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Dads Visit NYC Family Justice Center in Manhattan to Observe Denim Day, Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April 23, 2014 – To mark Denim Day and Sexual Assault Awareness Month, **Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Bill Chong** and **Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis** welcomed more than a two dozen fathers to OCDV's New York City Family Justice Center, Manhattan. In addition to touring the new facility, the fathers from The Osborne Association, Midtown Community Court, Union Settlement Association, Friends of Island Academy and Forestdale attended a workshop conducted by the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy staff. The event was part of Denim Day NYC 2014 observances focused on engaging men to speak out against sexual violence, including a rally and press conference on the steps of City Hall.

"By empowering men with the tools they need to advocate against sexual violence and for healthy relationships—not only their own but those of their friends and peers—DYCD's Fatherhood Initiative and community providers are strengthening New York City's families and young people," said Commissioner Chong. "DYCD is proud to partner with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence in addressing these very important issues on Denim Day and throughout the year."

"Survivors of sexual violence in New York City should know you are not alone, the City cares, and there are resources available," said Commissioner Pierre-Louis. "It is important that this year's Denim Day is a call to action to men because ending sexual violence must be everyone's priority. Men can make the difference by demonstrating that there is no excuse and never an invitation to rape. While this day is important to cast a spotlight on this issue, every day needs to be Denim Day in order to stop sexual violence."

OCDV operates the New York City Family Justice Center, Manhattan, as well as Centers in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, which provide comprehensive multilingual services to victims of domestic violence and their children, as well as elder abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking victims. With only one appointment, victims can meet with a prosecutor; receive legal advice on federal immigration remedies, divorce and custody issues, and

orders of protection; talk to a counselor; and apply for emergency housing—all while their children play safely in the next room. OCDV's peer-education prevention program, the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy, provides healthy relationship workshops to young people, parents and service providers throughout the City.

Denim Day grew out of a 1998 Italian Supreme Court decision that overturned a rape conviction because the victim wore tight jeans. The judges reasoned the victim's tight jeans meant that she had to have helped her assailant remove them, implying consent. After worldwide outrage, wearing jeans became an international symbol of protest against erroneous and destructive attitudes and myths surrounding sexual assault. Peace Over Violence, a nonprofit organization in Los Angeles led by Patti Giggans, organized the country's first Denim Day event in 1999.

DYCD supports New York City's afterschool and youth workforce development programs throughout the five boroughs. The agency also oversees funding for anti-poverty programs, such as adult literacy and immigrant services. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dycd or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence formulates policies and programs, monitors the citywide delivery of domestic violence services, and works with diverse communities to increase awareness of domestic violence. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

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