

Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York

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Newly Refurbished Gymnasium at Farragut Houses in Brooklyn: Funding through Seized Narcotics Proceeds

Ceremony and community basketball gam, 2 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, July 16

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Kings County District Attorney Kenneth P. Thompson, New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton, Frederick J. Watts, Executive Director of New York City's Police Athletic League (PAL), New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Vice President for Community Operations Deidra Gilliard, and Karen Means, Chief Development Officer and Executive Vice President for Goodwill Industries of Greater New York & Northern New Jersey, announced the unveiling of a newly refurbished gymnasium at the Farragut Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development in the Vinegar Hill section of Brooklyn.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place at 2 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, July 16, in the Farragut Houses Community Center, located at 228 York Street. The refurbished gymnasium features newly finished and painted floors, new safety mats and an upgraded scoreboard. Financial support is derived from drug trafficking proceeds obtained during criminal prosecutions by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and the Kings County District Attorney's Office.

Following the ceremony, a PAL "Cops & Kids" basketball game is scheduled to take place between youth from the Farragut Houses and officers from the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Police Service Area 3 (PSA3) Housing Bureau.

The Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office, the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Brooklyn North and the 84th Precinct conducted a long-term investigation into drug trafficking at the Farragut Houses from March 2014 to January 2015. Undercover NYPD officers made over 100 purchases of crack cocaine, heroin

and other drugs. The investigation, which was sparked by community complaints and incidents of gang-related violence, also resulted in the seizure of three firearms.

Drug trafficking groups had seized control of multiple apartments, including vacant apartments, for use as stash locations and for meeting customers. A total of 14 defendants were charged by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office. The Kings County District Attorney's Office prosecuted a number of other individuals on weapons charges and other crimes pursuant to court authorized searches of the apartments.

By supporting recreational programs, the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office and the Kings County District Attorney's Office join in a cooperative effort to strengthen the community in the wake of enforcement activity and to build relationships between young people and law enforcement. This program is the result of a successful collaboration between law enforcement and PAL, NYCHA and Goodwill Industries of Greater New York & Northern New Jersey, as well as community members dedicated to protecting the safety of residents and improving the quality of life for the city's youth.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, "It is gratifying to put seized narcotics proceeds to good use by supporting youth athletics at the Farragut Houses. We hope young people in the community will enjoy the gymnasium for years to come, and we look forward to many more collaborations with the Police Athletic League and all of our partner agencies to provide safe and fun recreational opportunities."

Kings County District Attorney Kenneth P. Thompson said, "Clearly, our partnership with the NYPD and SNP has led to numerous alleged drug traffickers being locked up and their criminal proceeds put to good use. I can't think of a better use of seized funds than to create a safe and modernized recreation area where young people can gather and get off of the streets."

"The NYPD is proud to see these criminal proceeds transformed into an athletic resource that will now be used by the community at the Farragut Houses, beginning with a basketball game between local youth and NYPD Police Officers," said Police Commissioner William J. Bratton. "This refurbished gymnasium is the result of the efforts of the Police Athletic League and our many partners who remain dedicated to supporting the youth and residents in public housing."

PAL Executive Director Frederick J. Watts said, "I am excited that the Special Narcotics Prosecutor continues her office's great partnership with PAL, supporting our role in bringing quality programs to community youth. PAL's collaboration with Ms. Brennan's office, the Kings County District Attorney, the NYPD, and NYCHA, not only promotes crime prevention, but strengthens relationships between law enforcement and the community."

New York City's Police Athletic League is the first and finest civilian-run PAL in the country. Founded in 1914, PAL has served the city's young people for over 100 years. PAL provides recreational, educational, cultural and social activities to 35,000 boys and girls annually. It is also the city's largest, independent, nonprofit youth organization. For more information, please visit www.palnyc.org.

NYCHA Vice President for Community Operations Deidra Gilliard said, "I commend Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan, Kings County District Attorney Kenneth P. Thompson, New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton, and other partners on this wonderful achievement for the youth of Farragut Houses. It is always moving when the proceeds from an activity that works to destabilize a community can instead be used to rebuild it. We recognize the incredible importance safe and modern recreational spaces have in public housing, and we look forward to continuing our work with community partners like Goodwill."

Karen Means, Goodwill Chief Development Officer and Executive Vice President, said, "Goodwill NYNJ is very proud to work together with the Special Prosecutors Office, DYCD, NYCHA and PAL in this initiative which supports the growth and development of strong communities. By connecting young people to caring adults and providing safe structured activities, we hope to increase resiliency in our

young people. We are excited about the possibilities this gym will bring to the families living in Farragut Houses.”

For 100 years, Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey, Inc., a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, has empowered individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment to gain independence through the power of work. Last year, Goodwill NYNJ provided access to opportunities to build careers and strong families to 95,000 people and placed more than 8,400 individuals in jobs. Goodwill’s Cornerstone Initiative at NYCHA Farragut Community Center provides an array of quality services through theme-based programming to youth and adults during non-school hours.