

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES COMMISSIONER WALSH PRESENT
NINTH ANNUAL NEIGHBORHOOD ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

***17 Organizations and Individuals Honored for Work to Revitalize New York City's
Communities***

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Small Business Services Commissioner Robert W. Walsh today presented the 2010 New York City Neighborhood Achievement Awards to 17 recipients from all five boroughs. Established in 2002, the awards honor organizations, businesses and individuals that have demonstrated excellence in enhancing New York City neighborhoods by fostering economic opportunity. Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Walsh presented the awards at a reception at Gracie Mansion.

"Many of New York City's local businesses and community members play a vital role making our neighborhoods great places to live, work and visit, and they deserve our recognition," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Tonight we honor and celebrate the recipients of the 2010 New York City Neighborhood Achievement Awards for their hard work and their commitment to the vitality of our City."

"We are honoring individuals, organizations and businesses that represent some of the 300 diverse and unique neighborhoods of New York City – neighborhoods made infinitely better because of this year's recipients," said Commissioner Walsh. "Great cities are built on great neighborhoods and I want to thank tonight's awardees for their commitment to building strong communities, and creating jobs and opportunities for New Yorkers."

The Leadership Award was presented to two individuals:

George Kaufman — Mr. Kaufman is chairman of both Kaufman Astoria Studios and the Kaufman Organization, a commercial real estate company. In 1980, he acquired Astoria Studios, a lone building in an underdeveloped area of Astoria. His vision was to create a vibrant, full-service production center capable of handling any type, size and style of production, while also serving as a catalyst for neighborhood economic growth. Kaufman Astoria Studios is now the biggest film and television production studio east of Hollywood, making Astoria a world-class destination for film and television production. The studio has created hundreds of jobs, provided office space for new tenants and attracted numerous businesses to the neighborhood, including national retailers, restaurants and a multiplex theater. The Kaufman Astoria Studios complex is also home to The Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, The Museum of Moving Image and the new Stage K, a 40,000-square-foot film and television production studio. The studio complex creates production, arts and business opportunities for current and future generations of New Yorkers.

Mary Wittenberg – Ms. Wittenberg is the president and CEO of the New York Road Runners, a non-profit organization that has been dedicated to growing the sport of running and enhancing health and fitness for people of all ages for 50 years. Every year, New York Road Runners puts on more than 60 races, including the ING New York City Marathon, of which Mary is the race director. Winding its way through all five boroughs, the race is the largest of its kind in the world and puts a spotlight on New York City's many neighborhoods. With more than 43,000 runners, 6,000 volunteers, and two million spectators, the citywide economic impact of the ING NYC Marathon is estimated at more than \$250 million each year. In addition, every year 100 U.S.-based charities use reserved marathon entries as fundraising vehicles for their organizations, collectively raising over \$20 million. Citywide, New York Road Runners' running-based youth programs serve nearly 100,000 children in hundreds of schools and community centers. The youth programs promote children's physical fitness, character development, and personal achievement in communities

across the City.

The Small Business of the Year Awards were presented to five businesses:

Sweetriot, Downtown Manhattan – Sarah Endline launched sweetriot in October 2005 with the dream of creating a candy company that sold healthy, whimsical and socially responsible products. Sold in 2,500 retailers nationwide, including Zabar's, Gourmet Garage and Garden of Eden in New York City – sweetriot specializes in all-natural, high-quality dark chocolate products, from its original dark chocolate "peaces" collection to the recently launched yumBar collection.

The company equitably sources its cocoa directly from Latin America and uses recyclable, reusable packaging that features original artwork from emerging artists. sweetriot is dedicated to offering consumers a healthy, on-the-go dark chocolate fix. Located in Downtown Manhattan, sweetriot employs five people full time and offers part-time internships to students from New York University, Columbia University, Barnard College and Pace University.

Monique Greenwood's Akwaaba Mansion Bed and Breakfast, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn –

Monique Greenwood has owned and operated the Akwaaba Mansion Bed and Breakfast in Bedford-Stuyvesant for 15 years. The Bed and Breakfast offers a unique experience for all its guests, from residents looking for a getaway to visitors interested in exploring the culture of Brooklyn. Monique has dedicated herself to the growth of her enterprise, as well as the development of the neighborhood, serving as a tireless advocate and constant sounding board for her fellow merchants. Every year, she hosts a retreat for local merchants at the Bed and Breakfast. She also recently hosted a reception that allowed another tenant to raise funds and resolve a serious tax issue.

