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New York City Named One of the Nation's *100 Best Communities for Young People* By America's Promise Alliance and ING

Competition Recognizes the City's Effort to Focus on Quality Youth Development Programming that is Helping to Create Brighter Futures for Young People

New York, N.Y. —The efforts of New York City civic and community leaders were honored today when America's Promise Alliance, the nation's largest partnership organization dedicated to youth and children, announced the city had been named a winner of the Alliance's *100 Best Communities for Young People* competition presented by ING, a global financial services company. Its 2010 recognition marks the third win for New York City in the competition.

The *100 Best* designation recognizes those communities that make youth a priority by implementing programs that help keep children in school and prepare them for college and the 21st century workforce. In addition to enhancing local educational opportunities, most winning communities have taken steps to encourage youth civic engagement and supply developmental resources, such as quality afterschool programming, that create better places for young people to live and grow. The entire 2010 list of *100 Best Communities for Young People* and their accomplishments can be found at www.americaspromise.org/100Best.

"I am delighted to see that New York City is once again being recognized for its track record in developing data driven, research based models that prepare our young people for school, work and life," said **Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav**. "Even during these tough economic times, our city remains a leader in cultivating quality programs, proving that our young people are ready to succeed if only we give them the opportunity. We have found a way to maintain our commitment to the next generation, and I want to thank the America's Promise Alliance for acknowledging the tremendous work of this agency and our partners in the community."

"Getting our children ready to compete in the 21st Century workforce is a day in and day out commitment," said **Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott**. "It demands not only first rate schools, but also comprehensive afterschool programs and ways to encourage our young people to take part in the civic process. I am very proud that the America's Promise Alliance has once again selected our City as one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People. I have no doubt that if we keep up our tremendous efforts to engage our young people, our city will be on this list for a long time to come."

"Through its innovative and far-reaching programs, New York City is taking bold and effective steps to help their young people graduate and lead healthy, productive lives," said **Marguerite W. Kondracke, America's Promise Alliance president and CEO**. "New York City serves as

an example to inspire and educate other communities across the nation to tackle the challenges facing their city and children, and to implement initiatives that give them the essential resources they need to succeed in life.”

New York City was named one of the nation’s *100 Best* because of its continued investment in young people. Out-of-school time programs continue to provide much needed service for the city’s youth. Currently in its fifth year, one after school initiative, Teens Take the City offers youth hands-on experience in shaping public policy and provides a voice in high-level conversations.

Many programs across the five boroughs aim to provide applicable experience for youth and encourage service in the community. In one Brooklyn neighborhood, the Sunset Park Alliance for Youth serves 1,300 young adults and provides job training and placement, academic reinforcement and support services. Opportunities for young people to help others and reinvest in their own communities have been a focus for New York City. One citywide initiative, the Summer of Service 2009, sent 1,385 youth into public housing developments across all boroughs for sustainability efforts at 10 different locations.

On September 21, 2010, New York City and the other winners spanning 37 states were recognized at a ceremony in front of the Washington Monument on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Each of the winning communities was formally recognized with a designation on a map of the U.S., illustrating the geographic and demographic diversity of the winning 100 communities. In addition to the *100 Best* distinction, New York City and the other top communities will receive two road signs identifying the city as one of *100 Best*, as well as a trophy to be presented to local officials later this year.

Alliance Chair Alma Powell and President and CEO Marguerite W. Kondracke revealed the list of winners during the national celebration. They were joined by Rhonda Mims, president of the ING Foundation and senior vice president, ING’s Office of Corporate Responsibility and Multicultural Affairs and *Twilight’s* Kellan Lutz, who both share a passion for the development of young people.

“ING is committed to children’s education and to the advancement of education initiatives that prepare them for successful futures,” **said Mims.** “Our support for *100 Best* demonstrates our goal of honoring communities like New York City that produce real, measurable results for improving the lives of young people.”

The competition is one element of the Alliance’s Grad Nation campaign, a 10-year initiative to mobilize all Americans to take action in their communities to end the high school dropout crisis and prepare young people for college and the 21st century workforce. More than 7,000 students drop out each school day in the U.S., resulting in 1.3 million young people a year. To help decrease these numbers, the Alliance is more committed than ever to recognizing communities – regardless of size, location or history – that are taking real action to help more young people stay in school and graduate on time.

“*100 Best* is an essential building block of an inspiring national movement that gives everyone a chance to ensure every young person graduates,” **said Powell.** “These winning communities refuse to let the challenges they face be the determining factor in the lives of their children and youth. Instead, they are helping to build an infrastructure of assertive, successful and dynamic young people that are the future of this country.”

“Harlem RBI is pleased that New York City is being recognized as one of America's 100 Best Communities for Young People,” said **Richard Berlin, Harlem RBI's Executive Director**. “We believe that the best road for New York’s long term success is for the city to continue to invest in its young people. By providing opportunities for all young people to develop and succeed, we will create even stronger communities and a better city for us all.”

“The YMCA of Greater New York is committed to nurturing the potential of every youth and teen in New York City,” said **Jack Lund, President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater New York**. “Our programs provide kids in New York City with the opportunity to cultivate values, skills and relationships that lead to positive behaviors, better health and educational achievement. Through programs like Teens Take the City, we’ve been able to inspire young people to exercise their civic duties, develop self-confidence and give back to their communities.”

“For 106 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City has been changing the lives of youth in our community through one-to-one mentoring. We are proud that we have helped our city to once again be acknowledged as one of the nation’s best for young people,” said **Jon May, BBBS of NYC Board President**.

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