

FRESH YOUTH INITIATIVES

2201 Amsterdam Avenue, Storefront South
New York, NY 10032 • www.freshyouth.org • (212) 781-1113

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Contacts: Muadi B. Dibinga
(917) 604-6030
Andrew Rubinson
(646) 662-5021

FRESH YOUTH INITIATIVES CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF STATE-OF-THE-ART BUILDING SERVING LOCAL YOUTH

Upper Manhattan Community and Elected Leaders Join in Commending FYI's Growth and the New Building's Ability to Provide More Service and Learning Opportunities

NEW YORK. MAY 8, 2006: Fresh Youth Initiatives, Inc. will cut the ribbon for its new 9,000 square ft. state-of-the-art facility in Washington Heights on Monday, May 15th at 11:00 at 505 W. 171 Street. For the past 13 years, this nonprofit organization has engaged more than 2,000 youth in a broad menu of innovative community service projects in Upper Manhattan. The opening of this building marks the first permanent home for the organization.

Congressman Charles Rangel (D-New York); Manhattan Borough President **Scott Stringer** (D-New York); and New York City Council members **Robert Jackson** (D-Manhattan) and **Miguel Martinez** (D-Manhattan) will join local youth and FYI members in cutting the ribbon and delivering remarks. FYI's new home is located at 505 W. 171 Street between Audubon and Amsterdam Avenues. The day-long celebration will begin at 11:00 a.m. with a ribbon cutting ceremony, guided tour and light refreshments. A second, youth-oriented ceremony will take place at 6:00 p.m., followed by a host of activities including live music, face painting and an indoor scavenger hunt. The event is free and open to the public.

"This day marks an important milestone in our history," said Andrew Rubinson, FYI's Executive Director. "Our new home will allow us to double the number of youth who participate in our programs and do even more to serve the members of our Washington Heights-Inwood community." **Ziandry Peralta**, a 16-year old FYI participant and board member said, "The move is so exciting. Our new building will have a computer lab, library and other things so that even more kids will want to be down with us at FYI."

FYI's relocation from its current storefront to this new 4-story home was a lesson in perseverance. The project took 6 years and approximately \$3.8 million to complete and had to deal with several unforeseen challenges, including the discovery and removal of underground oil contamination at the site. Through it all, FYI's board, staff, youth leaders, and supporters didn't waiver from their goal of creating a state-of-the-art youth building dedicated to the needs of local youth. While the majority of the funds for this capital project were privately raised, FYI benefited from public support, including a critical contribution of \$500,000 from **New York City Council's Manhattan Delegation** last year. **The New York State Oil Spill Recovery Program** also contributed \$106,000 to cover the direct costs associated with the oil clean up.

David Payamps, an FYI program graduate and board member (and the first individual to donate money to the project) said, "At FYI we keep reaching for our goals no matter what obstacles come our way. Building our new place from the ground up really tested us. I'm looking forward to my younger sister and cousins having the same opportunities I did to move ahead in life through service."

The architect of FYI's new building is **Richard Dattner Architects**. Construction of the building was carried out by **Vanguard Construction and Development**. The firm of **Levien & Company** advised FYI throughout the project.

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