Formula "B" Parisien Beauty School, Sunnyside, Queens – Carmen Ledesma immigrated to the United States from Paraguay with two goals: to give her three children the best education possible and to open a business. In 1993, she opened her first business, a beauty salon, in Sunnyside, Queens, employing one person. Today, Carmen owns two full-service salons and the Formula "B" Parisien Beauty School, which employ nine Queens residents full time. Formula "B" Parisien Beauty School provides disadvantaged individuals with the skills they need to begin a career in the beauty industry. Carmen has been a strong voice for her community and fellow entrepreneurs; she advocated successfully for New York State to provide free English classes for foreign-language entrepreneurs and she is actively advocating for affordable healthcare coverage for small businesses.

South Bronx Food Cooperative, South Bronx – The South Bronx Food Cooperative is a grocery store that is operated by local residents and dedicated to providing healthy and affordable food to the community. When Zena Nelson founded the South Bronx Food Cooperative in 2007, the tiny store operated with five members and was open only on Saturdays. Today, the SBxFC has attracted more than 200 cooperative members, quadrupled its inventory, and moved to a 1,400-square-foot location open seven days a week. The South Bronx Food Cooperative contributes to the community of the South Bronx beyond its mission of providing fresh and nutritious products by offering educational opportunities like cooking and yoga classes, many of which are in English and Spanish. Located in a neighborhood that is historically underserved, the goal of the South Bronx Food Cooperative is to help improve the various health disparities faced by residents. The only co-op in the borough and one of five in the City, the South Bronx Food Cooperative is small but mighty, and is well on its way to starting a local food movement.

Atlantic Salt, Inc., Port Richmond, Staten Island – Active since 1977, Atlantic Salt, Inc. is a family-owned business that operates a marine terminal on Staten Island's north shore. Dedicated to helping local and state authorities keep the roads safe in bad weather, Atlantic Salt's marine facility receives salt from around the world and sells it to highway departments, municipalities and institutions throughout the tri-state region. In August 2009, Atlantic Salt brought together the Staten Island community by holding the first-ever "Atlantic Salt Maritime Festival," a free celebration to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Hudson's voyage into New York Harbor. The festival opened a marine industrial area not typically accessible to the general public, and

brought together local businesses and residents while heightening public awareness of one of the City's working waterfronts.

The Norman Buchbinder Neighborhood Beautification Award was presented to two organizations:

Out2Play— Out2Play, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing schoolchildren with safe, fun and developmentally beneficial play spaces. With funding and support from private donors, elected officials and the Department of Education, Out2Play transforms empty, asphalt schoolyards into vibrant play spaces, giving thousands of children the chance to run, play ball, climb and be active in a safe, supervised environment. Out2Play develops playgrounds from start to finish by identifying schools, raising the necessary funds, working with the school community and architects to design the playgrounds, hiring contractors and then overseeing construction. In the past three years, Out2Play has created 80 playgrounds that span all five boroughs and nearly one million square feet of previously vacant space. The organization recently secured a grant from the Department of Education to construct 70 more playgrounds across the City. Out2Play not only provides children with spaces for physical activity, but also revitalizes the community, which results in a sense of pride for all residents.

Trust for Public Land— The Trust for Public Land is a non-profit organization that creates outdoor spaces, such as parks and public gardens, to improve communities and the quality of life for residents. This national organization has extended its efforts in New York City by creating programs to make sure that all residents, especially children, have easy access to outdoor spaces. In partnership with *PlaNYC*, the organization's NYC Playgrounds Program will establish 151 playgrounds and parks throughout the city, bringing 380,000 children new places to play. The Trust for Public Land engages school teachers and administrators, students and members of the community in the design of recreational areas suitable for each neighborhood. Since the early 1970s, the Trust for Public Land has helped construct over 300 parks and other spaces, and has helped to create and restore nearly 70 public gardens. The Trust for Public Land's work has transformed spaces that will benefit communities across the five boroughs for years to come.

The Development Award was presented to *The Archway* of DUMBO, Brooklyn. The Archway is a 7,000 square foot tunnel under the Manhattan Bridge, paved with historic Belgian block. The Archway, which was closed for 17 years and used as a New York City Department of Transportation facility, was recently reclaimed by the Dumbo Improvement District in an effort to better serve the local community. With Rogers Marvel Architects, PLLC and the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the space has been repurposed for more sustainable uses revolving around public art and cultural programming. Since the construction was completed last year, the Dumbo Improvement District has brought an eclectic mix of cultural and artistic events to the Archway, including the Brooklyn Flea, DUMBO Fight Night, and live viewings of the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa. This new public space has brought a wealth of social and cultural benefits to the neighborhood.

