

Contact: Andrew Doba
adoba@dycd.nyc.gov
(212) 442-5979 or (347) 622-2914

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DYCD and NYC Service Conclude the 3rd Annual Summer of Service Initiative

Young People From Across the Five Boroughs Complete Work on Service Projects that Improved Their Neighborhoods

Bronx, NY – Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav and NYC Chief Service Officer Diahann Billings-Burford today took part in the 2011 Summer of Service culminating event at a community garden in the Morrisania section of the Bronx. Summer of Service is a five week program that encourages young people to take an active role in their community. Youth volunteers at this site worked on the cleaning up and clearing out of a public space on 168th Street and Prospect Avenue. The project, which is being administered by the Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers Inc. (SEBNC), has engaged more than 100 young people and area residents since its launch on July 15.

“For the last three years, young people from every borough have taken on problems large and small as a part of Summer of Service,” said **DYCD Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav**. “And though this year’s initiative is coming to an end, committed young people and local residents who joined their cause have left an indelible mark on their neighborhoods. Whether they took on public health issues like diabetes or obesity or worked to beautify their public spaces by cleaning up parks and painting over graffiti, Summer of Service participants gave back to their community, and we are all the better off for it.”

“This year marks the third *Summer of Service* for our City’s youth, and the projects addressed are some of our City’s most pressing issues, from improving public health to protecting the environment,” said **NYC Chief Service Officer Diahann Billings-Burford**. “I applaud these young people who have willingly served their communities this summer and encourage them to make a lifelong commitment to giving back through service and volunteerism.”

Summer of Service is made possible by a generous grant made to the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City by the Neuberger Berman Foundation. The Mayor’s Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to innovative public-private partnerships such as Summer of Service. This summer, 16 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) administered projects that engaged nearly 2,000 elementary, middle and high school youth volunteers and more than 1,300 area residents. Projects varied in scope from

organizing a farmer's market on Staten Island to training young people to promote health and wellness in Northern Manhattan.

“Neuberger Berman is proud to partner with DYCD, NYC Service, the Mayor’s Fund and local not-for-profits in this important initiative,” said **Elizabeth Rabii Cribbs, Treasurer of the Neuberger Berman Foundation**. “On Friday Neuberger Berman employees will be in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx volunteering side-by-side with the youth who made these meaningful projects a reality. By engaging our employees in this way, we are reinforcing our Foundation’s core mission of supporting educational enrichment for youth with a strong focus on service.”

Inspired by a desire to combat high asthma rates in the area, young people at SEBNC have worked extensively on the maintenance and restoration of the community garden. As a part of Summer of Service, they have removed debris, put in new planting beds and embarked on a campaign to preserve 100 trees in the neighborhood. Upon its completion, the community garden will be used as a place where residents of Morrisania – young and old – can host special events, in addition to planting fruits and vegetables.

“Without the work of these students from Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers’ Project Uplift Program, we would not have seen the transformation of this space in such a short period of time,” said **Diane M. Herbert, Executive Director of Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers, Inc.** “Their enthusiasm so infected community residents that many stopped by to assist by repairing tools or pulling weeds. I am especially pleased how the self advocates of our developmental disabilities services were welcomed to assist in the project. Program participants and community residents now have an open green space for community activities.”

NYC Service was launched by Mayor Bloomberg in April 2009 to meet his State of the City pledge for New York City to lead the nation in answering President Obama’s national call to service. The program has three core goals: help more New Yorkers connect to service opportunities more easily, target volunteers to address the city’s greatest challenges and promote service as a core part of what it means to be a citizen of the greatest city in the world. NYC Service aims to drive volunteer resources to six impact areas where New York City’s needs are greatest: strengthening communities, helping neighbors in need, education, health, emergency preparedness and the environment. New Yorkers can find opportunities to serve their communities by visiting www.nyc.gov or by calling 311.

DYCD supports New York City’s afterschool and youth workforce development programs throughout the five boroughs. The agency also oversees funding for anti-poverty programs, such as adult literacy and immigrant services. For more information, please go to www.nyc.gov/dydc or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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