



BROADWAY MALL ASSOCIATION

Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer Breaks Ground In West Harlem And Washington Heights On The Nation's First Official Heritage Rose District

The Borough President and Volunteers Plant 100 Heritage Rose Bushes At 9 Sites on "It's My Park! Day"

Saturday, October 24, 2009 (New York, NY) - Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer is joined today by NYC Parks & Recreation Manhattan Borough Commissioner Bill Castro and noted Rosarian Stephen Scanniello, president of the Heritage Rose Foundation, to break ground on the nation's first official "Heritage Rose District" in West Harlem and Southern Washington Heights.

Borough President Stringer said, "Today, we're re-introducing some native New Yorkers with deep roots back into West Harlem and Washington Heights. Having this area become known as the nation's first Heritage Rose District will bring a big dose of flower power to a place of rich cultural and historical significance."



MBP Scott Stringer, Rosarian Scanniello and Urban Planner Paimaan Lodhi at groundbreaking for Heritage Rose District.

Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe said, "We are happy to partner with Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer to create a Heritage Rose District in West Harlem and Southern Washington Heights. Thanks to Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and Manhattan Community Boards 9 and 12, these roses will dress up some of our parks along the Hudson River waterfront. None of this would be possible without the efforts of 'It's My Park! Day' volunteers, who are spending the day beautifying these sites."

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum said, "New Yorkers can take great pride in today's groundbreaking of the nation's first official Heritage Rose District, and I congratulate all the residents of Harlem and Washington Heights. It is appropriate that these historic neighborhoods will now be dotted by beautiful, traditional roses. Thanks to all the volunteers participating in today's planting."

Heritage Rose Foundation President Stephen Scanniello said, "The Heritage Rose District of New York offers a unique opportunity for the Heritage Rose Foundation to put into action its Mission: to preserve heritage roses and promote their culture; to establish gardens where these roses may be grown and displayed; to foster public knowledge and appreciation of heritage roses and their preservation. We hope that this will start a trend across the country."



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Inspired by recently planted heritage roses at the grave of notable New Yorkers interred in Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum, community leaders conceived of the Rose District as a means to strengthen the public's ties to the area's rich heritage and to raise the visibility of their neighborhoods.

The Heritage Rose District generally encompasses the western portion of Northern Manhattan between West 130th and West 162nd streets, with Broadway and Trinity Cemetery at its nexus. The neighborhoods of West Harlem and Washington Heights – both with ample open spaces and a rich history – provide a perfect setting for growing and displaying roses, especially when plantings are inspired by local heritage.

This year, volunteers will plant over a hundred heritage rose bushes at the following nine sites within the Heritage Rose District: Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum, Church of the Intercession, the plaza at 155th Street and Riverside Drive, Audubon Terrace, Broadway Malls at 153rd Street and Broadway, Morris-Jumel Mansion, Montefiore Park at 137th Street and Broadway, Jackie Robinson Park at 145th Street and Edgecombe Avenue, and City College Campus on Amsterdam Avenue between 136th and 137th Streets.

The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation has generously committed to constructing and maintaining a new, permanent planter at the corner of 155th Street and Riverside Drive, as well as provide soil, compost and water for all of the rose bushes that fall within the Parks Department's jurisdiction.

In each instance, all of the roses being planted are varieties that once grew in Manhattan during the 18th and 19th centuries. In fact, many of the roses were originally grown in gardens located in Northern Manhattan. The roses planted in the Heritage Rose District have been donated by nurseries across the country, from as far away as California.

The planting of the commemorative roses was spearheaded by the Heritage Rose Foundation, a nonprofit organization established in 1986, devoted to the preservation of old roses. In the Spring of 2009, the Foundation planted the Harison's Yellow, thought to be the original "Yellow Rose of Texas," near the grave of George Folllott Harison, who in the 1830's created this rose in his Manhattan garden. On the grounds of the Church of the Intercession, the grave of John James Audubon is marked by the "Audubon," a red rose created to celebrate the famed naturalist whose estate became Trinity Church Cemetery.



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The collection also includes the "Puerto Rico" rose, a native to the island and symbolic of Northern Manhattan's rich Caribbean culture. Another variety being re-introduced to the area, the "Green Rose," was first sold in the 1830's. The rose was grown in the gardens of several families who participated in the Underground Railroad, and is rumored to have been a symbol used to mark a "safe home."

Inaugural partners in establishing the Heritage Rose District include: the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation; Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum; the Broadway Malls Association; the Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum; The Hispanic Society of America, The American Academy of Arts and Letters and Boricua College – all institutions housed at the landmark Audubon Terrace complex; and City College of New York.

With continued support from the community and local partners, the Heritage Rose District will be able to move forward on its plans to hold a second round of heritage rose plantings on the 40th anniversary of Earth Day in 2010. The targeted planting sites include St. Nicholas Park, Johnny Hartman Plaza, Dorrance Brooks Square, Convent Garden, Highbridge Park, Maggie's Community Garden, and Donnellan Square. Other future goals of the Heritage Rose District include conducting seminars, panels, lectures, walking tours and exhibits designed to encourage and increase the public's awareness of heritage roses.

There's also a free concert scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5 called "Everything's Coming Up Roses," which will be presented by The Riverside Oval Association. The performance by Marjorie Eliot and Parlor Entertainment will exclusively feature songs about roses to celebrate the new Heritage Rose District. This "Special Afternoon of Jazz" is taking place between 3 and 5 p.m. at the Church of the Intercession's Main Sanctuary, located at the corner of Broadway and West 155th Street.

October 24 is "It's My Park! Day," a celebration of neighborhood parks through volunteer opportunities and free cultural and recreational events. It is jointly organized by Partnerships for Parks, the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, the City Parks Foundation and local community groups.

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