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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES NINE AWARDS
SELECTED FOR THE FIRST PHASE OF NEW YORK CITY'S FAMILY ENRICHMENT
CENTER EXPANSION PLAN**

*FECs are Walk-in Centers Run by Local Community-Based Organizations and Co-Designed
with Local Families*

*First Phase of the Expansion Will Include New Sites in: Jamaica, Rockaway, Bedford-
Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Mott Haven, Parkchester, Central Harlem, East Harlem & Stapleton*

NEW YORK – The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) today announced the nine awards selected for the first phase of New York City's "Family Enrichment Center" (FEC) expansion plan. Launched in 2017, FECs are warm, home-like walk-in centers that are co-designed with local families and community members. Families and children can connect with neighbors, volunteer their time, and access resources and supports they feel they need to thrive at the centers. Last year, ACS announced that it would be expanding the FECs from three sites to thirty sites over the next three years. The new centers will be located in the hard-hit neighborhoods identified by the city's Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity (TRIE) based on their equity burdens and the impact of COVID-19. Since then, ACS has been seeking local community-based providers, with deep ties to their communities, to run the new sites.

Today, ACS announced that the first nine awards selected to run these expansion sites include:

- The Reggio Emilia Montessori Center in Mott Haven/Melrose
- Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice in Soundview/Parkchester
- Little Flower Children's and Family Services in Bedford Stuyvesant
- Riseboro Community Partnership in Brownsville
- Living Redemption Community Development Corporation in Central Harlem
- Union Settlement Association in East Harlem
- Forestdale in Jamaica/Hollis/Queens Village
- Ocean Bay Community Development in Rockaway/Broad Channel
- Fund for the City of New York with the Staten Island Justice Center in George/Stapleton

"When community members come together to support each other, children and families thrive," said **Anne Williams-Isom, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**. "Creating free, inclusive, stigma free spaces where neighbors can deepen connections and build supportive networks is the heart and soul of the Family Enrichment Centers. It's why so many families have been benefiting from the three existing FECs in Hunts Point/Longwood, Highbridge and East New York. I am thrilled that 9 more communities will have FECs in the coming year, and before long there will be 30 FECs across New York City."

“NYC neighborhoods each have unique strength and vitality. Family Enrichment Centers build on that foundation by putting in the lead those who know the assets and particular needs of their community best. Designed by members of the community, FECs offer families a welcoming place to connect with other families, connect with resources they may need, and access concrete supports—things we all need to thrive and weather difficult moments. We are excited to partner with community organizations to bring this resource to nine more NYC communities. We look forward to fully implementing the FEC expansion plan and we’re confident that it will benefit thousands of families and their children across New York City,” said **ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser**.

“Investment into our communities starts with investing in our youth and families, and expanding on our Family Enrichment Centers will ensure our residents have access to necessary resources close to home,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. “I have a great relationship with Circle of Dreams and OUR Place in the Bronx, and these new centers will create even more safe spaces for neighbors and families to connect, and provide a foundation for our youth to thrive. I want to thank Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom and Commissioner Jess Dannhauser for their work to make this a reality.”

“Family Enrichment Centers are proving themselves to be safe and assuring spaces in communities that have long experienced disinvestment and underrepresentation”, said **Senator Roxanne J. Persaud, Chair of the Senate Social Services Committee**. “I am thrilled to see nine new centers opening, including one that will serve constituents in Brownsville. Families coming together to share experiences make growth and healing all the more possible.”

“Family Enrichment Centers are an incredible resource and I am thrilled to see them expand. FECs foster direct parent involvement, community relationships, and grass roots connections while offering a safe and supportive environment. I've heard directly from parents and children who have had their lives positively impacted thanks to FECs and I believe this is a model we should continue to expand,” said **Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Chair Children and Families Committee**.

“The pandemic highlighted the inequalities that many New Yorkers faced for so long, many not knowing where to turn or what resources were available to them,” said **Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala, Chair of the Committee on General Welfare**. “These enrichment centers are a welcome resource and a safe space for families, especially in my district and I’m thrilled to learn that East Harlem and Mott Haven are part of that expansion. I want to thank ACS for their commitment in improving the lives of New Yorkers and their families.”

FECs are built on trust, positive relationships and making real, the dreams held by community members for their future. They are welcoming, safe, and accessible home-like environments, open to all, where neighbors can connect, contribute and access the information they feel they need. ACS entrusts provider agency staff with co-designing experiences with the community, that help deepen child and family well-being and parental resiliency, build new connections and develop lifelong bonds. Alongside FEC staff, community members may join advisory boards and help to build inclusive FEC experiences that are as unique as the communities in which FECs operate. Members may include individuals whose experiences with community resources or public systems, make them well positioned to support their neighbors.

ACS is committed to ensuring that community members are equal partners in the design and implementation of FEC offerings. Examples of past and current FEC offerings include: movie

nights (for families to meet in a safe space and allow children to make new friends); a therapist-led Healing Through the Arts offering for families recovering from community violence; cultural activities; and Café con Amiga (Coffee with Friends) facilitated by Spanish speaking parent leaders to provide support to parents and caregivers. In particular, the FECs proved crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing critical supports to families in need, including food, clothing, and technology, as well as social supports to parents and caregivers.

A 2020 [evaluation of the FECs](#) showed that the first three Centers are having a positive impact on families. FEC members reported that the FECs were enhancing their social supports (from family, friends and neighbors), family functioning, emotional connection with their children, and outlook on life. Additionally, those surveyed reported significant increases in their access to advice and resources in addressing several life challenges, including parenting, financial issues, relationships, food and nutrition issues, and stress management. The report also said that FECs were having a positive effect on members' access to concrete supports, which can help families better cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis. The existing FECs are: The C.R.I.B. in East New York; Circle of Dreams in Highbridge and; O.U.R. Place in Hunts Point/Longwood.

In 2021, ACS released a request for proposals (RFP) for the first phase of expanding the FECs across the City. Today's announcement includes the first nine awards selected as part of the expansion.

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