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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New and Renovated Special Victims Division Facilities Demonstrate NYPD Victim-Centered Commitment**

**New York, New York** – The NYPD today announced the opening of the new Manhattan Special Victims facility at 137 Centre Street, and also showcased the renovations to the Brooklyn and Bronx Special Victims Division sites. The Special Victims Division (SVD) has been undergoing extensive reforms over the last eighteen months, and the facility improvements align with the Department’s mission to uphold and strengthen the NYPD’s commitment to survivors of sexual assault. The facilities were evaluated through a survivor-focused lens, starting with the very first interaction and continuing through the entire investigative process.

"The significant facility improvements, increased staffing, enhanced training and new leadership within our Special Victims Division amplify our ability to respond effectively to survivors of all crimes, while continuing to conduct thorough and victim-centered investigations," said **Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill**. "The NYPD remains deeply committed to ensuring survivors feel the safety and support needed to come forward, bravely share their experiences, and help the NYPD bring to justice those who have committed these horrific crimes."

"My mission has been to create a victim-centered approach to sexual assault investigations from the survivor’s first encounter with the police, and at each step through the investigation. We have added investigators, ensured the highest quality trauma-informed, empathy-based training and a critical part of this work is creating welcoming facilities designed with the survivor in mind," said **Deputy Chief Judith Harrison, Commanding Officer of the Special Victims Division**. "Our renovated Special Victims Division facilities don’t look like traditional police offices; there are comfortable couches and play areas for children, natural light and art on the walls. This wraparound approach matters for survivors’ well-being and we are committed to doing anything and everything to bring justice to the brave survivors that come forward."

**Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance, Jr.** said: "With police, prosecutors, advocates, and service providers working together under one roof to help survivors report crimes, secure justice, and heal trauma, these facilities exemplify our shared commitment to victim-centered law enforcement. My Office is proud to station an experienced sex crimes prosecutor and a member of our Witness Aid Services Unit in this welcoming, state-of-the-art facility. I thank Commissioner O'Neill and Deputy Chief Harrison for their vision and leadership, which will bring our agencies’ strong partnership on behalf of sexual violence survivors to the next level."

“We are proud to partner with the NYPD and its Special Victims Division to help survivors feel safe, comfortable and supported during a time when they may feel their most vulnerable,” said **Ariel Zwang, Safe Horizon CEO**. “We applaud SVD for taking a trauma-informed and client-centered approach to redesigning their space and the presence of our advocates will support survivors as they seek justice and healing.”

Additionally, starting next week, the Manhattan Special Victims facility will be co-located with Safe Horizon victim advocates, who will support and work with victims throughout all stages of investigation and prosecution of cases. Safe Horizon will work in partnership with the Manhattan Special Victims Squad and District Attorney’s Office of New York to provide victim-centered, trauma informed services, including but not limited to, mental health, victim support and advocacy to sexual offense survivors. Safe Horizon victim advocates will also begin in the Bronx Special Victim Division next week.

### **Facility highlights**

#### **Manhattan**

*Starting last month, SVD investigators moved into the new, renovated facility. This new facility marks the next phase in Manhattan SVD renovations. An additional floor at 137 Centre Street has been newly allocated for SVD, and is currently being designed, which will give co-located space to the District Attorney and offer additional space for survivors, such as interview rooms and waiting room space.*

- Child friendly designated waiting room
- Designated interview room
- Renovated work space for investigators
- Comfortable furniture designed with the victim in mind
- Aesthetic improvements – art, plants, welcoming signage, art, paint
- Co-located Safe Horizon advocate beginning September 9
- Proximity to District Attorney (and eventual co-location with District Attorney by end of calendar year)

#### **Brooklyn**

*Victim-centered facility upgrades completed in April, 2019*

- Entire new wing with wood floors
- Designated waiting room spaces with child-friendly space
- Two designated Victim Interview Rooms
- Comfortable furniture designed with the victim in mind
- Furniture upgrades will be completed for investigators to enhance their work experience
- Aesthetic improvements – welcoming signage, art, paint, plants,
- Lobby improvements including buzzer to enter the building

#### **Bronx**

*Victim-centered facility upgrades completed in April, 2019*

- Large new designated child friendly waiting area with natural light (it was previously a storage area)
- Co-located Safe Horizon advocate beginning September 9
- Comfortable furniture designed with the victim in mind

- Designated spacious interview rooms with natural light
- Furniture upgrades will be completed for investigators to enhance their work experience
- Aesthetic improvements – welcoming signage, art, paint, plants,
- Renovated space for investigators

#### Staten Island

*The expanded facility will open by the end of 2019. Construction in progress.*

- New wing that was previously not allocated for SVD
- Proximity to DA located on an upper floor
- Safe Horizon Child Advocacy Center and ACS representatives are in a connected space
- Designated child friendly waiting room and Victim Interview Rooms
- Designated spacious interview rooms with natural light
- Comfortable furniture designed with the victim in mind
- Aesthetic improvements – welcoming signage, art, paint, plants,

The renovations in Staten Island are underway. The Staten Island expanded site will open by the end of 2019, and will include designated interview room space, a designated waiting room and victim-friendly aesthetics. Facility improvements in Queens are also underway and the Department is actively searching for a new location for the squad.

In addition to major facility improvements, under Deputy Chief Judith Harrison's leadership, there have been ongoing reforms to the division, all with the victim at the forefront.

#### **SVD Staffing**

- Since April 2018, the NYPD has consistently added investigators, increasing staffing in the Adult Squad by 59 investigators 123 (including attrition, transfers, etc).
- The average caseload per detective is now 61.1, down from 76.5 at the end of 2017.
- Total overall staffing in SVD is now 316. This includes 264 police officers and detectives, as well as 52 other personnel including civilians, supervisors and executives.

#### **Enhance SVD Training**

- The NYPD is committed to ensuring every detective in SVD has state of the art training to support survivors of sexual assault as they thoroughly investigate every case.
- Every NYPD investigators has received trauma-informed empathy-based training.
- In addition, every police officer received a mandatory training on how to ensure they are victim-centered when they respond to a sex crime. Often, a patrol officer can be the first person on scene and this training provides trauma-informed empathy-based skills for them as well.

#### **Updated CompStat sheet**

In addition, the Department recently announced an update to the CompStat sheet, which now includes Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Rape as well as Other Sex Crimes. The NYPD has always tracked and vigorously investigated sex assaults. This victim-centered change aligns the CompStat sheet with nationwide reporting practices and makes it more transparent. For the month of August, compared to last year, UCR Rape is 227 versus 230 (-1.3%), and Other Sex Crimes is 478 versus 490 (-2.4%).

The NYPD encourages survivors to come forward and report sex crimes, and they can do so at any police facility or to any police officer, by calling 911 or by calling the 24-hour NYPD rape hotline at 212-267-RAPE (7273).

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