



Staten Island Advance

This Lifelong Transit User Puts in All in Perspective

‘Transit Workers Are My Heroes’

(Letter to the Editor, Posted April 29, 2020)

By Jean Prabhu

Since 9/11, I have wanted to publicly thank the NYC transit workers who mean so much to our city. I have relied on transit workers for my entire life in this city where I grew up.

As a girl in Flatbush, I used public transportation to get to school, work, swim meets, dances, the “big” library at Grand Army Plaza and really to just about anywhere my imagination and public transportation could take me. My mother did not drive, but she understood how great the transit workers were, advising me and my four siblings to ask the bus driver if we had a question and to ride in the subway car with the conductor.

I have now lived on Staten Island for more than 30 years and the Staten Island express buses have been my way of commuting into Manhattan.

Never was I more in need of the service of transit workers than on 9/11, when I walked uptown for hours and found myself stranded. As I stood on the sidewalk wondering what my next move would be, a bus driver, unbidden, pulled up and asked, “Where are you going, honey?”

When I told him Staten Island, he told me to hop on and not to worry, he would get me there. With that he took me and assorted other dazed New Yorkers on a route which he clearly improvised. At one point, he actually drove that bus over the Manhattan bridge! He then directed me and my fellow passengers to our various ways home. Among so many great heroes on 9/11, he was my personal hero that day.

Now, we face another crisis and transit workers show the same bravery and competence that they showed on 9/11. This time, they repeatedly risk their lives and health for us by showing up. They get our health care workers and delivery people and grocery store workers where they need to be to keep us all going.

So, I just want to say: “Thanks!”

Transit workers, thank you for being there for my whole life, and especially now, with so much at stake for you and your families. A million thanks.