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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF SURVIVORS, FAMILIES AND YOUTH EDUCATION

City will invest additional \$3.9 million to prevent and reduce domestic violence, including healthy relationship education in middle schools, a new comprehensive web-based portal and public awareness campaign, and new resources to help survivors stay in their homes

BROOKLYN—In observance of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, First Lady Chirlane McCray announced an expansion of supports and programming to prevent and combat domestic violence in New York City, adding to the unprecedented investment in domestic violence initiatives [previously announced in May 2017](#). The city will invest an additional \$3.9 million to expand healthy relationship programming to city middle schools, develop the country’s most comprehensive one-stop web portal for domestic violence services, and expand supports to help keep survivors in their own homes.

“Far too many New Yorkers experience domestic violence and intimate partner abuse. Far too many of our neighbors, friends, and family can say ‘me too’ with the world-weary understanding that they’ll be saying it again and again. It simply must stop,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray, Co-Chair of the Domestic Violence Task Force and the Commission on Gender Equity**. “I’m proud that New York City is doing what’s necessary to heal and support survivors while taking groundbreaking steps to break the cycle of abuse to prevent trauma from happening in the first place.”

“Every New Yorker deserves to feel safe in their home. But while violent crime in our city continues to decline, domestic violence unacceptably still persists,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “This investment will help further our commitment to reduce domestic violence and support survivors by expanding education about healthy relationships and services available to those in abusive relationships.”

“Domestic violence exists in every community, in every neighborhood, in every borough. The physical and/or emotional violence may be the first of many traumas suffered by family

members,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. “We are already taking steps to protect survivors' homes and paychecks, and to hold abusers accountable. Today’s announcement will build upon our existing efforts to prevent domestic violence and also make sure survivors get the wraparound services that they need.”

This new investment includes an expansion of healthy relationship education to 128 middle schools throughout all five boroughs. An estimated one in 10 teens in a dating relationship report experiencing physical dating violence in the past year, and that number is double for LGBTQ-identified youth and triple for pregnant or parenting teens. Through the Early-Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (Early-RAPP), existing high school-based teen dating abuse programs will be retooled and expanded to provide a continuity of learning to Department of Education middle schools—reaching students earlier, when relationships most often begin.

Early-RAPP activities will include school-wide education campaigns, classroom workshops, support for individual students, professional development for faculty and administrators, and community outreach to parents and family members to expand education about risks of teen dating violence and provide tools for healthy relationships. The program is expected to begin implementation before the end of 2017.

In addition to the expansion of the E-RAPP program, the City will also:

- Develop a new web-based portal to house the city’s first centralized web-based domestic violence resource and information hub, enabling survivors to obtain critical forms like orders of protection, information about nearby services, and links to government agencies. The new portal would be the most comprehensive of its kind in the country.
- Launch a new public awareness campaign in early 2018 focused on telling the diverse and wide-ranging stories of domestic violence survivors that are not always visible and provide critical ways for New Yorkers to connect to the community and government resources for help.
- Create Safe Families NYC, a network of free supervised visitation resources in each borough providing a safe place for children to attend court ordered visitation with a non-custodial parent.
- Implement Home+Safe, an innovative program that will enable domestic violence survivors and their children to safely stay in their homes with access to high-tech alarm systems.

In 2007, 4.8 percent of all major crimes in the City were related to domestic violence, broadly defined to include offenses involving members of the same family or household, as well as those related to intimate partners. By 2016, that percentage had reached 11.6 percent. Domestic violence now accounts for one in every five homicides—and two in every five assaults—citywide.

New York City currently has in place multiple programs and services to support survivors, including shelter programs, training programs for agency staff and providers, educational and preventive programs for youth, and extensive case management services, legal, counseling and

economic empowerment at the Family Justice Centers situated in each of the five city boroughs. In 2016, there were more than 62,000 visits to the city's Family Justice Centers, which offer a range of services for survivors regardless of income, age, gender identity, sexual orientation or immigration status.

Last week, the New York City Council passed the "Earned Sick and Safe Time Act," also referred to as "paid safe leave," introduced by City Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland and co-sponsored by Mayor Bill de Blasio, which amends the city's current law on sick time to allow survivors of domestic violence survivors to use their leave to seek help and overcome abuse.

"The recommendations we're announcing today are another example of New York City's commitment to survivors of Domestic Violence," said **Cecile Noel, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence**. "With the implementation of these initiatives, we are expanding prevention opportunities, and enhancing services and supports for survivors."

"While New York's streets are safer than ever, there remains a group of New Yorkers who do not feel secure in their own homes and relationships. The investments being announced today are an important step towards ensuring that domestic violence survivors and their children have as many resources available to them as possible. Public safety must be felt by everyone, everywhere – especially at home," said **Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice**.

