

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, December 20, 2024

NYC DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONNECTS A RECORD NUMBER OF NEW YORKERS TO FREE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN 2024

Nearly a half million young people and adults benefit from afterschool, jobs, literacy, free meals, and more

NEW YORK — Looking back at the year gone by, the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) is celebrating an unprecedented 480,000 New Yorkers served in Fiscal Year 2024, up nearly 100,000 (26 percent) since the beginning of the administration. The year also saw another record number of jobs and summer enrichment activities for young people, as well as targeted strategies to make the city safer and more affordable.

“From day one, our administration has focused on creating a safer, more affordable New York City. In 2024, we continued to deliver on that vision and ‘Get Stuff Done’ for working-class New Yorkers,” said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. “Thanks to our extraordinary public servants, America’s safest big city got even safer this year, with overall crime down and thousands of illegal guns, mopeds, and ghost cars taken off city streets. We passed historic legislation to turn New York into a ‘City of Yes,’ shattered affordable housing records once again, and put billions of dollars back into New Yorkers’ pockets. We broke records for the most jobs and small businesses in city history and moved millions of trash bags off our sidewalks and into containers. But we know that there is even more we can do to continue to uplift working-class families. As we look to the future, our administration remains committed to keeping New Yorkers safe and making our city more affordable for the millions of New Yorkers who call our city home.”

“Under the leadership of Mayor Adams, investments in DYCD and the number of youth, families, and communities we serve have never been higher. This was another banner year for DYCD, thanks to our amazing community partners, collaborations with sister agencies, and the forward-thinking agenda of the administration in building a safer, more equitable city,” said **DYCD Commissioner Keith Howard**. “DYCD is excited to launch another year of outstanding programs, community engagement, and opportunities for all New Yorkers to thrive.”

DYCD’s 2024 highlights include:

Offering Record Summer Jobs and Enrichment: The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) provided more than 100,000 jobs and other paid opportunities to young people aged 14-24 for the third consecutive summer. Summer Rising, a partnership with NYC Public Schools, enrolled 115,662 young people from kindergarten through eighth grade in academic and enrichment activities—a three percent increase over 2023.

Expanding Summer Recreation: In partnership with the New York Yankees, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, and NYPD Blue Chips, the Summer Night Lights baseball and softball leagues continue to grow, with some 400 young people and 22 teams playing at Elston Gene Howard Field, on the footprint of the old Yankee Stadium. More than half of this year’s athletes were young women! Meanwhile, two new Saturday Night Lights locations have been added in Queens, and the renovated PAL Armory Center in Washington Heights features a new state-of-the-art baseball facility.

Building Team Sports: DYCD joined Mayor Adams and Governor Hochul in announcing new team sports grants that funded 41 community-based organizations in all five boroughs this summer. Most of these providers did not have existing contracts with DYCD, supporting the Mayor Adams' priority to bring aboard organizations historically disconnected from city contracting opportunities.

Keeping Neighborhoods Safe: DYCD's Summer Safety Plan provided additional hours of safe programming for young people at Beacon, Cornerstone, and Saturday Night Lights. The J'ouvert celebration was again the safest in recent memory. The multi-day deployment included 950 clergy and Crisis Management System (CMS) staff, twelve Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) personnel, twenty CMS and clergy organizations, and five NYPD precincts along with additional police from across the city.

Focusing on Underserved Communities: In addition to prioritizing services in the six police precincts with the highest rates of gun violence, DYCD used programs such as SYEP, the Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program (AGVEP), and CURE Violence to recruit participants from historically underserved communities, including NYCHA complexes, and young people in need of violence interruption or intervention.

Providing Community Space: DYCD's 92 Beacon and 99 Cornerstone Community Centers both saw increases from a year ago in the number of youth and adults coming through their doors, connecting to everything from recreation and free meals to academic enrichment and life skills.

Alleviating Poverty: DYCD hosted a landmark symposium at the United Nations marking the 60-year anniversary of President Lyndon Johnson signing the Economic Opportunity Act. "60 Years of Community Action: Renewing Our Commitment to End Poverty in New York City" drew hundreds of participants and VIPs to celebrate the legislation, which laid the foundation for the nation's War on Poverty, and the Community Action work of agencies like DYCD.

Feeding New Yorkers: More than 1.5 million free meals were delivered through Cornerstone, Saturday Night Lights, and standalone sites. Additionally, the Discretionary Food Pantries Initiative administered by DYCD helped distribute more than 20 million pounds of food, and Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs served more than 500,000 meals.

Saving Homes: DYCD Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Healthy Families programs helped 300 New Yorkers avoid eviction or foreclosure.

Encouraging Small Business: Through DYCD's Community Development programs, 230 small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs acquired skills—fostering thriving businesses and economic growth within their communities.

Promoting Parenthood: DYCD joined the Department of Correction and SCO Family of Services at the graduation ceremony of 12 young dads completing the Fatherhood Initiative program pilot at Rikers Island. The initiative supports young fathers who are incarcerated, as well as their families.

Supporting Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY): DYCD broke its own record by collecting nearly 4,000 responses (up 16 percent from the previous year) for the 2024 Youth Count, a point-in-time census of sheltered and unsheltered young people. The percent of young adults reunited with family or placed in a suitable environment from Crisis Services programs rose to 83 percent, an increase of 20 points over the prior year. More than 2,800 youth received case management services at Drop-in Centers, a 27 percent rise.

Prioritizing Mental Health: More than 5,000 youth and young adults received mental health support in a DYCD-funded residential program or Drop-in Center, a 42 percent increase over the previous year. As part of Literacy program requirements, provider staff are familiar with common mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, trauma, and substance abuse.

Bridging the “Digital Divide”: DYCD used \$15,000 of public safety grant funds to support the launch of the NYC Computer Lab Initiative Connected Learning Center at the Edenwald Houses in the Bronx. The center will offer internet access and high-quality educational tools and programming to area residents.

Encouraging Higher Education: Aspiring college students visited Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from the mid-Atlantic to the South, including Spelman, Morehouse, Clark Atlanta University, North Carolina A&T University, Norfolk State University, and University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Four participants received early acceptance certificates from their colleges of choice.

Giving New Yorkers a Voice: Our Local NeighborhoodStat (NStat) series over the summer offered NYCHA residents a chance to be part of the participatory budgeting process, and vote how funding is spent in their communities.

###