongside Larry and his band.

Future benefits, hosted by Stephen Lash and his assistant Barbara McLaughlin, moved to Christie’s on Park Avenue. For these, Jeanne—assisted by Janis Eltz and Judy Fresco and co-directed by Jamie Gibbs—organized a massive logistical effort. Members provided homemade food and store donations, which were col-

lected by three cars driven by Gorman Reilly, Janis Eltz, and me. Jeanne deployed us with maps for our assigned pickups. She personally soaked and cooked a Virginia Smithfield ham donated by Bill Brothers, along with several turkey breasts donated by Natalie Cox. One year, while my sister was driving, I asked Jeanne’s doorman, “Please bring me Mrs. McAnaney’s breasts!” You can imagine the reaction.

At the benefits, volunteers wore aprons designed by Jenny Clark (originally for the 96th Street and Lexington Avenue subway scrub-up) as they prepared and served deviled eggs, salmon, avocado mousse, Glaser’s cookies, and Orwasher’s bread. At the board meeting the following morning, Bill Brothers—who always arrived on his bike—was handed a container of pea soup by Jeanne. Since his requested ham bones had accidentally been tossed in the trash

the night before, Jeanne had fished them out to make the broth. Beyond logistics, Jeanne was a powerhouse fundraiser, famous for persuading local businesses to buy ads in the Benefit Journal. She was consistently the organization’s #1 seller.

When CIVITAS discovered that the infamous building at 108 East 96th Street exceeded height zoning, Jeanne leaned out of her window to take the photos that proved it was twelve stories too high. Years later, when Jeanne’s daughter Ashling was a law student, she spotted a picture of that offending building in a land-use textbook and sent it to Jeanne and Genie.

As a dedicated, hands-on board member, Jeanne recently attended community meetings regarding Northwell’s development plans for Lenox Hill Hospital. She followed up by delivering statements at Community Board meetings and writing newsletter articles. Given that Community Board meetings can be repetitive and “a fate





SUMMER AT THE DAVIS CENTER

Diana Devendorf Rice, CIVITAS Board Member



AFTER A COLDER THAN USUAL 2026 WINTER, NYC residents are looking forward to the warmer months. Fortunately, summer at Central Park promises to come alive at the Davis Center at the Harlem Meer, where a wide range of seasonal programs invite New Yorkers of all ages to connect with nature, recreation, and one another. The Davis Center will continue to be a vibrant hub for swimming, sports, education, and cultural engagement—in one of the park’s most scenic settings.

The Ice Skating Rink, a core feature of the Park’s winter activities, will transition back to an outdoor pool, providing free public swimming throughout the summer. The Gottesman Pool will offer dedicated lap swim times, family hours, and swim instruction programs. As we saw last year in 2025, the pool is a vital community resource—particularly during periods of extreme heat. Swim lessons and water safety programs help children and adults build confidence in the water while promoting health and wellness.

In addition to the pool, the Davis Center will be hosting a slate of other recreational options designed to keep participants active and engaged. Summer sports clinics, fitness classes, and open recreation sessions encourage movement and play in a welcoming, inclusive environment. These offerings support the Center’s mission to provide equitable

access to recreation in Central Park, especially for communities in northern Manhattan.

Educational and nature-based programs are another hallmark of the Davis Center’s summer season. Led by skilled educators and park staff, workshops and guided activities introduce children, families, and adults to the ecology of the Harlem Meer and the surrounding park landscape. Hands-on learning experiences—such as wildlife observation, environmental stewardship activities, and outdoor exploration—foster curiosity and a deeper appreciation for Central Park’s natural systems.

The Davis Center also serves as a gathering place for community-oriented cultural programming during the summer months. Performances, seasonal celebrations, and special events bring neighbors together and highlight the park as a shared civic space.

Importantly, many summer programs at the Davis Center are offered free or at low cost, ensuring broad accessibility and reinforcing the Central Park Conservancy’s commitment to public service.

As summer unfolds, the Davis Center stands as a powerful example of how thoughtful programming, beautiful public space, and community engagement come together—making Central Park not just a landmark, but a living, active resource for the city. 🌍

GREEN SPACES ON MANHATTAN'S EAST SIDE:

» *A Scenic Urban Journey*

Greg McCarthy



GREG MCCARTHY

WITH THE ENERGY OF SPRING 2026 surrounding us, the East Side of Manhattan from Midtown through the Upper East Side and into Harlem offers one of NYC's loveliest stretches of parks, waterfront promenades, and neighborhood greens. Whether you're looking for river views, playgrounds for kids, fitness paths, or quiet places to sit and reflect, this corridor has something special at every turn. Here are some prominent parks and open green spaces from 56th Street to 125th Street to visit this spring and summer.

THE EAST RIVER ESPLANADE is a continuous waterfront pathway stretching up the East River, the Esplanade (part of the larger Manhattan Waterfront Greenway) offers stunning views of the water, skyline, Roosevelt Island, and passing boats. It's ideal for walking, jogging, and cycling and connects many parks along the river edge. (54th Street to 125th Streets; due to its condition, some sections are closed).

» <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/east-river-esplanade>

A CHARMING, SMALLER WATERFRONT PARK just south of the Queensboro Bridge, Andrew Haswell Green Park is part of the East River Greenway. It offers seating areas,

scenic views of Roosevelt Island and Queens, and a peaceful place to stroll along the riverfront. (60th to 63rd Streets).
» <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/andrew-haswell-green-park>

A NEIGHBORHOOD GEM on the Upper East Side, Carl Schurz Park features shaded walking paths, gardens, a waterfront promenade, and Gracie Mansion, the official residence of NYC's mayor Zohran Mamdani. The park's dog runs are among the city's best, and the stroll along the river is especially lovely on warm days. (84th to 90th Street).

