

Johnny C. Rivera - Bio

is a proud product of East Harlem who has spent his professional life serving the community. Johnny's commitment to Community Service began many years earlier when he was a teenager participating in the Youth Action Program. He learned from this experience that in spite of being poor we have a duty and responsibility to serve our community and be part of the solution. Later on, he organized a successful protest demanding that the local elected officials stop blocking state funds to renovate an abandoned building to be used for affordable housing. The protest was a rousing success, the funds were released and the building was renovated providing much needed housing for the people of East Harlem. This magnificent accomplishment won Johnny recognition from the Citizen's Committee of New York City who conferred upon him their prized New Yorker for New York Award.

Today, in his current role as Director of Community and Government Affairs for HARLEM RBI, Johnny identifies and engages key constituents to build and strengthen relationships between Harlem RBI and the East Harlem community.

Prior to Harlem RBI, Johnny was the Senior Director of Programs at Mount Sinai Medical Center's Department of Community and Government Affairs where he initiated the series of Community Roundtable as a means to bridging community.

As Congressman Charles B. Rangel's representative in East Harlem, where he was the Director of Operations for four years. In his autobiography, Congressman Rangel specifically mentions Johnny: "Holding down and keeping me up in El Barrio/East Harlem is Johnny Rivera, who shares his experience with me and is a great Community Adviser."

Thereafter, Johnny was elected to the Community School Board 4 and served as its president. In that capacity, Johnny lobbied City Hall for funds to restore the Auditorium of PS 57, and as a result, \$1.3 million dollars was earmarked for the full restoration.

Johnny Rivera also partnered with philanthropist Eugene M. Lang to create the celebrated "I Have a Dream" Program, which provided graduates of elementary school PS 121 with assured college tuition and enrichment programming. Johnny developed the intervention model used to prevent high school dropouts and increase access to a college education that is used throughout the nation and abroad. In her celebrated book, titled *Within Our Reach*, Elizabeth Schorr writes, "It became the mission of trouble-shooter Rivera to carry the message (stay in school and go to college) in his frequent encounters with the youngsters."

Johnny has served as the Chairman of the School Board #4 and Chairman of the Land-Use Committee for Community Board #11, as well on the Professional Advisory Committee to the Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Services, a member of the Board of Trustees for the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, the Youth Action Program & Homes, SINERGIA, Falu Foundation and the East Harlem Block School Nursery.

Johnny graduated with BA degree in Political Science from Hunter College and is working towards a MPA in Public Administration from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.