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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, SPEAKER QUINN, DEPUTY MAYOR WALCOTT, NYCHA  
CHAIRMAN MORALES AND DYCD COMMISSIONER MULLGRAV ANNOUNCE  
PLANS TO CONTINUE YOUTH PROGRAMMING AT 25 NYCHA COMMUNITY  
CENTERS THROUGHOUT THE FIVE BOROUGHES**

*NYC Department of Youth and Community Development to Administer Comprehensive Youth  
Programming at NYCHA Community Center Sites in all Five Boroughs*

*19 NYCHA Centers Slated for Closure Will Remain Open*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Deputy Mayor for Education and Community Development Dennis M. Walcott, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales and Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav today announced a plan to ensure continuity of services at 25 NYCHA community centers utilizing \$12.25 million in funding provided by the New York City Council. The plan will allow 19 NYCHA centers to remain open that were previously slated for immediate closure. Eleven of these sites will continue to be funded through June 30, 2009. Federal funding shortfalls, which have shortchanged NYCHA by more than \$551 million since 2002, have continuously challenged the Authority's mission to preserve public housing in New York City.

“Working with Speaker Quinn and the City Council, we are making a strategic investment to ensure that high-quality youth programming remains available at 25 NYCHA community centers, 19 of which were previously slated for closure,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “Public housing residents are among those most threatened by the economic challenges we are currently facing, and these centers play a major role by providing crucial programs and services that teach skills to help students stay in school and families better their lives.”

“Community centers are so much more than just brick and mortar – they are the vibrant heart of entire neighborhoods,” said Speaker Christine C. Quinn. “Especially now, as the economy takes a downward turn, we need to keep the doors of these places open, so that residents can utilize the services they offer. When we talk about protecting core services, this is exactly what we mean.”

“Community centers are a hub for NYCHA residences, and this important continuity of services assures that young NYCHA residents and their families will have access to programs and resources that help them to be successful,” said Deputy Mayor Walcott. “In these times of unprecedented economic challenges, we continue to work closely with City agencies, the Mayor's Office and the City Council, as well as with a broad spectrum of stakeholders on behalf of our young people to make sure that they have the resources available to them.”

The plan will occur in two phases. In the first phase, beginning February 2, 2009 and operating through December 31, 2009, DYCD-funded Beacon community centers located near the 25 NYCHA facilities will establish comprehensive satellite programs at each of the respective sites. The Beacon model created in New York City in 1991, and since replicated in cities nationwide, features collaborative, community programming designed to provide quality services to youth and adults after school, in the evenings, and on weekends. DYCD identified the 25 NYCHA sites through a needs- assessment analysis that took into account poverty and youth population indicators, availability of services, geographic diversity, and the suitability of physical facilities within each public housing development. Of the sites selected, 10 are in Brooklyn, five each are in the Bronx and Queens, four are in Manhattan, and one is on Staten Island.

In the second phase, for which the Mayor has baselined funding, DYCD will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified community-based organizations interested in operating programs at the 25 sites. New contracts will begin on January 1, 2010. The initiative is designed to serve two distinct age groups: younger youth (ages 5-12) and older youth (ages 13-21). NYCHA residents and other stakeholders will help to shape the programming model outlined in the RFP.

“Today’s action is good news not only for our residents, but for all New Yorkers who have come to rely on the services provided by both agencies,” said NYCHA Chairman Ricardo Elías Morales. “By continuing to maintain youth programming, we ensure NYCHA residents have access to these important services. This allows NYCHA to focus our resources on safeguarding our core mission of preserving public housing.”

“DYCD is working closely with NYCHA to provide public housing residents with comprehensive, high-quality and innovative programming tailored to the needs of each community. This is an exciting chance for DYCD to put to work our years of experience serving young people and their families,” said DYCD Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav. “The goal of this initiative is to ensure the healthy development of young people living in public housing.”

“So many NYCHA residents depend on their local community centers for after school, senior and adult education programs,” said Public Housing Chair Rosie Mendez. “Though we are looking down every possible avenue to reduce spending in the City’s budget, now is exactly the wrong time to cut these vital services. Keeping these centers open is great news for numerous of communities.”

“A time when government is reducing spending and employers are cutting jobs is the wrong time to close community centers,” said Housing and Buildings Chair Erik Martin-Dilan. “These centers are not just places where people hang out – they are invaluable resources that keep our kids out of trouble and allow adults to continue their education. This is great news during these tough economic times and I am very glad that they will remain open.”

“Today’s announcement is a step in the right direction not only for my constituents but for the children and young adults that seek a safe haven to engage in extracurricular activities and interact with their peers,” said Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito. “In these uncertain times, now more than ever we need these centers in our neighborhoods and I thank the administration and my colleagues in the Council for working hard to keep these community centers open.”

This winter with support from The Wallace Foundation, DYCD will convene a series of meetings with key stakeholders including NYCHA residents, Resident Association leaders,

elected officials and principals at schools that serve youth who live in the participating developments to gather input and ensure transparency and community support. DYCD also will survey young people and organize focus groups with their parents or caregivers to better understand the communities' needs. Feedback from these surveys will help shape the content of a concept paper to be released in the spring.

A list of the 25 community centers remaining open is attached.

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Contact:	Stu Loeser/Dawn Walker	(212) 788-8491
	Ryan Dodge (DYCD)	(212) 442-5979
	Howard Marder (NYCHA)	(212) 306-3322
	Andrew Doba (Speaker)	(212) 788-7120