» <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/carl-schurz-park>

A FAVORED COMMUNITY PARK with sports courts, tennis, basketball, and a large outdoor pool (open in summer), John Jay Park is perfect for active families and locals alike. Its river views and spacious layout make it a great stop during a waterfront walk. (76th to 78th Streets)

» <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/johnjaypark>

ALONG THIS STRETCH you'll also find smaller playgrounds and pocket parks that add charm and community space to the streetscape, from local playgrounds near 70th and 80th Streets to garden-filled spaces tucked between apartment blocks. (See the NYC Parks website for a full map search.)

» <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks> 🌐



WESTWARD EXPANSION OF SECOND AVENUE SUBWAY

Kevin Simek, CIVITAS Board Member



A MOVE HAILED AS a game changer for transit in one of Manhattan's most under served neighborhoods, Governor Kathy Hochul has advanced plans to extend the Q line of the Second Avenue Subway westward along 125th Street, into West Harlem. The proposal, now gaining momentum with dedicated funding for design and engineering, shifts the subway project from its north-south focus to a vital crosstown link. The extension would add three new stations along 125th Street; Lenox Avenue, St. Nicholas Avenue and Broadway. This would create transfers to seven different subway lines, dramatically improving east-west mobility in Harlem, where riders currently depend on buses.

The plan represents a significant deviation from the original Second Avenue Subway vision, which called for

a continuous 8.5-mile-north-south corridor from 125th Street down to Lower Manhattan, with up to 16 stations along Second Avenue. Phase 1, which opened in 2017, extended the Q to 96th Street. Phase 2, now underway, will push the line north to 125th Street and Lexington Avenue, adding stations at 106th, 116th, and 125th streets. Rather than continuing south in future phases, the MTA will now prioritize tunneling westward from the Phase 2 endpoint at 125th Street and Lexington Avenue. Building directly off Phase 2 and keeping the tunnel boring machine active, without costly demobilization, will lead to substantial savings. Governor Hochul's administration has committed to funding preliminary engineering, with state budget approval required to move forward. 🌐

EAST SIDE NYC PARKING TIPS >>

RED: NO PARKING / NO STANDING DO NOT PARK. Obey red signs.

YELLOW: TIME-LIMITED / LOADING CHECK TIMES. Short stops only.

BLUE: HANDICAP PARKING ONLY PERMIT REQUIRED. Strictly enforced.

GREEN: METERED / PERMITTED OK PAY THE METER. Read posted rules.

ORANGE: STREET CLEANING ALERT MOVE YOUR CAR. Watch for sweepers.

QUICK TIPS TO AVOID TICKETS:

- ▶ READ ALL SIGNS CAREFULLY
- ▶ USE THE PARKNYC APP
- ▶ SET REMINDERS FOR ALT-SIDE
- ▶ CHECK FOR TEMP SIGNS
- ▶ IF UNSURE, DON'T PARK!



» OPUS 118 HARLEM SCHOOL OF MUSIC: QUALITY MUSIC EDUCATION IN EAST HARLEM



Roberta Guaspari works with a young violinist in the early days of Opus 118.



35 years later, Opus 118 Alum Amanda Negron teaches violin at Opus 118.

FOR 35 YEARS, Opus 118 Harlem School of Music has been a stalwart fixture in East Harlem.

In 1991, violin teacher Roberta Guaspari refused to let music disappear from East Harlem classrooms after her public school violin programs were cut due to budget constraints. With the support of parents, teachers, and volunteers, she founded Opus 118 Harlem School of Music to continue providing free, high-quality music instruction.

Roberta's commitment drew the attention of world-renowned violinist Arnold Steinhardt, who, inspired by Roberta's work, enlisted colleagues Itzhak Perlman and Isaac Stern to organize Fiddlefest, a benefit concert at Carnegie Hall that kept the program alive. Not only did Opus 118 survive, it flourished, laying the foundation for a story that was told in the documentary *Small Wonders* and the major motion picture *Music of the Heart*, where Roberta was played by Meryl Streep.

Housed in the CPEII Elementary School building on East 100th Street, Opus 118 continues to enrich the broader East Harlem community through concerts, outreach, and partnerships. Alumni rejoin the program as teachers and mentors, creating a cycle of giving back that strengthens both the program and the neighborhood.

"Be a nuisance when it counts. Do your part to inform and stimulate the public to join your action. Be depressed, discouraged, and disappointed at failure and the disheartening effects of ignorance, greed, corruption and bad politics—but never give up."

—Marjory Stoneman Douglas, environmentalist, journalist and activist

To learn more about CIVITAS, or to explore the online version of our newsletter, use this snaptag!



CIVITAS

WORKING FOR QUALITY
IN URBAN LIFE

1457 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10128

(212) 996-0745
info@CIVITASnyc.org
www.CIVITASnyc.org

You're Cordially Invited



CIVITAS ANNUAL BENEFIT

HONORING

ANDREW A. DAVIS
President of Davis Selected Advisers and Philanthropist

JEANNE McANANEY
CIVITAS Board Member

MAY 12, 2026 / 6:00 PM
DOMINICAN ACADEMY
44 EAST 68TH STREET • NEW YORK CITY

JOIN OUR BENEFIT HOST COMMITTEE!



CIVITAS Citizens
1457 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10128
info@CIVITASNYC.org

CIVITAS' 2026 ANNUAL BENEFIT

MAY 12, 2026

6:00PM

LOCATION:

Dominican Academy

44 East 68th Street

Between Park Avenue and Madison Avenue

New York City

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/CIVITAS2026>
to join our
Benefit Host Committee or purchase tickets!

