For Immediate Release
Contact: Stephanie Gendell, (646) 232-6721, sgendell@cccnewyork.org

Dozens of Youth Urge Mayor and City Council to Save Their Elementary After-school Programs

New Yorkers Need More After-school and Summer Programs But City Budget Eliminates After-school for 6,600 Elementary School Students

New York, NY – Dozens of elementary school children from community-based after-school programs joined other youth, providers, advocates and local elected officials on the steps of City Hall Tuesday to urge the Mayor and the City Council not to cut elementary after-school programs in the upcoming city budget. The Mayor’s budget includes a $16 million cut to after-school, which would eliminate programs for 6,600 elementary school children.

“After-school programs are a vital part of our children’s education, in addition to providing extra learning hours and a wide variety of enrichment activities; after-school programs provide children with a safe place to be after school hours, and our city’s parents depend on after-school for childcare. A $16 million cut to elementary afterschool programs is unacceptable. As a City we need to do more, not less for our young people and that means expanding the capacity of after-school programs, including summer programs for our city’s youth,” said Council Member Mathieu Eugene, Chair of the City Council’s Youth Services Committee.

“Henry Street Settlement is grateful to the NYC Council for ensuring that 75 children at our Boys and Girls Republic in Alphabet City on the Lower East Side have access to afterschool and summer camp programming. The youth we serve at BGR are coming of age in a community marked by homelessness, persistent poverty, limited educational attainment, and high rates of violence. These programs are truly a lifeline for the community, and we hope the City prioritizes these services in their upcoming budget so that Henry Street can continue to offer these crucial programs,” said Jeremy Reiss, Deputy Development Officer, Henry Street Settlement.

“For New York City to truly support the working families who keep our economy moving, the City must invest in stable, high-quality after-school programs. It is crucial that the FY 18 budget ensure stability for these essential programs by restoring and baselining $16 million for after-school programs for elementary school students,” said Gregory Brender, Co-Policy Director at United Neighborhood Houses.
“During every budget cycle, our after-school programs are threatened with cuts that shutter critical services for our schoolkids. Our elementary after-school programs need to be expanded to serve more elementary and high school students, not continually put at risk of closure,” said Council Member Peter Koo.

A recent Campaign for Children poll of 800 New Yorkers, commissioned by Citizens’ Committee for Children found that the overwhelming majority of New Yorkers who are likely to vote in the upcoming election wanted to see increased funding for high-quality after-school, summer programs and child care. Specifically, 87% of general election voters and 92% of Democratic primary voters support expanding access to free and reduced price child care, after-school and summer programs. In addition, the high cost of raising a family was a major source of stress for working parents with 83% of general election voters saying the cost of child care, after-school and summer programs is a major financial burden for NYC’s working parents and 76% saying they worry about the cost of raising a family in the city.

“When voters volunteer to pay higher taxes to help families meet the financial burdens of providing for children, it’s proof that so many are struggling with the balance of working while ensuring children have safe, structured places to learn and grow,” said Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens’ Committee for Children. “Parents seek affordable, high-quality early childhood education, after-school and summer programs to ensure the economic stability of their families as well as their children’s academic success, and they want the City’s leaders to expand access,” added March.

The advocates and providers also called on the City to expand after-school programs to more elementary and high school programs and ensure that the City’s after-school program continue to include summer programming, as it has historically. The Mayor’s proposed budget only partially restores summer programming to middle school students and does so for one year only.

"It’s great to see the City prioritizing access to schools with UPK and 3-K for All, but cutting after-school programming forces working families to choose between jobs and childcare. The Mayor and the Council must restore funding for critical after-school programs that enable working families and their children to thrive,” said Sharon Greenberger, President & CEO of the YMCA of Greater New York.

It is more important than ever that the City maintain its investment in after-school programs. The Trump Budget proposes to eliminate all funding for 21st Century, a federal after-school program serving New York City students.

ABOUT CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN: The Campaign for Children is a coalition of 150 early childhood education and after-school advocacy and provider organizations, including Citizens’ Committee for Children, The Children’s Aid Society, United Neighborhood Houses, Good Shepherd Services, FPWA, the Day Care Council of New York, UJA-Federation of New York, and the YMCA of Greater New York. The Campaign’s successful advocacy saved child care and after-school programs for more than 47,000 children by securing more than $120 million of one-year City Council discretionary funds for two consecutive years, which then were successfully baselined. The Campaign also advocated for the expansion of Universal Pre-K and middle school after-school programs in NYC, and saved summer programs for over 31,000 children.

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