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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG HOSTS RECEPTION TO HONOR OUTSTANDING NYC FATHERS WITH SPECIAL GUEST CARMELO ANTHONY AT DADS MATTER AWARDS CEREMONY**

***Citywide Fatherhood Initiative One-Year Progress Report Shows City Agencies Offering Support for Fathers to Positively Engage in their Children's Lives***

***Launch of NYC Dads Website Connects Fathers to Citywide Parenting Resources***

Today Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg honored ten fathers from across New York City who have overcome extraordinary challenges to become positive and consistent forces in the lives of their children at the *Dads Matter* event at Gracie Mansion. Mayor Bloomberg was joined by New York Knick Carmelo Anthony to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative, NYC DADS, and to announce progress in making New York City agencies more father-friendly. NYC DADS was designed to strengthen New York City's families by helping fathers be more active in their children's lives. To coincide with the ceremony, the Mayor also announced the expansion and relaunch of the NYC DADS website at [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov). Using [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov), fathers can, for the first time, find opportunities through city agencies and New York's community partners to access vital support services that can help improve their capacity to be good parents. The site will also help them locate free and low cost activities and events to enjoy with their children. The Mayor was also joined by Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs and Citywide Fatherhood Services Coordinator Alan S. Farrell.

"When children have the financial and emotional support of two parents, and when their fathers are actively involved in their lives, they are more likely to perform well in school, achieve financial stability and avoid early pregnancy and involvement in the criminal justice system," said Mayor Bloomberg. "New York City is committed to helping more fathers support their children."

"Like millions of dads across the country, President Obama has said that his most important job is being a father," said Joshua DuBois, Special Assistant to the President and Executive Director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. "We are excited that New York City is promoting fatherhood through this year's *Dad's Matter Awards* as we all work toward addressing the crisis of fatherlessness in our communities and making sure every child has a safe, loving home."

"We know that dads matter in the lives of children," said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. "The NYC DADS initiative is helping fathers be there for their kids, both financially and emotionally. The City's ongoing cross-agency commitment to considering – and supporting – the specific concerns of fathers sends the important, empowering message that the City believes they are crucial components in the strengthening of our families and the nurturing and development of our children."

"I try to do my best both on and off the court; however, I know that having the support of my teammates and others is important," said New York Knick Carmelo Anthony. "Being a part of my son's life means the world to me. I am happy to be here today to celebrate this citywide initiative and honor

these fathers, who have worked hard to be a part of their kid's lives."

"Today we honor dads who've overcome life's challenges to be involved in their children's lives," said Citywide Fatherhood Services Coordinator Alan S. Farrell. "We are encouraged by their stories and inspired to continue the work of helping fathers connect with their children and strengthening our city's families."

The ten *Dads Matter* honorees were chosen from more than 100 nominated fathers, submitted from city agencies and community programs. The selected fathers – who range from City agency employees to case workers to men currently accessing the city's myriad employment and training programs – include single father of two John Gallagher, a Department of Citywide Administrative Services' employee of seven years. Mr. Gallagher's two sons live with him and he works to ensure that they have access to the medical care they need to keep them healthy and active. To support his sons' growth he has served as an Assistant Scout Master and coach.

June 17th marks the one year anniversary of from Mayor Bloomberg's launch of a citywide fatherhood initiative to strengthen New York City families by helping fathers be active in their children's lives. Thirteen City agencies were directed to form a task force – the Father's Working Group – to review their policies and practices to make sure fathers are not unintentionally excluded from or missing opportunities to engage in their children's lives. The task force was charged with creating opportunities within each agency and through interagency collaborations to support fathers as they increase their capacity to be good dads.

The Parks Department, Health and Hospitals Corporation, Department of Correction, New York City Housing Authority, Department of Probation, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Human Resources Administration, Department of Education, City University of New York, Administration for Children's Services, Department of Youth and Community Development, Department for the Aging and the Department of Homeless Services were each charged with identifying and removing barriers, as well as transforming agency culture and developing best practices to increase positive father involvement in the lives of their children.

During its first year, NYC DADS facilitated the development of new cross-agency collaborations that will result in better services and more opportunities for fathers and their children. The City's success in this work can lend to decreasing the collateral consequences caused by father absence.

- Housing Authority's fatherhood initiative, the first launched by a public housing authority, is quickly becoming a model for the nation. NYCHA is providing a safe and child-friendly space for dads and their kids to interact while connecting fathers with agencies that can help them to improve their own lives. NYCHA Community Operations provides education, cultural and recreational opportunities to the program, including parenting classes and employment and educational workshops.
- Department of Probation developed a curriculum to re-train probation officers which will be replicated at other city agencies for front-line workers. Probation officers are being prepared to create a more father friendly environment for the men that they serve.
- Parks launched the "Daddy and Me" Adventure pilot program. This eight-session outdoor adventure program provided opportunities for hiking, fishing, orienteering, team-building games, and wilderness survival, and is designed to provide unique bonding and engagement opportunities for fathers and their children. These sessions provided 38 dads and their children an introduction to parks and outdoor recreational experiences.
- In an effort to help fathers become more involved in the education of their children, the Department of Homeless Services has collaborated with the Department of Education's (DOE) Students in Temporary Housing program to offer off-site workshops where fathers could learn how to access DOE's Achievement Reporting and Innovation System, which provides information about their child's academic performance.
- The Department of Correction, in conjunction with the New York Public Library, launched the

Daddy and Me Storybook project for inmates who are parents. Through the Daddy and Me Storybook project, adult inmates who are parents participate in a four-session program that provides parenting and literacy instruction.

New York City's NYC DADS Fatherhood Initiative newly launched, redesigned website at [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov), will serve as a resource for dads throughout the City. Showcasing City services, programs, and events in the five boroughs, NYC DADS's website encourages dads with limited financial resources to meet their financial and emotional responsibilities to their children in positive and meaningful ways. The website features a new "Dads' Resources" section, where NYC fathers can find help from City agencies and partner organizations for issues they may be facing, such as finding employment or housing. The website features information from fourteen City agencies on the many efforts and services directly targeting dads. The site also features a new calendar of events to help fathers and children stay connected with NYC DADS events.