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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, COUNCIL SPEAKER QUINN, DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING COMMISSIONER BARRIOS-PAOLI AND THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE UNVEIL UPDATE ON AGE FRIENDLY NYC INITIATIVES**

*Latest Report – Age-Friendly NYC: 59 Initiatives – Released as City Wins **Best Existing Age Friendly Initiative Award** from the International Federation on Aging*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs, Department for the Aging Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, and New York Academy of Medicine President Dr. Jo Ivey Boufford today released a progress report on *Age-Friendly NYC*, a cross-agency, public-private partnership created in 2009 to enhance the lives of older New Yorkers. The report, which highlights major achievements in pedestrian safety, parks access and innovative senior centers among others, coincides with the announcement that New York City was recognized as having the Best Existing Age Friendly Initiative in the world through a competition sponsored by the International Federation on Aging. The *2013 Summa Age-friendly Cities and Communities Innovation Award* was presented to *Age-Friendly NYC* in Istanbul, Turkey on behalf of a panel of judges from more than 10 countries and a range of professions. Since its launch in 2009, Age-friendly NYC has engaged the City's agencies, non-profit and business communities to better include and serve older adults in such areas as community and civic participation; housing; public spaces and transportation; and health and social services. Age-friendly NYC has helped create safer streets for seniors, increased the number of transportation options, worked with more than 1,000 local businesses to attract and serve older customers, among other initiatives. Today's report updates *Age-Friendly NYC's* progress since its inception.

“Five years ago, our Administration launched a series of initiatives focused on improving the quality of life of our growing senior community and providing older New Yorkers with new opportunities to take advantage of all that our City has to offer,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “We thank the International Federation on Aging for recognizing our city’s progress and commitment to our seniors. Age-Friendly NYC is working to transform our City into a healthier, safer and more active place to grow older.”

“We’re honored to be recognized for our age-friendly initiative,” said Speaker Quinn. “With the city’s senior population to increase in the next 20 years, our seniors are also growing more active and more involved in their own health and well-being. Age-Friendly NYC will

(more)

continue work to understand the needs and concerns of our older population so that we can secure our City's future.”

“Mayors are in a unique place to structure communities that tap the vitality and strength of the aging population, realizing their potential and preparing for their needs,” said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. “We are proud to be recognized for our leadership under Mayor Bloomberg, and know that this challenge continues to lie in front of all urban areas.”

“It’s a fact of life that everyone gets older and we need to make sure our City is prepared to meet the needs of our aging population. That’s what we set out to achieve five years ago and we are honored that Age-Friendly NYC was recognized for these efforts,” said Department for the Aging Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli. “Our success is due to the collaborative efforts of our sister City agencies, the New York City Council and the New York Academy of Medicine. Without this uniquely innovative partnership and the grassroots community efforts from local businesses and neighborhood organizations, we would not have been able to build the foundation for what makes New York City a better place to live for our seniors.”

“We are extremely honored that Age-friendly NYC has been recognized with this award for its innovative vision and strategy,” Dr. Jo Ivey Boufford, President of The New York Academy of Medicine. “The outcomes of the Age-friendly NYC initiative represent the work of hundreds of public and private partners from across the city over the past six years. We are proud that cities around the world are looking to New York as a model for applying an ‘age-in-everything’ lens across agencies and sectors.”

“With our senior population expected to double over the next two decades, we’ve been actively working to make the Big Apple the best possible place to grow older,” said Council Member Jessica Lappin. “It’s gratifying that New York City has been internationally recognized for our innovative approach to improving the lives of the elderly.”

“I am so proud to have launched the city’s first Aging Improvement District in El Barrio/East Harlem thanks to this exciting collaboration between the City and the New York Academy of Medicine,” said Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito. “We have since worked to bring additional public seating to our community and open the first-ever senior hours at our public pool, which has since spread citywide. These are small but meaningful steps that help make growing older a little bit easier in our communities. I congratulate everyone involved in the Age-Friendly NYC initiative for this honor.”

