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—For Immediate Release

Department for the Aging Welcomed 10,000 Older New Yorkers to Age in Action 2008

*Seniors from across the City Go Green at largest City-sponsored
gathering in the country in honor of May's Older Americans Month*

QUEENS, NEW YORK – May 8, 2008 – Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs and Commissioner Edwin Méndez-Santiago, LCSW today greeted 10,000 seniors at Age in Action 2008, a free day-long festival of healthy aging, celebrating the talents and accomplishments of older New Yorkers at Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Joining Deputy Mayor Gibbs and Commissioner Mendez-Santiago were Commissioner of Cultural Affairs Kate D. Levin, State Senator Marty Golden, Assemblymember and Chair of the Committee on Aging Jeffrey Dinowitz, Assemblymember Adam Clayton Powell IV, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr., Councilmember Leroy Comrie, Councilmember Helen Sears, Councilmember David Weprin and Councilmember Thomas White Jr.

The Department for the Aging (DFTA) introduced a variety of new and creative programs for seniors to enjoy, including a Technology Tent, a Senior University, culturally diverse performances, health screenings, 'Laugh for the Health of It' comedy show, a 50s themed 'Soda Shoppe' and a senior Artisans Marketplace and Gallery. This year the Department offered a variety of *Go Green* activities, including distributing to seniors DFTA's own recyclable *Go Green* tote bag.

"Today's event gives us the chance to show our appreciation for and celebrate the longevity, and vitality of New York City's 1.3 million seniors, which is an ever-growing population," said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. "The City is working hard to implement innovative reforms that will strengthen and modernize all our senior services so we can serve the greatest number of seniors possible."

"At Age in Action seniors share the secret to living longer lives, staying active, engaging their minds, and remaining socially involved," said Commissioner Méndez-Santiago. "Older New Yorkers have the opportunity to participate in health screenings, learn about walking clubs, showcase their artwork, explore volunteer opportunities, and surf the web. This year's *Go Green* theme is a highlight throughout the day, from gardening to DFTA's recyclable tote bags. The seniors here today are an example of vibrant aging and are essential to the vitality of this great city."

The Big Apple Circus emceed the main stage at Age in Action. Soprano's Star Domenic Chianese kicked off the program, followed by the NYPD Band and the New York City Housing Authority Choir. Senior center groups also performed on the main stage, participated in a dance contest, health screenings, games, trolley rides and a senior art gallery.

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New to this year's Age in Action was the Senior University in a Recreational Format (SURF), which offered seniors the opportunity to learn gardening, stress reduction and environmentally friendly jewelry making techniques. Charles Nardozi of the National Garden Association provided four 45 minute sessions for seniors on container gardening using edible and decorative greens, such as parsley and basil. In addition, Nardozi distributed seed packets donated by the National Association to all participants. Sessions on stress reduction using modified Yoga techniques taught seniors how to relax and demonstrated environmental boosts to well-being. And finally, seniors were shown how they can "recycle" buttons, chording, yarns and other everyday materials into pendants and bracelets. All participants received a bag of items to take home for their own projects.

Highlighting the Department's commitment to developing opportunities for older New Yorkers to enjoy creative exploration as part of healthy aging, seniors were able to showcase their artistic talents for competition in an Artisans Marketplace. Comprised of both a Senior Art Gallery and an Arts Area, the Department expanded last year's highly successful juried art show to include photography, sculpture, and watercolor and oil paintings. Working closely with the Bronx Council of the Arts and Elders Share the Arts, individual senior artists from across the city shared their artwork with festival participants. Joining the artists was renowned photographer and senior advocate Chester Higgins, who offered seniors professional insight and judged the photography portion of the Senior Art Gallery. Additionally, there were approximately 70 senior centers displaying artwork created through senior center arts programming. These centers serve as models for "the senior center of the future," providing comprehensive programming to promote wellness and healthy aging.

Seniors were excited to sharpen their computer skills at a Technology Center. The Department for the Aging and the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) information technology staff assisted seniors with learning how to log onto the internet, search for senior health related information, access email, and use ACCESS NYC. In addition to 15 wireless laptops available for hands on experience, seniors were introduced to the Jitterbug cell phone which offers big backlit buttons and other senior-friendly features.

Presented by the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) and its charitable arm, the Aging in New York Fund, Age in Action is an annual event in honor of Older Americans Month. It has grown steadily to become one of the largest healthy aging, municipal-sponsored initiatives in the country for people over the age of 60. Older New Yorkers from close to 200 senior centers throughout the city converged at today's event to display their musical and artistic talents, to receive free health screenings and to socialize with thousands of other Older New Yorkers.

Age in Action 2008 was sponsored by HealthPartners, IPA, Secure Horizons & Evercare, Empire BlueCross Blue Shield, HIP, Wellcare of New York, and Touchstone Health.

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****Photos of the event are available in high and low resolution.**