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SPECIAL SCREENING OF DISNEY'S *THE GAME PLAN* HOSTED BY NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION AND RUSSELL SIMMONS' RUSH PHILANTHROPIC ARTS FOUNDATION

NYC Dads celebrates involved fatherhood with Harlem Dads who participate in local parenting programs.

New York - The New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) and Russell Simmons' Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation is hosting a special screening of Walt Disney Pictures' new film, *The Game Plan*, on Wednesday, September 26, 2007, at 5 pm at the Magic Johnson Theater in Harlem. The event will bring together Russell Simmons, HRA Commissioner Robert Doar, and Dads and children who participate in Harlem-based youth groups and community programs that offer supportive parenting services for fathers. Special guests will include NY Giants' running back Derrick Ward and former Giants' fullback Charles Way.

NYC Dads is an HRA-led citywide public education campaign focusing on the important role that fathers play in their children's lives. As a part of this initiative, HRA also hosts community events to celebrate low-income Dads who participate in local community-based fatherhood programs.

Fathers make unique and irreplaceable contributions to the lives of their children. Children who spend consistent and positive time with their fathers do better in school, stay out of trouble and have healthy relationships with their peers. Parenting programs are an effective way to give fathers the support they need to care for their families and have been shown to help fathers make significant gains in employment, vocational planning, feeling positive about their current relationships with their children, and being able to plan for the future.

The Game Plan tells the story of a superstar quarterback Joe Kingman, played by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, whose team is chasing a championship. At the top of his career, Kingman is rich, famous and the living the ultimate bachelor lifestyle. But all this comes to an end when he discovers the 7-year-old daughter he never knew he had. Despite the hilarious misadventures that come with being a new father, Kingman discovers that there's more to life than money, endorsements and adoring fans: the love of one very special small fan is the only thing that matters.

"The messages our culture sends play an important role in guiding young people to make the right choices. We at HRA are pleased to partner with groups such as Rush Philanthropic, that are sending the message that Dads need to be there for their children," said HRA Commissioner Robert Doar.

HRA partner, Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation was founded in 1995 by brothers Russell, Danny and Joseph "Rev. Run" Simmons, and is dedicated to providing disadvantaged urban youth with significant exposure and access to the arts, as well as providing exhibition opportunities to underrepresented artists and artists of color.

While Rush's primary emphasis is the arts, the organization is committed to the general well being of young people by considering a wide range of concerns. Through its signature education programs Rush promotes family involvement, and helps to foster positive, supportive environments for the youth it serves by creating art programs that actively engage the youth's parents and siblings in a creative environment.

"Russell, Danny and Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation are thrilled to partner with HRA in their efforts to promote sustained family engagement, knowing that it will lead to more fulfilling lives for our city's children and families, said Rush Philanthropic Executive Director, Tangie Murray.

Harlem-based groups that will be attending the event include Strive's Pops program, SEEDCO's Strengthening Families Through Stronger Fathers Initiative, and youth from Harlem Children's Zone's After School Program.

NYC Programs for Fathers

Mayor Bloomberg's strategy to combat poverty focuses on three major groups: young adults, families with small children and the working poor—among them, young men ages 18 to 24 years old, without a high school education, who are often fathers and disconnected from the workforce.

To increase employment opportunities for non-custodial fathers so they are better equipped to provide financial support to their families, the Department of Youth and Community Development now funds 18 community-based programs—serving 1,500 fathers annually—that help fathers reconnect with their children, find employment, and provide personal and economic support to their children.

HRA's Office of Child Support Enforcement also helps fathers through STEP (SUPPORT THROUGH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM), a program to assist non-custodial parents with job training and placement, so they are able to pay child support.

Most recently, to encourage work and to make work pay for non-custodial parents, Mayor Bloomberg has begun advocacy efforts to significantly increase the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income workers, including fathers who do not live with their children. The proposal includes lowering the qualifying age from 25 years old to 21 years old, to include a larger number of young single dads, and increasing the maximum benefit from \$400 to \$1,200.

NYC Dads

Since his arrival at HRA in February 2006, Commissioner Robert Doar has made involved fatherhood a top priority. In June, the agency created NYC Dads and hosted the first annual Father's Day Picnic at Coney Island's Keyspan Park.

To celebrate Child Support Enforcement Month in August, HRA's Office of Child Support Enforcement hosted a free afternoon at Coney Island's Astroland for nearly 200 fathers with their children. HRA purchased 1,000 discounted tickets and offered them free of charge to low income non-custodial parents who are current in their child support payments.

In the winter 2008, HRA will launch a broad public relations campaign and a website, which will serve as an online resource guide for fathers and families.

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