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United Way of New York City and City's HRA Announce Launch of Groundbreaking "My Door" Initiative for Domestic Violence Survivors

***My Door* provides transitional and support services to ensure safety, economic self-sufficiency and family stability so that families will be able to afford and sustain themselves in their new apartments**

At a joint press conference this morning, Gordon J. Campbell, President and CEO of United Way of New York City and New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) Commissioner Robert Doar announced that "My Door," United Way's and the city's pioneering initiative for domestic violence survivors, has begun serving clients in the Bronx. My Door provides coordinated transitional and support services to families as they transition out of the city's domestic violence shelters, to ensure that when they enter permanent housing, they are safe, financially secure and on track for employment.

"The launch of My Door is so important," said Campbell, "not only because it addresses the three legs of family security—safety, employment and financial stability, and housing—but also because of the new coordinated service model in place, one that addresses the very complex needs of domestic violence survivors.

"United Way of New York City is pleased to once again demonstrate that by working in partnership, government, the philanthropic sector, and community-based organizations can creatively address social service problems that sometimes seem intractable. The seamless model of transitional and ongoing support used in My Door is one that we hope will have impact citywide and beyond," Campbell added.

The press conference was held at United Way of New York City's offices and was attended by many members of the Task Force on Domestic Violence and Permanent Housing and advocates for domestic violence survivors from across the city.

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Plans for a United Way and administration collaboration on after-care services for domestic violence survivors were announced by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and United Way's Campbell at a press conference one year ago, also held at United Way of New York City. At that time, the Mayor announced the expansion of affordable housing options for survivors of domestic violence, including the start of the first-ever New York City housing subsidy program targeted to victims of domestic violence exiting HRA's domestic violence shelters—the Domestic Violence Work Advantage program (DV Advantage). It provides a rental subsidy for these families and also grants them, in recognition of their complex needs recovering from abuse and associated stresses, a six-month waiver of the obligation to be employed before moving into their new homes. My Door provides critical support to the DV Advantage and other housing subsidy programs by ensuring that families have achieved the necessary stability, financial and otherwise, to handle their rents on their own as they enjoy, hopefully, safe and rewarding new lives.

“HRA is very supportive of the My Door initiative,” said Commissioner Doar. “We are proud to partner with United Way of New York City on this important two-year demonstration project, which will lead to good results for vulnerable families.”

Throughout the course of its operation, the My Door program will be extensively evaluated to determine best practices and lessons that will inform and strengthen New York City's design of supportive services for domestic violence survivors in the community.

Laurel W. Eisner, Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families, emphasized how essential the services My Door provides are to the families: “Victims of domestic abuse,” she said, “often tell us they stayed in a violent relationship because they were dependent on their batterers to keep their children clothed, housed and fed. For those who courageously took the leap and came into a domestic violence shelter, My Door will help them achieve that goal on their own. My Door helps them not just to survive, but to thrive.”

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UWNYC is allocating a total of approximately \$500,000, which will be used by Sanctuary for Families to cover the costs of case management and supervision, service delivery, and outcome documentation. My Door is generously supported by the van Ameringen Foundation, Inc. and the Viola W. Bernard Foundation.

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