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MAYOR BLOOMBERG PLANTS 500,000th TREE TO CELEBRATE HALFWAY MARK OF MILLIONTREESNYC

Key Initiative of PlaNYC is One Year Ahead of Schedule

Fall Volunteer Planting Day Is October 22nd – Thousands of Volunteers will Plant 20,000 Trees

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today celebrated the halfway mark of the MillionTreesNYC initiative by planting the 500,000th tree, a Pin Oak, at Saint Nicholas Park in Harlem. MillionTreesNYC is a public-private partnership between the City of New York and New York Restoration Project that aims to plant one million trees throughout the five boroughs by 2017. MillionTreesNYC was launched in October 2007 with the goal of being complete by 2017. The target planting goals have been exceeded by 20 percent, putting the City one year ahead of schedule in planting one million trees. Mayor Bloomberg, who encouraged all New Yorkers to adopt and care for trees in their communities, was joined by Knicks star and MillionsTreesNYC donor Carmelo Anthony, New York Restoration Project Executive Director Amy Freitag, Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability Director David Bragdon and other community stakeholders.

"Since the MillionTreesNYC initiative began four years ago, New Yorkers have rolled up their sleeves and dug in to make New York City 500,000 trees greener," said Mayor Bloomberg. "This fall, I want to encourage all New Yorkers to continue their efforts to make our City greener and greater by making a pledge to adopt a tree. Trees need us just as much as we need them, so help green your neighborhood, create cleaner air and cooler streets, and improve the health of all New Yorkers."

"The only way a massive city-changing program like this can happen is from collaboration and partnerships – the City and Parks Department; and our private non-profit, New York Restoration Project; many visionary corporations – especially our lead partners BNP Paribas and Toyota; and the public. Together we are changing the ecology of New York City. And we are grateful to everyone who has stepped up and said 'I'm in'," said Amy Freitag, Executive Director of New York Restoration Project.

"It's great to be back in New York and to see it getting greener every day, thanks to the Mayor's MillionTreesNYC initiative," said Carmelo Anthony, who has pledged to adopt a tree outside his home. "Our kids need and deserve clean air, beautiful neighborhoods, and the sense of pride that comes from working together to plant trees and care for them all over our city."

“MillionTreesNYC seeks to expand on its success – of mobilizing thousands of New Yorkers to plant 500,000 trees on streets, in parks, and in natural areas – by encouraging New Yorkers to make a pledge to adopt and care for trees in their neighborhoods,” said New York City Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “Parks is proud to be a part of this initiative and this day, as we celebrate hitting the halfway mark to a million ahead of schedule! Make New York City’s trees part of your family tree by saying “I’m In,” and adopting one today. Trees serve as vital assets to communities by cleaning the air, lowering summer temperatures, beautifying neighborhoods and raising property values, and slowing climate change.”

“PlaNYC was designed to help New Yorkers realize the many benefits of sustainability – combating climate change while enhancing quality of life and strengthening the economy at the same time,” said Mayor’s Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability Director David Bragdon. “Like PlaNYC, a tree delivers more than one benefit at a time: it helps the city absorb more rainwater without expensive additions to the sewer system, it cools us down with shade in the summer, it banks carbon instead of emitting carbon, and it beautifies a neighborhood and raises property values.”

Through a mix of public and private plantings for MillionTreesNYC, the City of New York, New York Restoration Project, community partners and citizen volunteers are planting in places such as schoolyards and playgrounds, public housing campuses, health care facilities, business districts, commercial and residential developments and New Yorkers’ very own front yards. MillionTreesNYC is supported through donations made to NYRP and the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, which helps to facilitate innovative public-private partnerships such as this initiative. On MillionTreesNYC Fall Volunteer Planting Day on October 22nd, NYC Service and thousands of volunteers will plant 20,000 trees at six sites across the five boroughs.

Young trees face many natural and man-made threats from the urban environment and require ongoing maintenance to survive. After planting trees, New Yorkers can take care of trees through the MillionTreesNYC Stewardship Corps, which aims to engage thousands of volunteer New Yorkers who want to keep young newly planted trees healthy and growing. In addition to volunteer tree care events, the Stewardship Corps offers participants the opportunity to take a free tree care workshop, receive free tree care tools, and adopt a street tree online.

MillionTreesNYC is a 10-year initiative to plant and care for one million new trees throughout the City’s five boroughs and a key aspect of Mayor Bloomberg’s *PlaNYC* to create a healthier, more livable city. MillionTreesNYC will ultimately expand the City’s urban forest by 20 percent, provide New Yorkers important health, economic and environmental benefits, and create a more sustainable urban environment. Since its launch in October 2007, public, private and non-profit organizations have rallied over 21,000 citizen volunteers to plant trees in what has become an unprecedented tree planting campaign and citywide environmental movement. To learn more about MillionTreesNYC, visit www.nyc.gov or call 311.

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