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DYCD HOSTS FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE EVENT AT QUEENS COUNTY FARM MUSEUM

Participants take part in pumpkin picking, hayrides and conquer the “Maize Maze” in latest event for dads and father-figures to reconnect with their children

Queens, NY – Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav, together with NYC’s Fatherhood Coordinator Alan S. Farrell, today greeted dads and father-figures at the Queens County Farm in the agency’s latest Fatherhood Initiative event. More than 100 fathers and their children took part in pumpkin picking, went on the hayride and navigated their way through the “Maize Maze.”

“Part of helping fathers reconnect with their children is creating an environment that exposes them both to new experiences and strengthens their relationships,” said **DYCD Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav**. “A trip to the Queens County Farm Museum is a great opportunity to learn new things. But even more importantly, I hope this trip will be a memory most of the participants will always remember.”

“Spending quality time with your children is one of the most important things parents can do,” said **New York City’s Fatherhood Coordinator Alan S. Farrell**. “A simple afternoon at the Queens County Farm Museum can provide fathers with the opportunity to create memorable moments and connect with their children in a meaningful way. The City is working to develop a series of events that will make this happen consistently throughout the five boroughs. We look forward to DYCD’s sponsorship of more great events like this one.”

DYCD partnered with five community based nonprofits for this event, including: Union Settlement Association’s “Young Men on the Rise” Program; Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem “Diligent Dads” program; the Center for Court Innovation, Midtown Community Court’s “Dads United for Parenting”; Forestdale Fathering Initiative; and Friends of Island Academy Fatherhood program. In addition, these groups were joined by participants from some of DYCD’s afterschool programs, including: Bronxworks Cornerstone Program at Betances Community Center; Safe Space OST Program at PS 30 and Samuel Field Beacon Program at MS 172. In total, the event drew close to 200 participants.

The Fatherhood Initiative is designed to help non-custodial fathers reconnect with their children and develop essential parenting skills. Studies have shown that children with involved fathers are less likely to get into trouble at home, school, or in the

neighborhood, and that an active and nurturing style of fathering is associated with better verbal skills, intellectual functioning, and academic achievement among adolescents.

In the United States, 29 million children live in fatherless families. Since 2002, DYCD has been committed to enhancing childhood development through programs that encourage fathers to improve or increase their involvement emotionally and financially with their children.

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