“I am truly grateful to the International Federation for the Aging for recognizing the work the City has done through Age-Friendly NYC for our seniors in NYC,” said Council Member Arroyo. “Many have participated and much work has gone into bringing us to this point. I look forward to the work ahead, which will bring us closer to our goal of an age friendly New York.”

“Today’s update of Age-Friendly NYC is an affirmation of a concept that I have championed for several years: an age-friendly city is a better city for all,” said Council Member Gale Brewer. “My office has launched several very successful initiatives aimed at older New Yorkers, including the city’s first Age-Friendly Grocery Guide; the Westside Senior Supported

Agriculture Food Bag Program, bringing fresh produce to seniors for a low price; convincing DFTA to provide more fresh produce with meals at senior centers; senior forums co-hosted by the New York Academy of Medicine; and working with nonprofits like Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) to provide seniors with technology training. I look forward to working with partners within and outside government to expand on these initiatives and continue to improve the city for our growing senior population.”

“It is great to see that the Age-friendly NYC initiative has been so successful in helping improve the quality of life for seniors around the city,” said Council Member David G. Greenfield. “We owe it as a City Council to do everything we can to make New York City safer and more convenient for our seniors, who have given so much over the years and deserve our support and respect. I am very proud to have played a role in this great effort and to fight on behalf of seniors each and every day. My thanks to Mayor Bloomberg and Speaker Quinn for their tremendous leadership on this issue.”

*Age-Friendly NYC* is part of an international effort to ensure the great cities of the world not only support their residents as they age, but also tap the tremendous resources older people can offer. New York City is home to 1.3 million older New Yorkers, a number expected to increase by close to 50 percent by 2030. In 2007, the City Council provided funding to NYAM to begin creating a blueprint to help New York City become a model of an age-friendly city. In 2008, the New York Academy of Medicine in conjunction with Speaker Quinn and the Bloomberg Administration released a report, *Toward an Age-Friendly New York City*, which outlined the major themes that emerged from a year-long assessment and conversation with New York’s older residents. In 2009, Mayor Bloomberg, the City Council and NYAM launched *Age-Friendly NYC*, a blueprint for promoting active aging, fulfilling a promise made by Mayor Bloomberg during a State of the City Address.

Age-friendly NYC is a public/private partnership that includes not only government initiatives, but also multiple private and nonprofit initiatives. Some highlights include:

- **Innovative Senior Centers (ISCs):** Throughout 2012 and 2013, the City transformed 10 senior centers into ISCs. ISCs provide enhanced programming, including robust wellness programs, additional access to health care services, arts and cultural programs, and new technological and volunteer opportunities. ISCs will work with individual center members to obtain baseline health information upon enrollment and will measure critical health outcomes over time.
- **Seniors Partnering with Artists Citywide (SPARC):** SPARC places artists in residence at the City’s senior centers, where they provide arts programming to older adults. Currently, there are 50 artists working at 48 centers in a variety of media, including dance, theater, visual arts, music, photography, and writing.
- **Support of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs):** A NORC is a community, comprised of a mixture of privately- and publicly-owned housing, where older residents are a substantial proportion of the households as a result of their aging-in-place. With \$5.6 million in funding, the City provides inter-disciplinary programs called

Supportive Services Programs to the 28 NORCs in NYC. These programs include transportation and shopping services, social activities, connections to community and government resources, health promotion activities, and assistance with health care management.

