



*Department of Juvenile Justice officials brief community leaders on the Release to Parent Initiative.*

## **DJJ Launches Release To Parent Initiative**

On Tuesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) unveiled a new initiative to reduce the number of youth in detention in its ongoing effort to reform the city’s juvenile justice system. The initiative, Release to Parent, is designed to assess youth to allow those who are eligible to return home with a parent or legal guardian.

The Release to Parent initiative provides immediate assessment of youth admitted to DJJ facilities by the police using a series of measures to determine if the youth is qualified to avoid detention and return home before appearing at court. DJJ is sensitive to the needs of both youth and parents, embracing the city’s policy of providing full access to services despite a person’s legal status. Youth who are deemed eligible to be released to a parent through the initiative are issued a Family Court Appearance Ticket that requires the youth to appear before a family court judge with a parent or guardian.

Since the start of the Release to Parent initiative, sixteen youth have been released to their parent or legal guardian, avoiding detention in a juvenile justice facility as a direct result of the initiative.

DJJ is working closely with a number of partners to ensure the success of the Release to Parent initiative, including the Department of Probation, the Administration for Children’s Services, and the New York City Law Department, as well as the youth and parents. Through its work with these partners, DJJ will continue to improve upon the implementation of the program and its work to prevent detention usage.

The Release to Parent initiative is one part of DJJ’s reform efforts, which was outlined in the Mayor’s 2007 State of the City Address. This initiative builds upon already successful programs aimed at reducing the number of youth in detention, including the Collaborative Family Initiative that to date is responsible for the release of over fifty youth who now receive the critical mental health services they need in the community.

