For Immediate Release

Council Members, Youth, Providers and Advocates Rally at City Hall to Save Summer Programs for Over 34,000 Middle-School Students and After-School Programs for 9,000 Elementary School Children

As Budget Negotiations Come to a Close, Children Urge the Mayor to Not Cut Their After-School and Summer Programs

June 11, 2018: New York, NY: Since the summer of 2015, the de Blasio administration has been annually threatening to cut $20.35 million for summer camp programming from 34,000 middle school students enrolled in the after-school programs his administration created. The Mayor’s budget once again proposes to cut this funding, as well as funding for after-school programs for 9,000 elementary school children.

Once again, Council Members, youth advocates and providers are rallying at City Hall to call on the Mayor to restore funding for summer programs for over 34,000 middle school students and after-school programs for 9,000 elementary school children. Advocates are urging City to end the budget dance over summer camp and after-school programs by baselining the funding in the upcoming budget agreement. This would prevent children and their parents, as well as program providers, from having to deal with this anxiety, confusion and chaos next year.

Hundreds of middle school children have also written letters to Mayor de Blasio urging him to restore funding for summer camp programs and explaining how the cut impacts them and their families. The children talk about the stress and anxiety facing their families and the prospects of being home playing video games or on the streets unsupervised this summer.

The Campaign for Children has been telling the Mayor that making New York City the fairest large city must mean ensuring low-income working parents have access to safe, developmentally appropriate programs after the school day and during the summer while they are at work. The Campaign for Children is urging the Administration to end the budget dance for summer camp and return to the original model of after-school programming where summer camp was a portion of the program because children who need care from 3-6 PM also need care in July and August.

“Summer programs are invaluable experiences that give young people an opportunity to build self-esteem, social skills, leadership skills, knowledge and friendships. After years of progress, the mayor’s proposed cuts to summer middle school programs threaten to widen the achievement gap and reverse the gains we have been making in education in recent years. Restoring these cuts is amongst my top priorities as we continue in the budget negotiating process,” said Council Member Deborah Rose, Chair of the City Council Youth Services Committee.
“Summer programs are vital to the development of our young people, giving them opportunities to enrich their lives and to grow as individuals. These programs also provide a much-needed resource for our hardworking families, who often struggle to keep their children involved in positive activities when school is not in session. As elected officials, we have an obligation to ensure that these programs receive the appropriate funding in the Mayor’s Executive Budget. That is why we are calling on Mayor de Blasio to support them so that they may provide a constructive atmosphere for learning to 34,000 middle school students this summer,” said Council Member Mathieu Eugene.

“Our city’s children and working families deserve safe, engaging summer after-school programs. These programs keep families from having to make difficult, often costly choices about childcare during summer months while providing valuable social and developmental enrichment. It’s imperative that funding for these vital programs is restored, said Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair of the City Council’s Committee on Education.

“By providing kids with opportunities to continue to grow their leadership and intellectual development in the summer, and providing parents with peace of mind throughout the work week, access to safe, high-quality summer school programs are critical to the stability and success of thousands of public school students and their families,” said Council Member Margaret S. Chin. “But for over 700 middle school students in Lower Manhattan and thousands more across the City, access to this vital programming now hangs in the balance. I join my Council colleagues, Campaign for Children, and all the families rallying to restore funding to these programs to ensure that our City will do all that it can to build a brighter future for our children.”

“I believe in cutting wasteful spending, but cutting funding to children’s programs is something I’d never support. We need to invest as much as we can in our children, and that includes summer camp and after school programs that keep our students engaged and active year round,’ said Council Member Robert Holden.

“For the vast majority of Children’s Aid’s 165-year existence, we have provided rigorous, enriching summer activities to kids knowing full well that it keeps their bodies healthy and their minds engaged and happy. And we have done so in the same under-resourced communities that will feel most acutely the rippling effects of the potential loss of 34,000 seats. Young people need summer programs to avoid summer learning loss. Teens gain valuable employment experience. And their parents can work and maintain financial stability knowing their children are safe while out of school. We cannot implore the mayor and City Council loudly enough to restore this funding,” Phoebe C. Boyer, President and CEO, Children’s Aid.

“Parents rely on the City’s summer programs to provide safe, affordable, developmentally appropriate activities for their children during the months of July and August. These programs not only ensure parents can continue to work, but they offer children with social, cultural, and sports activities as well as academic supports that not only prevent learning loss but provide enriching experiences that help children develop life-long skills and friendships. I am deeply disappointed that the Mayor’s Budget once again proposes to cut summer programming from over 34,000 middle school students. It is imperative that the funding for these programs be restored immediately, said Jennifer March, Executive Director, Citizens’ Committee for Children.
A key aspect of economic equity is high quality, comprehensive educational programming for our children. By cutting $20 million from the Mayor’s preliminary budget, the City is eliminating vital summer programming for thousands of children, which will exacerbate summer learning loss and uncertainty for parents. Summer programs are critical supports, particularly for low-income working parents who struggle to provide for their families, as they help ensure that children are engaged in high quality educational and recreational activities year round. Restoring these cuts is crucial,” said Jennifer Jones-Austin, CEO & Executive Director, FPWA.

“It is outrageous that summer programs for middle school students are once again part of a budget dance. In order to put quality programs together, providers need to know in advance if they will be funded for these services,” said Susan Stamler, Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses. “We call on Mayor de Blasio to immediately restore funding for these important programs for our young people.”

“The continued unreliability of summer camp funding is hurting the New York City families with the greatest economic insecurity. Unless this funding is fully restored, over 34,000 middle school students in many of the city's most underserved neighborhoods will lose access to critical summer programs that keep them safe, growing and learning, and provide them with nutritious meals during the summer months. Good Shepherd Services urges Mayor de Blasio to demonstrate his support for New York's children and families and reinstate this funding immediately to give families and providers time to adequately plan for the excellent summer programming that all children deserve,” said Sister Paulette LoMonaco, Executive Director, Good Shepherd Services.

“COMPASS after-school and SONYC middle school summer programs are often the only affordable, safe and enriching out of school activities for students. UJA-Federation of New York urges the Administration to protect these critical programs and include $20.35 million in the FY2019 budget (enabling 34,000 middle school students to attend summer 2018 programs) and $16 million maintained for elementary after-school capacity during the 2018-2019 school year,” said Louisa Chafee, Senior Vice President for Public Policy and External Relations, UJA-Federation of New York.

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, Children’s Aid, 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 34,000 children.

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