- **Accessible Dispatch:** After a 2 year pilot program, the City's Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) launched "Accessible Dispatch" in September 2012. Accessible Dispatch compensates drivers for their travel to a pickup location, so passengers pay only the metered taxi fare. In addition, TLC was recently authorized to increase the number of medallions for accessible taxicabs by 2000. All drivers of wheelchair accessible taxicabs are required to participate in the Accessible Dispatch program, which has completed over 18,000 trips since its launch.
- **Safe Streets for Seniors:** Through its Safe Streets for Seniors initiative, the Department of Transportation (DOT) is implementing safety improvements in 25 areas identified as having an above-average rate of senior pedestrian fatalities and injuries. Typical improvements include: extending pedestrian crossing times at crosswalks, adding countdown clocks, altering curbs and sidewalks, restricting vehicle turns, and narrowing roadways. As of May 2013, DOT had finished implementing improvements in 17 of the 25 areas. Since the program began, senior pedestrian fatalities have decreased 21 percent citywide.
- **Falls Prevention:** The NYC Falls Prevention Coalition focuses on advertising solutions to preventing falls among older adults. It includes partners from various sectors, including health care, social services, academia, advocacy, and the government. The Coalition has developed falls prevention web pages, promoted falls prevention education and programming, completed a falls survey among senior center participants, and developed a brief home safety checklist to help people who visit seniors in their homes find and fix fall hazards.
- **Silver Alert:** A partnership between the City's Department for the Aging (DFTA), the New York City Police Department (NYPD), and the City Council helped create legislation for Silver Alert, a public notification system that aids police in the search for missing older persons with dementia. When a senior with a cognitive impairment, such as Alzheimer's, is reported missing and deemed to be in imminent danger of physical injury or death, NYPD initiates a protocol through which a wide audience (e.g. media outlets, community organizations, senior service providers) is notified, allowing the public to assist the NYPD in searching for the missing senior. As of August 2013, there had been 135 Missing Senior Alerts and 107 Silver Alerts (since the programs launched in 2010 and 2011, respectively).
- **Market Ride:** Market Ride uses school buses during off hours to take seniors from senior centers to supermarkets and farmers' markets that have a greater array of fruits and vegetables than their smaller, neighborhood stores. School buses are also used to take senior center members to recreational facilities, museums, Broadway shows, and a host of other venues. Market Ride began as a pilot program in Brooklyn in the 2008-2009

school year and is now available to senior centers in all five boroughs. Since October 2012, 13 senior centers and 3 NORCs have requested buses to transport seniors to markets, and 52 trips have allowed 1,333 seniors to participate in this service.




- **Success Mentor Initiative:** DFTA has partnered with the Success Mentor initiative, which connects mentors to students who are chronically absent in an effort to improve attendance. In 2011-2012, DFTA recruited 10 older adults to serve as Success Mentors in 4 schools, where each mentor was matched with 15-20 mentees. At the end of the 2011-2012 school year, the percentage of chronically absent students declined on average by 50%. In 2012-2013, DFTA increased the number of mentors to 24 placed in 7 schools
- **TimeBanksNYC:** TimeBanksNYC is an online registry where New Yorkers can sign up to assist older adults with errands and other tasks; likewise, older adults can offer their time and talents. For every hour that a participant provides a service for another member, s/he earns a time credit that can be redeemed for services from other members. Exchanges include teaching drawing classes, language tutoring, and cooking meals. Since launching in 2009, TimeBanksNYC has registered almost 2000 members.

*2013 Summa Age Friendly Cities and Communities Innovation Award*

The International Federation on Aging recognized these initiatives as best demonstrating innovation and visionary approaches to age friendliness and generational inclusivity during a conference held in Istanbul last week. Scores of cities and communities from around the world applied for the award, and applicants were judged by an international panel of experts representing more than ten countries and fields of medicine, architecture, design, medicine, urban planning, international relations, public administration, social work, business, and economics. The *Age-Friendly NYC* partnership is part of an international effort, called the Global Age-Friendly Cities initiative, launched by the World Health Organization. The initiative seeks to engage cities throughout the world in planning for the worldwide increase in the older adult population by creating environments in which older adults can continue to be actively engaged and contribute to the cities in which they live. In 2010, New York became the first city in the world to receive a certificate of membership to the World Health Organization's Network of Age-Friendly Cities.

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Contact:	Marc LaVorgna/Evelyn Erskine	(212) 788-2958
	Jamie McShane/ Shirley Limongi	(212) 788-7116
	Jon Minners (DFTA)	(212) 442-1092
	Abigail Franklin (NYAM)	(212) 822-7244

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