The Partnership Award was presented to *Volunteers of Legal Services* of Manhattan. Volunteers of Legal Service has worked for 25 years to connect New Yorkers with high-quality legal assistance that they could not otherwise afford. The organization's Microenterprise Project provides pro bono legal services to small businesses and entrepreneurs, helping them structure their businesses, review contracts and leases, and address intellectual property issues. Volunteers of Legal Service recruits top law firms and matches them with both non-profit organizations and economic development agencies to serve the City's business community. These legal partners empower entrepreneurs and small business owners with the knowledge they need to make sound legal decisions that can have a long-term positive impact on their success.

The Placemaking Award was presented to *Red Hook Food Vendors* of Red Hook, Brooklyn. On summer weekends, 10 street food vendors hailing from Latin America park their trucks at the intersection of Bay Street and Clinton Street in Brooklyn to serve food to people spending their day at nearby Red Hook Park. These traditional artisan cooks are collectively known as the Red

Hook Food Vendors, and have been a staple of Brooklyn summers for the past 36 years. Originally an informal open-air market, the Red Hook Food Vendors have grown from a handful of individual vendors into a coalition of small businesses who have an official relationship with the Department of Parks and Recreation. The vendors have put Red Hook on the culinary map, bringing new energy to the historic neighborhood and attracting visitors from all over the City. Many of the vendors have expanded their operations and now run successful satellite stands at various locations citywide, including Brooklyn Flea and Central Park's Rumsey Playfield for 2010 Summerstage Concert Series.

The Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise Advocate of the Year Award was presented to two individuals:

Reverend Jacques A. DeGraff – Reverend Jacques DeGraff is the Vice President of One Hundred Black Men, Inc., a member of the Minority Business Leadership Council, and a board member of Nontraditional Employment for Women. He also serves on the pastoral staff at the historic Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem. In 2009, Reverend DeGraff served as the lead representative from the M/WBE community during extensive negotiations between the City of New York and the Building Trades Council, which resulted in the Project Labor Agreements, covering most new public building construction and building renovation over the next four years. Thanks to the guidance of Reverend DeGraff, the Project Labor Agreements include groundbreaking commitments that allow for greater access to work by M/WBE firms. The Project Labor Agreements will save the City nearly \$300 million, restoring dozens of major infrastructure projects and creating hundreds of construction jobs.

Alfred Placeres – Alfred Placeres is the president of the New York State Federation of Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, a board member of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and has been involved in Hispanic advocacy in New York, Washington D.C., and abroad for over 30 years. Mr. Placeres is an immigration attorney and serves as a director for the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Foundation, where he chairs the subcommittee on immigration. Since 2004, Mr. Placeres has served on the New York City M/WBE Advisory Board, advising the Department of Small Business Services on how to make M/WBE certification more accessible and valuable. He has helped Small Business Services develop strategies that have led to an increase in the number of certified firms from 1,035 in June 2006 to nearly 2,800 today. Throughout his time on the M/WBE Advisory Board, he has consistently served as a consensus builder and champion of the program.

The Workforce Innovation Award was presented to *Hostos Community College* in the South Bronx. As the only public institution of higher education in the South Bronx, Eugenio María de Hostos Community College provides innovative workforce development initiatives to an area that has some of the highest poverty and unemployment rates in New York City. Hostos meets the needs of low-income students from diverse backgrounds through a wide range of programs, including health associate's degree programs in fields such as nursing and dental hygiene, training designed for non-native English speakers and a program to help public housing residents overcome multiple barriers to employment. All students intern locally, and many graduates have returned to work in their home communities to do their part in helping transform this area. Through these programs, Hostos is providing critical training and education to residents, while also increasing the community's access to affordable health services.

The Service Award was presented to two individuals:

Stuart Saft– Stuart Saft is a partner and head of the Global Real Estate Practice at Dewey & LeBoeuf, LLP, a leading global law firm providing clients with both local and cross-border solutions. Stuart served for a decade as the chairman of the New York City Workforce Investment Board, seeing the City through its darkest days after September 11, 2001. Under Stuart's leadership, New York City transformed its workforce system, growing the number of Workforce1 Career Centers from three to ten, and increasing the number of New Yorkers placed in jobs each

year from 500 to 25,000. He has been a steady, devoted, passionate leader.

Rocco Damato— Rocco Damato is the CEO of A.L. Bazzini Co., Inc., which has been producing quality nuts, dried fruits and confections for more than 100 years. Rocco has been a member of the New York City Workforce Investment Board for more than eight years. During his tenure, New York City's workforce system has grown not only in size but also in strength. As the chair of the Workforce Investment Board's Workforce Policy Committee, he has provided strategic thinking and innovative ideas, developing policies that are practical and outcome-oriented for both jobseekers and businesses.