



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, June 16, 2011

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Hundreds Rally Against Cuts to Youth Services

New York, NY – On Thursday, June 16th, hundreds of young people from across New York City rallied together in City Hall Park to protest the cuts to youth programs and urge the restoration of dramatic budget cuts to after school and youth development programs.

Working families have taken some of the hardest hits in the Mayor’s Executive Budget, the loss of child care services, youth programs and teachers will have a detrimental impact on New York City’s most vulnerable families. New York City is facing the end of after-school programs for over 16,000 youth, in addition to the damaging cuts to Beacons, services for runaway and homeless youth, Summer Youth Employment Program jobs for teens, GED and adult literacy services for disconnected youth, and other programs that help youth succeed. Youth services in NYC have been decimated by 43% and overall more than 50,000 fewer youth will be served due to budget cuts.

Selena Valentin, who is an 8th grader at a Children’s Aid Society’s CS 166 in the Bronx and participates in the OST program there believes she would not be where she is now had it not been for her after-school program. “My Children’s Aid Society after school program is a place where I can feel safe and where I am part of family. They offer limitless opportunities to join clubs that will help you figure out what you want to do for your future or to do something you don’t normally get to do in school,” says Valentin.

“The Washington Height Y’s OST Option 2 program serves over 100 youth in Washington Heights and Inwood each year in programs that include leadership, community service, college preparation, performing and fine arts, dance and team sports. The at-risk teens we serve rely on the Y to provide high quality programs and a safe and nurturing environment where they can grow on multiple levels. Without the continuation of the OST Option 2 funding, the Y will be unable to provide these programs,” said Michael Fermaglich, Chief Operating Officer of the YM & YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood.

Lai-Wan Wong, Director of St. Nick's Youth and Education Division said, "We have continuously been asked to do more with less and this year we don't know how we can keep running programs if funding is cut again. Our most crucial services are being threatened. I don't know where our young people will go this Fall since Beacons are being dramatically cut. There are fewer jobs through the summer youth employment program, so fewer teens will be able to work this summer as well. The long-term impact of these budget cuts on youth and communities will be devastating. We must restore vital youth funding now for our communities."

"These budget cuts will diminish homeless youth's access to shelter, a basic human right. Allocating funds toward basic human rights should not be questioned, as it is the foundation of our government. Loss of youth shelter beds means more young people forced to make high-risk decisions to survive. These young people epitomize the human capacity to survive, if supportive resources tailored to this unique population diminish, sex work, substance abuse and violence will inevitably increase. This is about survival; human beings will do what they must in order to survive. I just hope our elected officials support the life affirming options for our homeless youth," said Michael Morgan from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program at the Door.

Youth, advocates and concerned community members rallied at City Hall Park to demand the Mayor and City Council restore funding to important programs at risk, in the proposed FY 2012 City Budget, including:

- ▶ **\$23.59 million for Out-of-School Time Programs**
- ▶ **\$6.7 million for Beacons**
- ▶ **\$7.2 million for Runaway and Homeless Youth Services**
- ▶ **\$3.8 million for the After Three Program (The After-School Corporation – TASC)**
- ▶ **36,000 Summer Youth Employment Program Jobs for Teens**
- ▶ **\$6.7 million for Adult Literacy Programs**
- ▶ **Full Funding for City Council Youth Services Initiatives, including: the Council After School Adventure (CASA), Dropout Prevention Initiative, YMCA Y After School Program, Teens Take the City, Institute for Student Achievement, Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation, New York Junior Tennis League, and Councilmember Discretionary Youth Services Initiatives.**

The event was organized by the:

Members of New York City Youth Alliance: The After-School Corporation ▪ Citizens' Committee for Children of New York ▪ Coalition for Asian American Children & Families ▪ The Dryfoos Group ▪ Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies ▪ Human Services Council of New York City ▪ Neighborhood Family Services Coalition ▪ The New York Immigration Coalition ▪ Partnership for After School Education ▪ UJA-Federation of New York ▪ United Neighborhood Houses of New York ▪ YMCA of Greater New York