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—*For Immediate Release*

2,000 Older Adults Walk Their Way to Healthy Aging Along Historic Midland Beach Promenade

Big Apple Strollers walked over 35,000 miles this year—the equivalent of one and a half times around the equator

STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK – October 7, 2008 – 2,000 older New Yorkers, representing 120 Big Apple Stroller Walking Clubs, celebrated walking a total of 35,000 miles this year by strolling along Midland Beach to promote senior health and physical fitness. The New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) Commissioner Edwin Méndez-Santiago kicked-off the Senior Stroll introducing Staten Island’s Todt Hill Tap Dancers. Seniors from the Staten Island YMCA Aerobics class warmed the attendees up for their 2-mile stroll. Joining the Commissioner were State Senators Andrew Lanza and Diane Savino, Assembly Members Michael Cusick, Janele Hyer-Spencer, Patrick Kavanagh, Adam Clayton Powell IV, and Lou Tobacco, and Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz.

“The Senior Stroll is a celebration of healthy aging through exercise,” said Commissioner Méndez-Santiago. “Research shows that if we remain physically active—even for just 30 minutes a day—we will have improved strength, endurance, and flexibility. The Big Apple Strollers are the embodiment of this research. In addition to the Big Apple Stroller Walking Clubs, many of our senior centers offer various physical activities including Tai Chi, Yoga and aerobics. I urge all older New Yorkers to follow a healthier lifestyle and to stay physically active.”

The Senior Stroll highlighted the accomplishments of the more than 120 Big Apple Strollers walking clubs. This year, clubs were given a choice of three goals with each objective having a targeted number of steps—Walk Around Your Neighborhood, under 25,000 steps; Walk Around Your Borough, 25,000 steps; or Walk Around New York City, 125,000 steps and over. Each club chooses a goal that best suited their membership. One club is given a Wild Card award for coming closest to 50,000 steps. The Department awarded four of its walking clubs with a certificate recognizing their level of achievement. They were:

- *Raices Astoria Senior Center (Queens)* - Walk Around Your Neighborhood with 762,373 steps (approximately 5,775 miles).
- *United Hindu Cultural Council Senior Center (Queens)* - Walk Around Your Borough with 6,665,181 steps (approximately 3,333 miles)
- *Great Kills Friendship Club (Staten Island)* - Walk Around New York City with 11,549,929 steps (approximately 11,300 miles)

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- *CWA Local 1180-Retiree Division* – Wild Card winner with 49,731 steps (approximately 25 miles)

Big Apple Strollers walk a minimum of twice a week for 30 minutes to achieve a targeted number of steps, anywhere from 25,000 to 125,000 steps, or equivalent 12.5 to 62.5 miles. Each club member uses a pedometer to count his or her number of steps. This year the clubs walked a total of over 70,000,000 steps, which is equivalent to 35,000 miles or one and a half times around the equator.

Older adults should talk with their doctor first before beginning any rigorous exercise. Doctors can help tailor a program to an individual's level of ability and needs. At any age, older adults can take part in a moderate exercise program. Older New Yorkers can call 311 for information about their Big Apple Stroller walking club.

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