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## **AFTER YEAR OF ADVOCATING FOR STREET SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS, PS 22Q STUDENTS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS CUT RIBBON ON NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL**

*Students lobbied elected officials for street safety improvements after their classmate was hit by car*

**Flushing, NY** – State Senator John Liu, Council Member Sandra Ung and Assembly Member Ron Kim today joined students and faculty from PS 22Q Thomas Jefferson School to cut the ribbon on a new traffic light outside the school. The city recently installed the traffic signal at Sanford Avenue and 155th Street after a sustained advocacy effort by the school’s 4th and 5th grade students who demanded the city take action to improve street safety outside their school after their classmate was hit by a car while crossing the street.

In May 2023, a PS 22Q student was hit by a car while crossing the street on his way to school. Although he was not injured, the frightening incident sparked a student-led street safety initiative. Students conducted a heartfelt letter-writing campaign to area elected officials as part of their Civics For All curriculum, in which they were tasked with creating change in their community.

**State Senator John Liu** stated, “As elected officials, when we get a lot of hand-written letters from 4th and 5th graders, it means we better pay attention, especially when they dot the ‘i’ in your name with a heart! We knew from day 1 these students were engaged and serious about making a change in their community, and so we worked with the city to make sure their school street was safe. This traffic signal is just one of many tools that make our streets safer, and we’re proud of their outstanding efforts in taking action, and refusing to take no for an answer!”

**City Council Member Sandra Ung** stated, “Today’s ceremony isn’t just about celebrating a new traffic light that will make a dangerous situation much safer for this school community, it is a recognition of the dedication and commitment of the students at PS 22. They proved that when you care deeply about something and are willing to work hard for it, real change can happen. The impact of their advocacy will be felt at PS 22 long after they are gone, and for that they should be incredibly proud.”

**State Assembly Member Ron Kim** stated, “I would like to offer my heartfelt appreciation to the students and teachers for making today’s traffic signal opening possible. Turning your advocacy into action has led us all here. As a parent to three young children, I am always worried about thwarting the deadly combination of poorly planned streets, and unsafe drivers. My wish is that today some parents can rest easier knowing the city and state heeded their call. I want to thank

my colleagues for their work on this matter and all the stakeholders who made today's ceremony possible."

**NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez** stated, "The students of PS 22Q and students across New York City deserve safe routes to school. NYC DOT is committed to using every available tool to make our streets safer, especially around our schools. We look forward to continuing our work with students and educators city-wide to identify and implement street safety projects and we thank Senator Liu and area-elected officials for their advocacy and partnership."

**District 25 Superintendent Dr. Michael Dantona** stated, "We are incredibly proud of our students for taking the initiative to enhance safety in our community. Their dedication and hard work exemplify the power of civic education and the positive impact our students can have. This achievement underscores the importance of empowering students to become active, informed citizens. We extend our gratitude to school leaders, teachers, parents, and local officials who supported this initiative."

**PS 22Q Principal Jennifer Meyer** stated, "Today, I stand as a representative of our school to share our story. This is not a story about a street light; it's about the power of unity, the strength of our collective voices, and determination. Sanford Avenue is a very busy street where cars, trucks, schools buses, MTA buses, and electric bikes contribute to the flow of traffic as drivers navigate the curvature of the road causing blind spots to drivers. Each day, there are approximately 800 children entering and exiting The Thomas Jefferson School and this is what stimulated our PS 22Q Civics Team to 'Take Action.' They rallied together - students, parents, teachers and community leaders alike, with a shared vision of safety and protection. I stand here proud to announce that our efforts did not go unnoticed: a new street light now illuminates our road. The students and pedestrians of Sanford Avenue are now safer due the installation of the street light."

**Alisson Flores, current 5th grader**, wrote, "There are too many accidents in front of our school. It is dangerous for the students and the teachers to cross. If we had the traffic light then there won't be so many accidents. It will also be safe for our community."

**Joe Hui, current 5th grader**, wrote, "Every day I walk to school and cars zoom by with no care! That's dangerous! I think we need a new traffic light in the middle of the street so people can see the curve and not crash ... We want to be safe. Imagine a car goes so fast and almost hits you! That's too dangerous for any children so adding a traffic light could save the whole school!"

Photos and letters from students linked below.

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