



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 17, 2006

Contacts: Carrie Gleason 347-256-4429
Carolyn Daly 917-705-4740
Zita Allen 212-684-5300

Retail Workers Rally and March on Lower Broadway Demanding Living Wage, Better Working Conditions

Retail workers protesting low wages and poor working conditions in Lower Broadway shops throughout SoHo and NoHo held a rally and march dubbed "Re-Action on Broadway" on Sunday, December 17.

The primarily young Latino, Asian, African and West Indian New Yorkers and immigrants who participated in the rally and march are current and former employees of a number of shops along one of the city's trendiest shopping strips, including Yellow Rat Bastard (YRB), OMG, David Z and Portobello.

They are also part of the Retail Action Project (RAP), an organization of the community group Good Old Lower East Side, Inc. (GOLES), one of the main organizers of the event. The event was also supported by the city's retail union - the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU/UFCW) -- and other community and religious groups and political leaders.

"Many of the young retail workers in this city are young African immigrants who came to this country looking for a better life for themselves and their families. Instead, they found employers who pay them at or below minimum wage and abuse and exploit them," said Bakary Sawaneh, President of the Gambian Society. "For these young African immigrants, the American Dream is yet to become a reality but the Gambian Society will work with RAP to make sure their dreams do come true."

GOLES Executive Director Damaris Reyes said, "The standards for wages, benefits and working conditions have been deteriorating as the retail industry in this city has grown." GOLES, through RAP, is determined to do something about that, Reyes added. "RAP believes that the thriving retail industry in lower Manhattan can and should provide the living wages, benefits and stability our community needs to prosper."

Other speakers at the Sunday afternoon rally and march included New York State Senator Martin Connor, GOLES Executive Director Damaris Reyes, Bakary Savaneh, President of the Gambian Society in New York, Michael Feinberg of the New York Labor-Religion Coalition, Lucille Carrasquero of the Cooper Square

Committee, and Jose Enriquez, a worker at Footco and President of RWDSU Local 2006. Current and former NoHo/SoHo shop employees will also speak. Reverend Billy and the Stop Shopping Choir also performed.

###