

---For Immediate Release --

STATE OF NEW YORK
DIVISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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***NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND VILLAGE OF
PATCHOGUE ANNOUNCE COMMUNITY FORUM TO PLAN RESPONSE
TO BIAS RELATED MURDER OF ECUADORIAN IMMIGRANT***

Galen D. Kirkland, Commissioner of the New York State Division of Human Rights, and Paul V. Pontieri, Jr., Mayor of Village of Patchogue, today announced they will co-sponsor a community forum on Friday, November 14, 2008, 10:30 a.m., at Temple Beth El, 45 Oak Street, Patchogue, New York. The purpose of the forum is to begin planning the community's response to the racially motivated murder of Marcelo Lucero, who was killed on November 8 by seven local teenagers. The community forum is open to the public, community groups, and local organizations and will be attended by representatives of the State Division of Human Rights, and key local officials from the Village of Patchogue, including the Mayor Pontieri, South County Central School District Interim Superintendent of Schools Raymond Walsh, and local police representatives.

The forum will be an opportunity for the community to speak out against the murder of Mr. Lucero, to establish both short and long term goals to facilitate the healing process and to prevent future hate crimes. In the short term, a coalition of community groups has agreed to fund and distribute flyers in English and Spanish with an image of the Statue of Liberty, and the statement "We are all one." The Division and Village are encouraging community residents, local businesses, and all public facilities to prominently display these signs as a show of respect for Mr. Lucero and his family, and to demonstrate their solidarity against bias and discrimination. Members of the Clergy will also be encouraged to disseminate these flyers at

their houses of worship over the weekend and to dedicate a portion of their service to addressing the tragic incident and how best to heal the community. In the long term, the Division and Village will work collaboratively with other local community activists and educators to develop an educational program for young people to foster mutual respect for all, irrespective of race, ethnicity, creed, sex/gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, and familial status.

Commissioner Kirkland said: “We look forward to working with Mayor Pontieri, the local police department, educators, business people, activists, and all local residents to ensure that this tragic death is not in vain and that this incident becomes an opportunity to educate our young people on the strength that we derive by living in a diverse community.”

Mayor Pontieri said: “As the Mayor of a diverse and inclusive community, it is imperative that we bridge the divide and realize that the things we have in common far outnumber those that divide us.”

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New York has the proud distinction of being the first state in the nation to enact a Human Rights Law, which affords every citizen “an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life.” The New York State Division of Human Rights was created to enforce this important law and does so through, among other things, the vigorous prosecution of unlawful discriminatory practices and the receipt, investigation, and resolution of complaints of discrimination. Please visit the Division’s website at www.dhr.state.ny.us for additional information about the agency and its work.