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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
COMMISSIONER JIMENEZ OPEN NEW YORK CITY'S THIRD
FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER**

***One-Stop Service Center to Help Victims of Domestic
Violence and their Children in the Bronx***

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez today opened the Bronx Family Justice Center. The Bronx Center, the third in the Family Justice Center Initiative, is part of the Bloomberg Administration's overall effort to reduce domestic violence and provide comprehensive services to victims. Created in partnership with Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson, the new center brings together dedicated domestic violence prosecutors, civil attorneys, and social service providers under one roof to help victims of domestic violence and their families. As a result of the City's focus on this issue, over the last eight years, family related homicides have declined by 20% citywide, and thousands of victims have had access to services when they have needed them the most. Joining the Mayor at the opening were Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., Deputy Mayor for Legal Affairs Carol A. Robles-Roman, Chief Advisor to the Mayor for Policy and Strategic Planning and Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt, Mayor's Fund to Advance New York President Megan Sheekey, and Grammy award-winning salsa singer and composer Gilberto Santa Rosa.

"We're committed to keeping New York the safest big city in the nation, and that includes making New York a leader in combating domestic violence," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Our groundbreaking Family Justice Centers in Brooklyn and Queens have provided a safe haven for families that need to re-start their lives, and now women and children victimized by violence in the Bronx will have a new place to turn for the resources they need to get their lives back on track."

"Victims of domestic violence should know that they are not alone," said Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez. "By putting all these services under one roof, we want to make it as easy as possible for someone in an abusive situation to get the support and help they need and deserve."

The new Family Justice Center will streamline the process for domestic violence victims in the Bronx, encouraging them to seek help and allowing them to receive the services they need. The City's first Center, in downtown Brooklyn, was opened in 2005, and the second Center in Kew Gardens, Queens, opened in 2008. Together, they have had over 80,000 visits to date, with a combined daily average of over 130 visits a day. One of the most unique aspects of these Centers is the provision of legal services by immigration attorneys who can help apply for federal assistance

under the Violence Against Women Act. To date, they have assisted over 2,500 victims with immigration concerns and have assisted in filing for 287 U-Visas, 97 Self-Petitions for Lawful Permanent Residence, and 35 Battered Spouse Waivers. Clients also have the opportunity to meet with Family Court attorneys who can assist them with child support and custody proceedings. At the Centers, clients can participate in self-sufficiency programs that include English as a Second Language, job readiness, resume preparation, and financial literacy workshops. Other services available to victims at the Center include parent and children's counseling, safety planning, assistance with filing police and probation reports, prosecution of domestic violence crimes, services for the elderly and/or disabled, and help with affordable housing and public benefits assistance. Staff members of the center will offer services in 15 languages and telephonic interpretation will be available in over 150 other languages.

"Whatever can be done to provide an added measure of safety and protection to the people of the Bronx, having a multitude of services available in one place for Bronx families, will definitely speed the delivery of services to those whom we serve," said Bronx District Attorney Johnson.

"The Bronx Family Justice Center will provide the most cutting edge services and collaborations to combat domestic violence in the Bronx," said Deputy Mayor Robles-Roman. "We've created the model for how a Family Justice Center provides much needed services for victims. Professionals from all walks work together to come up with solutions and services – including police officers, social workers, prosecutors, clergy and lawyers. This team will protect Bronx families and children from violence and harm."

Additionally, the Family Justice Center in the Bronx will utilize a recently launched paperless client intake system that will greatly enhance the coordination among the partner agencies co-located at the Center. This new system, developed by the City's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, will now be in use at all three Centers.

Services for clients of the new Center in the Bronx are provided by the following City and non-profit partners: the Bronx County District Attorney's Office, Barrier Free Living, Health and Hospital Corporation, Human Resources Administration, inMotion, Inc., Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, The Legal Aid Society-Bronx Neighborhood Office, Legal Services NYC-Bronx, Neighborhood Self-Help by Older Persons Project, New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, New York City Department of Probation, New York City Housing Authority, New York City Police Department, Regional Aid for Interim Needs, Inc., Safe Horizon, Sanctuary for Families, Sauti Yetu Center for African Women, Urban Justice Center and Violence Intervention Program, Inc.

"I am happy to join Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Jimenez to celebrate the opening of the Bronx Family Justice Center," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. "This center is a true example of taxpayer dollars going to good use. Through the work at this new center, we are healing and rebuilding the spirits and lives of all those that will walk through these doors. This model of partnerships between City agencies, community based organizations, law enforcement and domestic violence advocacy groups is one that I am extremely proud of and that should be replicated to serve other pertinent social issues."

At the opening, the Mayor also launched a new Spanish-language public service announcement radio campaign with the support of

93.1 FM Amor and Mega 97.9 FM. Mayor Bloomberg, Commissioner Jimenez and Grammy award-winning musicians Gilberto Santa Rosa and Juan Luis Guerra, recorded announcements that will be heard on the two New York City radio stations owned by the Spanish Broadcasting System. Gilberto Santa Rosa and Juan Luis Guerra recently collaborated on a successful domestic violence prevention campaign with the Procuraduría de la Mujer (Women's Advocate's Office) of the governments of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The announcements are the first phase of a public education effort to be unveiled in the coming weeks to raise awareness about domestic violence in places people visit everyday such as banks, restaurants, supermarkets, and pharmacies throughout the city.

"I am honored to be here today to lend my voice and recognition to help victims of domestic violence," said Gilberto Santa Rosa.

"Preventing domestic violence is something to which we can all contribute in one way or another. Domestic violence must stop, and must stop now. Love is respect"

The \$4.4 million New York City Family Justice Center in the Bronx, like the Brooklyn and Queens Centers, is a public-private partnership coordinated with the help of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established to promote partnerships between the City and the private sector. An annual event to benefit of the Mayor's Fund, Fete de Swifty, raised significant support for the development and operation of this Center. Members of the benefit committee were present at today's announcement to celebrate the opening. This Center in the Bronx, built by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services using a number of green and recycled materials, is supported by a diverse group of companies, foundations, and citizens which includes: Verizon Wireless, Verizon Foundation, Xerox, WebHouse, Inc., Dell, Inc., Cisco Systems, Inc., and Network Appliance, Inc.

The New York City Family Justice Center in the Bronx will be open to victims beginning Tuesday, April 20, 2010. If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, help is available 24-hours-a-day in all languages by calling 911, 311, or the New York City Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-621-HOPE (4673).

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