

2015-K498

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue upon the occasion of hosting its first Greek Jewish Festival on May 31, 2015

WHEREAS, The quality and character of life in New York State is greatly enriched by its religious institutions and the faithful and generous service of those who devote themselves to endeavors of family, faith, and community; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend institutions of such magnanimous conduct and bearing which demonstrate a deep and continuing concern for others, and in so doing, inspire others to do the same; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue upon the occasion of hosting its first Greek Jewish Festival on Sunday, May 31, 2015, in the Lower East Side of New York City; and

WHEREAS, Kehila Kedosha Janina was founded in 1906 by Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews from the city of Ioannina, Greece; Romaniote Jews, the indigenous Jews of Greece, have lived on Greek soil for over 2,300 years, and have the distinction of the longest, continuous Jewish presence in the European Diaspora; and

WHEREAS, Today, Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue maintains the unique traditions of this 2,000-year-old community, and is the last Romaniote synagogue in the entire Western Hemisphere; and

WHEREAS, In the early 20th Century, there were hundreds of other synagogues on the Lower East Side that mostly served Ashkenazi Yiddish-speaking Jews or Sephardic Spanish-speaking Jews; needing a place of their own where they could preserve their unique traditions, customs, liturgy, and language, a property was purchased on Broome Street, and

the congregation opened its doors to worship at its current location in 1927; and

WHEREAS, For the past 88 years, Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue has served the Romaniote community on the Lower East Side and many of the remaining neighborhood Sephardim; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, a museum was created in the women's gallery of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue to tell the story of this distinct community; and

WHEREAS, This monumental event will celebrate the unique Romaniote and Sephardic heritage of its historic community; the festival will include live Greek, Sephardic, and Mediterranean music, traditional kosher Greek Jewish foods and homemade pastries, Greek dancing, an outdoor marketplace full of vendors, arts and educational activities for children, and much more; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to partner with several local organizations and community groups on the Lower East Side including the Tenement Museum, the Museum at Eldridge Street, Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox, the Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy, the Lower East Side Business Improvement District, Woodward Gallery, the United Jewish Council of the East Side, and the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative, just to name a few; and

WHEREAS, Kehila Kedosha Janina will also be partnering with the Lower East Side History Month, and the Fourth Arts Block to connect numerous community groups and explore its shared history; and

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue of the Lower East Side, New York City has maintained its integral mission to enrich the Greek Jewish life and the total Greek Jewish community by developing and implementing programs for the recreational, educational, cultural, and social needs

of the community, and by doing so, stimulate and amplify in individuals their sense of responsibility to the local community and society as a whole, and creating an atmosphere especially congenial to Greek Jewish thought, beliefs and values; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue upon the occasion of hosting its first Greek Jewish Festival on May 31, 2015; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue, Lower East Side, New York City.