

One World Trade Center Will Go Gold For Childhood Cancer Awareness



The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey has changed its tune and decided to light One World Trade Center on the night of Sept. 2 to highlight Childhood Cancer Awareness. (File photo).

Kiawana Rich

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- The Port Authority is changing its tune to a brand-new color -- gold.

The agency has decided to light up One Word Trade Center after all for one day during the month of September in honor of Childhood Cancer Awareness.

Two Staten Island voices at the forefront in support of this change were Assembly member Nicole Mallitotakis and Rep. Michael Grimm. The lawmakers were joined by State Sen. Marty Golden, Assemblyman Alec Brook-Krasny and City Councilman Vincent Gentile in submitting a letter to Patrick Foye, executive director of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, requesting that One World Trade Center be lit in gold during September to promote the cause.

Ms. Malliotakis said she was pleased to hear from the agency that the building would "go gold" the night of Sept. 2.

In a press release, she said:

"We received a response to our letter, and I would like to thank Pat Foye, Chairman of the Port Authority, as well as the Durst Organization, which manages One World Trade Center, for showing their compassion and concern for pediatric cancer by graciously agreeing to light the tower gold for a day in September, which is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. The families affected by this horrible disease have spearheaded a wonderful initiative to find a cure, and we could not be more pleased that the Port Authority and America's tallest building, One World Trade Center, have joined this noble cause."

In a statement, Grimm said:

"I'm elated that One World Trade Center has accepted our request to "Go Gold" in support of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. This is a tremendous victory for the countless foundations and families in our district that do amazing work on behalf of kids with cancer, and I want to thank them, Assemblywoman Malliotakis, Port Authority Executive Director Pat Foye, Senator Marty Golden, and the Durst Organization for their help in realizing this wonderful effort."

According to the Port Authority, after receiving the letter, Foye reached out to the Durst Organization, which manages the building, to tell them to make sure this request was accommodated.

The agency originally refused to light the building in gold to support Childhood Cancer Awareness. Parents who have lost children to cancer or whose lives were affected by it had requested of the Empire State Building's "Lighting Partner" program to light its spire for the cause.

In a press release sent out by representatives of the Empire State Building, it was stated that an individual requested a tower lighting for Childhood Cancer Awareness. "It is clearly stated on our Lighting Partner Application on our website that the Empire State Building does not accept lighting requests from individuals," said the statement.

That refusal **prompted outcries on** Facebook, Twitter and **#EmpireGoGold**.

Previously, the building had OK'd lighting to highlight everything from Broadway shows and Germany's World Cup team to autism, AIDS and Alzheimer's and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

In their letter to Foye, the lawmakers stated:

"Pediatric cancer affects more than 16,000 American children every year, the average of whom are only eight years old and 20% of whom do not survive. Unfortunately, existing cancer treatments are incredibly harsh on children and can inflict significant damage on such young bodies. Awareness initiatives have proven to be effective in raising funds for medical research and we firmly believe this effort will be no different, and no less worthy of a vigorous citywide campaign to achieve our goal."

The Advance wrote an editorial Thursday addressing the issue.

Staten Island teens brought attention to the cause on the "Today Show" during a performance of Neon Trees on Rockefeller Plaza, with Bay Terrace resident Alexandria Caggia getting some face time on camera.

While the Empire State Building held back, support was found elsewhere, with the Times Square Building and the Coney Island Parachute Jump both agreeing to go gold.

In Brooklyn, Bay Ridge Cares, a local nonprofit organization, has developed a "Go Gold Bay Ridge" program that will involve exhibiting gold ribbons, gold bows and gold lighting throughout the neighborhood.

Requests for comment from the Port Authority had not been received in time for this online posting.