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Council Members, Providers and Advocates Rally at City Hall to Save Summer Programs for Over 34,000 Children-- Again

City Council to Question de Blasio Administration About the Preliminary Budget Cut to Summer Camp Programs

New York, NY: Despite the one-year reprieve last summer, the New York City Preliminary Budget for City Fiscal Year 2019 has once again failed to fund summer programs for over 34,000 middle school students. The City Council will be asking the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) questions about this troubling cut at today's budget hearing on the Youth Services budget.

Since the summer of 2015, the Campaign for Children, parents, youth, and providers have had to advocate annually to maintain summer programming at the now over 34,000 middle school after-school slots created by the de Blasio administration. In prior years, the summer programming has been saved through advocacy efforts with the City Council, often leaving parents and providers scrambling to enroll children just as school is ending. Last year, the administration partially restored the slots in February, which was a relief to thousands of children and their parents.

Unfortunately, this year's Preliminary Budget once again cuts the \$20.35 million needed to ensure children enrolled in after-school programs have a safe and developmentally stimulating place to be while their parents are at work in July and August. Notably, all after-school slots, except those that are part of the de Blasio middle school expansion, include summer programming.

Summer programs prevent summer learning loss, while enabling parents to work knowing their children are somewhere safe and engaged in organized activities rather than home alone watching television or out on the street. These programs also ensure that children have access to free, nutritious meals.

Those at the rally are urging the de Blasio administration to restore summer programs for these children no later than the Executive Budget so that providers are able to plan for a quality program and parents are not burdened by the uncertainty of where their children will be this summer.

"Summer programs are invaluable experiences that give young people an opportunity to build self-esteem, social skills, leadership skills, knowledge and friendships. After years of progress, the mayor's proposed cuts to summer middle school programs threaten to widen the achievement gap and reverse the gains we have been making in education in recent years. Restoring these cuts in the mayor's executive budget are amongst my top priorities as we continue in the budget negotiating process," said **Council Member Deborah Rose, Chair of the City Council Youth Services Committee.**

"Summer programs are vital to the development of our young people, giving them opportunities to enrich their lives and to grow as individuals. These programs also provide a much-needed resource for our hardworking families, who often struggle to keep their children involved in positive activities when school is not in session. As elected officials, we have an obligation to ensure that these programs receive the appropriate funding in the Mayor's Executive Budget. That is why we are calling on Mayor de Blasio to support them so that they may provide a constructive atmosphere for learning to 34,000 middle school students this summer," said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene.**

"Our city's children and working families deserve safe, engaging summer after-school programs. These programs keep families from having to make difficult, often costly choices about childcare during summer months while providing valuable social and developmental enrichment. It's imperative that funding for these vital programs is restored, said **Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair of the City Council's Committee on Education.**

“By providing kids with opportunities to continue to grow their leadership and intellectual development in the summer, and providing parents with peace of mind throughout the work week, access to safe, high-quality summer school programs are critical to the stability and success of thousands of public school students and their families,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. “But for over 700 middle school students in Lower Manhattan and thousands more across the City, access to this vital programming now hangs in the balance. I join my Council colleagues, Campaign for Children, and all the families rallying today to call on the Administration to restore funding to these programs in the Executive Budget and ensure that our City will do all that it can to build a brighter future for our children.”

“For the vast majority of Children’s Aid’s 165-year existence, we have provided rigorous, enriching summer activities to kids knowing full well that it keeps their bodies healthy and their minds engaged and happy. And we have done so in the same under-resourced communities that will feel most acutely the rippling effects of the potential loss of 34,000 seats. Young people need summer programs to avoid summer learning loss. Teens gain valuable employment experience. And their parents can work and maintain financial stability knowing their children are safe while out of school. We cannot implore the mayor and City Council loudly enough to restore this funding,” **Phoebe C. Boyer, President and CEO, Children’s Aid**.

“Parents rely on the City’s summer programs to provide safe, affordable, developmentally appropriate activities for their children during the months of July and August. These programs not only ensure parents can continue to work, but they offer children with social, cultural, and sports activities as well as academic supports that not only prevent learning loss but provide enriching experiences that help children develop life-long skills and friendships. I am deeply disappointed that the Mayor’s Preliminary Budget once again proposes to cut summer programming from over 34,000 middle school students. It is imperative that the funding for these programs be restored immediately, said **Jennifer March, Executive Director, Citizens’ Committee for Children**.

“A key aspect of economic equity is high quality, comprehensive educational programming for our children. By cutting \$20 million from the Mayor’s preliminary budget, the City is eliminating vital summer programming for thousands of children, which will exacerbate summer learning loss and uncertainty for parents. Summer programs are critical supports, particularly for low-income working parents who struggle to provide for their families, as they help ensure that children are engaged in high quality educational and recreational activities year round. Restoring these cuts in the Executive budget is crucial,” said **Jennifer Jones-Austin, CEO & Executive Director, FPWA**.

“It is outrageous that summer programs for middle school students are once again part of a budget dance. In order to put quality programs together, providers need to know in advance if they will be funded for these services,” said **Susan Stamler, Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses**. “We call on Mayor de Blasio to immediately restore funding for these important programs for our young people.”

“The continued unreliability of summer camp funding is hurting the New York City families with the greatest economic insecurity. Unless this funding is fully restored, over 34,000 middle school students in many of the city’s most underserved neighborhoods will lose access to critical summer programs that keep them safe, growing and learning, and provide them with nutritious meals during the summer months. Good Shepherd Services urges Mayor de Blasio to demonstrate his support for New York’s children and families and reinstate this funding by the time he announces his executive budget to give families and providers time to adequately plan for the excellent summer programming that all children deserve,” said **Sister Paulette LoMonaco, Executive Director, Good Shepherd Services**.

ABOUT CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN: The [Campaign for Children](#) is a coalition of 150 early childhood education and after-school advocacy and provider organizations, including Citizens’ Committee for Children, Children’s Aid, United Neighborhood Houses, Good Shepherd Services, FPWA, the Day Care Council of New York, UJA-Federation of New York, and the YMCA of Greater New York. The Campaign’s successful advocacy saved child care and after-school programs for more than 47,000 children by securing more than \$120 million of one-year City Council discretionary funds for two consecutive years, which then were successfully baselined. The Campaign also advocated for the expansion of Universal Pre-K and middle school after-school programs in NYC, and saved summer programs for over 34,000 children.

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