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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND WALMART ANNOUNCE AGREEMENT TO CONTRIBUTE
AND RAISE UP TO \$5 MILLION TO SUPPORT THE CITY'S SUMMER YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

Donations Will Add Up to 3,400 Summer Jobs for NYC Youth

Most Private-Sector Support Ever Raised

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Jeanne Mullgrav and Senior Director for the Walmart Foundation Michelle Gilliard today announced a \$5 million pledge to the Summer Youth Employment Program, which launches its 2011 season today. Walmart's pledge, which brings private-sector support for the City's summer jobs program to its highest level ever, will expand the program by up to 3,400 jobs and help mitigate cuts in State and Federal funding. The Mayor announced the donation at the Brownsville Recreation Center in Brooklyn where he also was joined by Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, City Council Minority Leader James Oddo, Council Member Peter Koo and Council Member Eric Ulrich.

"Walmart's generous donation creates the most job slots the Summer Youth Employment Program has ever raised with private money," said Mayor Bloomberg. "This timely investment in our city's youth comes at a moment when many young people are struggling to find employment and will give thousands the opportunity to take that critical first step toward their career goals."

"A summer job prepares a young person for a working life," said Commissioner Mullgrav. "In the short term, these jobs mean extra money for tuition, books and household expenses. But in the long term, this experience in the world of work is the first open door to a lasting career. I want to thank Walmart for investing in our young people and the future of our city."

"For years, the Walmart Foundation has supported programs that strive to make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers," said Senior Director for the Walmart Foundation Michelle Gilliard. "The City's Summer Youth Employment Program is an initiative that's obviously important to kids and families across the five boroughs, especially during these tough times. We've talked a lot about jobs and this donation was an opportunity to deliver during a time of real need."

“Young Brooklynites, particularly those in Central Brooklyn, are ready, willing and able to get the job done – all they need is the opportunity,” said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz. “When we help youth find jobs through programs like the City’s Summer Youth Employment Program and Summer H.E.A.T, which my office organizes, we make an important investment in our kids by improving their self-esteem, teaching them the value of hard work and giving them real skills for when they enter the adult workforce. So kudos to Walmart for not just improving the lives of thousands of kids today—but helping them realize their dreams tomorrow.”

”I’d like to thank Walmart for this generous \$4 million investment in New York City’s future,” said Minority Leader James Oddo. “This is a lot of money, even for a large corporation, and it is being put to good use supporting thousands of city teens in their first foray in the workforce. I have always supported the Summer Youth Employment Program and encouraged kids in my district to apply, and I would like to thank Walmart for ensuring that more of them are placed this summer.”

“I would like to thank Walmart for partnering with New York City and saving thousands of summer jobs for our young people,” said Council Member Koo. “As we all know, the Summer Youth Employment Program provides an excellent opportunity for businesses to not only have great energetic workers, but to also give young people real-world work experience, networking opportunities and career lessons about New York City businesses. I hope that more corporations will follow and invest in the future work force of New York City. I also want to thank Mayor Bloomberg for his work with Walmart to ensure that the youth of our city are engaged in positive work-related activities during the summer. “

“In today’s economy, it’s hard to find a job,” said Council Member Ulrich. “Thanks to Walmart’s generous donation, thousands of teenagers and young adults will be able to make a little extra money this summer. Walmart is setting a fine example by helping keep our kids off the streets and giving back to the community.”

New York City is spending \$20 million on the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) programs this summer. And in response to substantial cuts in State support this year, combined with the expiration of Federal stimulus funding, left big gaps in the program’s current budget, in May Mayor Bloomberg created “Summer Youth Employment Partners” to push for private donations to the program through the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City. That current total of private donations for summer jobs that the Mayor’s Fund has raised now stands at more than \$6 million – the most ever – with more expected from Walmart’s pledge.

SYEP has provided summer jobs to hundreds of thousands of New York City residents, ages 14 to 24, since its launch in the early 1960s. Participants, who earn minimum wage, are placed at camps, parks, government agencies, local non-profits, hospitals, senior centers, daycare centers and small businesses throughout the city. SYEP also provides career exploration, post-secondary education information and life skills training, including health education and financial literacy. Research shows that early work experience greatly benefits young people. Students who work during high school tend to stay in school and graduate at higher rates. Early work experience is also linked to higher rates of employment and higher earnings: for every year that teens work, income in their twenties increases by an average of 14 percent to 16 percent.

Using only public dollars, the City has been able to provide about 24,000 summer youth jobs this year. With the Walmart Foundation’s commitment, and with donations from more than 30 other companies, the City has been able to increase the number of summer youth jobs to more than 28,000 jobs. This is fewer than last year, but more than it would have been without the private-sector help.

Approximately forty percent of SYEP participants work in summer camps and daycare centers, vastly expanding the capacity of these programs to serve New York City’s working families. The wages earned by SYEP participants also stimulate the local economy. Last summer, participants earned \$36 million in wages, much of which they re-circulated in their neighborhoods through purchases at local businesses.

In 2010, SYEP served over 35,000 young people working at approximately 5,800 sites across the five boroughs. This year, the City reaffirmed its commitment to the program with a \$20 million allocation. The State added another \$10 million. Reductions at the state level and the loss of federal stimulus money, however, reduced SYEP slots to 24,000 slots – less than two-thirds last year’s number and well under half the more than 52,000 young people SYEP placed in 2009. This year, the Department of Youth and Community Development received 131,000 applications from residents in every corner of the City. With demand far exceeding placements, the City launched Summer Youth Employment Program Partners, a public-private partnership to help fund summer jobs for thousands of young New York City residents.

Today’s pledge from Walmart celebrates the initiative’s success in raising more than \$6 million for SYEP, increasing the total number of slots to more than 28,000.

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