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**Monroe College Hosts “DiVA Talk 2020: Boots on the Ground”
Virtual Event to Address Domestic Violence**

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, Commissioner Cecile Noel from the New York City Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, and Domestic Violence Activist Doreen Lesane Among Those Delivering Remarks

BRONX, NY, October 22, 2020 – [Monroe College](#), a national leader in educating urban and international students, last night hosted “DiVA Talk 2020: Boots on the Ground,” a virtual town hall meeting to address domestic violence issues, interventions, trends, and support resources. This event is held each October to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Faculty from the College’s School of Criminal Justice were joined by civic leaders, survivor support advocates, members of law enforcement, and health and human services professionals to discuss domestic violence matters and how the current public health crisis is impacting efforts to help those in abusive and unhealthy relationships.

Monroe College President Marc Jerome made welcoming remarks, underscoring the College’s support for the DiVA initiative’s important work. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, and Commissioner Cecile Noel from the New York City Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence were among those to share thoughtful insights and perspectives during DiVA Talk 2020.

Bronx domestic violence activist and consultant Doreen Lesane, creator of the “SPEAK UP” campaign against domestic violence, delivered the keynote address. Her moving remarks were followed by a panel discussion moderated by Monroe College faculty member and domestic violence support advocate Anne Paulle. The panelists are an impressive group on the front lines of this national crisis:

- Melissa Cebollero: Senior Director, Office of Government & Community Relations, Montefiore Health System, The University Hospital for Albert Einstein College of Medicine;
- Maureen Curtis, LMSW, MPH: Vice-President, Criminal Justice Programs at the national victim advocacy organization Safe Horizon;
- Margarita Guzman: Executive Director, Violence Intervention Program; and
- Liz Spurrell-Huss, MSW, MPH: Public Health Social Worker with the Office of Community and Population Health (OCPH) at Montefiore Health System.

Launched more than 15 years ago, the DiVA initiative was first convened as a series of domestic violence awareness and intervention projects by Melissa Cebollero, formerly the Health and Human Services Director in the Bronx Borough President's Office under Adolfo Carrion; the program continues to be maintained by Ruben Diaz, Jr., the current Bronx Borough President. Anne Paulle, one of today's panelists, was among the first survivor support advocates to join with her. Ms. Paulle was the Director of the Bronx Domestic Violence Programs at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services at the time.

The DiVA name -- which reflects the initiative's focus on Domestic Violence Awareness -- is given to a number of programs to help individuals in crisis and their families. DiVA programs range from talks such as the one held last night, to immediate crisis intervention assistance and longer-term counseling and support. DiVA services have included inclusive spa/outreach, theatrical performances and telephone hotline services for the Bronx community.

ABOUT MONROE COLLEGE

Founded in 1933, Monroe College is a recognized leader in urban and international education. The College is proud of its innovative programs to increase college access, affordability, and completion outcomes, especially among first-generation students. The strength of its warm, supportive culture is reflected in the personal connections fostered among students, faculty, and staff.

Monroe educates close to 8,000 students each year, offering Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs from campuses in the Bronx, New Rochelle, and St. Lucia. Students may also take courses online.

Programs are offered through seven academic schools, including the Schools of Allied Health Professions, Business and Accounting, Criminal Justice, Education, Hospitality Management and the Culinary Institute of New York (CINY), Information Technology, and Nursing, as well as through King Graduate School. Liberal arts and continuing education programs are also available. For more information and admissions criteria, please visit <http://www.monroecollege.edu>.

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