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PRESS RELEASE

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NYCHA CELEBRATES PUBLIC HOUSING'S 70th ANNIVERSARY

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg joined New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman Tino Hernandez in proclaiming today New York City Housing Authority Day in celebration of the 70th anniversary of public housing in New York City.

"Seventy years ago, New York City led the nation in a bold new effort to eradicate tenements and slums by providing low- and moderate-income families with housing that met high sanitation, health, and safety standards," said Mayor Bloomberg. "With the creation of the New York City Housing Authority 70 years ago, our City made good on our reputation as a bastion of opportunity."

The 70th anniversary of the New York City Housing Authority also marks the birth of public housing in the United States. NYCHA's first development, First Houses, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, took a series of 1846 tenements and demolished every third building to provide adequate light and air, and rehabilitated or rebuilt the remaining buildings. At the same time, by combining backyards, an attractive common courtyard and recreation area was created. First Houses was dedicated in December 1935 and completed on May 31, 1936.

Tino Hernandez, NYCHA's 19th Chairman, proudly remarked that, "over the years, NYCHA has been shaped into the premier public housing agency in the nation through the work of talented and dedicated people." He pointed out that "NYCHA's 70-year tradition of excellence was not achieved easily nor will it continue without our commitment to meet and overcome new challenges".

Not only is NYCHA the oldest public housing authority in North America, it is also the largest with 345 developments containing 2,698 residential buildings housing approximately 419,606 authorized residents in 181,856 apartments. Today, NYCHA represents 8.6 percent of the City's rental apartments and is home to 5.2 percent of the City's population.

NYCHA is nationally recognized as the finest large housing program in the country. Along

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NYCHA Celebrates 70th Anniversary add 1/1/1

with conventional public housing, NYCHA also administers the Section 8 Leased Housing Program for over 90,000 New Yorker families. NYCHA residents and Section 8 voucher holders combined occupy 12.7 percent of the City's rental apartments.

"Much of NYCHA's success is attributed to constant upkeep and preservation of our infrastructure coupled with modernization of aging developments and providing more than just a place to live," Hernandez stated.

There are a wide variety of programs offered by NYCHA that are geared specifically to special age or special needs groups such as children, teens, single-parents, seniors, substance abusers, and victims of domestic violence, among others. NYCHA oversees a network of over 400 community facilities that include community centers, senior centers, health care centers, day care and Head Start educational centers.

NYCHA's 70th anniversary also marks a step into the future with the beginning of a five-year process to document the history of the Housing Authority. This includes a program of compiling oral histories from NYCHA residents, from staff and retirees.

"As far as NYCHA's future is concerned, I'm committing NYCHA to a continuation of our close collaboration with the City's other housing agencies, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the New York City Housing Development Corporation, to carry out Mayor Bloomberg's \$3 billion New Housing Marketplace Plan to produce and preserve 65,000 units of affordable housing over the next four years," Hernandez remarked.

NYCHA has identified properties in the Bronx and Manhattan and Staten Island for redevelopment as affordable housing because the properties were vacant, unused, underdeveloped or in an advanced level of deterioration.

"The fiscal challenges NYCHA faces are bringing about new ways of looking at how we will continue to successfully operate in the future," Hernandez emphasized

This past summer saw a proud display of the scope of NYCHA's staying power. Two developments celebrated their 60th anniversaries – Ingersoll and Whitman Houses in Brooklyn; and seven celebrated their 50th anniversaries – Gravesend Houses in Brooklyn, Martin Luther King Towers and St. Nicholas Houses in Manhattan, Mariner's Harbor on Staten Island, South Jamaica in Queens, and Highbridge Gardens and Soundview Houses in the Bronx.

First Houses, which sits on 1.23-acres, consists of eight buildings, 4 and 5-stories high with 126 apartments housing some 174 residents. It is located between East 2nd and East 3rd Streets, Avenue A and First Avenue on Manhattan's Lower East Side. First Houses, along with Harlem River Houses and Williamsburg Houses, enjoys New York City landmark status.

Detailed information on NYCHA can be obtained from our website: www.nyc.gov/nycha.