"Domestic violence compromises the health of individuals, families and neighborhoods," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. "I thank Mayor de Blasio for committing additional funding to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all residents. We're pleased to partner with the Office to Combat Domestic Violence to make sure New Yorkers know the various forms of domestic violence and how to find support."

"The launch of the Early-Relationship Abuse Prevention Program will bring important lessons on healthy relationship to middle schools throughout the school year, build partnerships with community partners, and offer workshops and training to ensure students have the tools they need to develop healthy relationships," said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. "We thank the First Lady for her partnership and leadership on this important issue and look forward to continuing this work."

"Domestic violence affects people of all backgrounds and walks of life, and it is a major driver of poverty and homelessness," said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. "Expanding successful programs like Teen RAPP to middle schools, educating the public about the resources available, and using the latest technology to make it easier for survivors to get help are important steps in confronting this very serious issue."

"We are proud to support the City's commitment to ensuring that domestic violence victims and survivors have total access to services to help rebuild their lives," said **Anne Roest, Commissioner of the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications**. "This is a first-of-its-kind web-based portal for domestic violence information and resources. Critical forms like orders of protection and links to nearby

government agencies are among the many resources victims and survivors can now access all in one site and on their mobile device.”

"My administration is committed to strengthening the voices of domestic violence survivors and empowering their families to not only survive, but thrive, said **Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President**. Through our role on the Domestic Violence Task Force, survivors have been at the table to share their stories as well as advise on sensible policies that take on abuse and its root causes. I hope the City's new investment in domestic violence prevention and intervention will have a meaningful impact as we strive to save lives."

Acting Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez said, "I would like to commend the Mayor and First Lady for their continued commitment to support victims of domestic violence and to help prevent familial abuse. Today's investment will go a long way in achieving these goals and is in line with our holistic approach in Brooklyn, which seeks to assist survivors to rebuild their lives whether they pursue a criminal case or not."

“The issue of domestic violence has been in the shadows for far too long. It demands all of our attention and requires a steadfast commitment to ensuring survivors know that help is available, and that they are not alone. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray for making this important investment,” said **Congressman Eliot Engel**.

“I am proud to stand with First Lady McCray in support of today’s announcement to expand critical services, enhance education programs, and build public awareness of domestic violence,” said **Congressman Adriano Espaillat**. “It is essential that we support some of the most vulnerable among us and continue to lend our collective voices to prevent and protect the victims, survivors, and loved ones of those affected by domestic violence throughout our community.”

Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon said, “The new domestic violence education campaigns and support programs will be invaluable to survivors throughout New York City. Educating middle school students through the Early-RAPP program and the creation of a web-based portal with information for survivors will spread awareness about a critically important issue that affects thousands of people, most often women and teens. The additional funding for these programs will improve much needed education efforts on domestic violence and help keep New Yorkers safe.”

“Domestic violence is one of the most senseless crimes. We as humans need to support, not harm, each other,” said **Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol**. “I applaud the First Lady McCray and Mayor de Blasio for investing in this important cause and providing the services that can ease recovery from this devastating experience. We will now have 21st century resources and wraparound services available to truly serve the domestic violence victim and their whole family.”

"Our City is making great strides in our fight against domestic violence. The additional funding secured by the First Lady Chirlane McCray, will provide domestic violence survivors with additional tools to remain safe. Additionally, New Yorkers will count with educational resources to learn more about how this issue impacts the lives of so many people in our City. I commend

the First Lady and the Domestic Violence Task Force for their efforts to protect survivors and inform New Yorkers on this issue,” said **Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland**.

"We are spreading the word that domestic violence survivors do not need to suffer in silence or isolation -- support and assistance are available for them and their children. I applaud the de Blasio administration for their ongoing work and extensive outreach to survivors, along with the new services they are launching. It is going to take a society-wide effort to combat intimate partner violence, and we have begun that journey," said **Council Member Rosenthal, Co-Chair of the Women's Caucus**.

“When I was appointed to this Task Force last November, I said that New York City had one of the strongest support networks for survivors of domestic violence of any major city in the country. Today, I am proud to say that this network has been made even stronger,” said the **Honorable Judy Harris Kluger, Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families**. “By focusing significant resources on smart and innovative initiatives like public education, home security and abuse prevention, we will save countless lives and help break the cycle of domestic violence. Sanctuary for Families and the 16,000 survivors we serve every year are proud to stand with Mayor de Blasio, First Lady Chirlane McCray and Commissioner O’Neill, and we are grateful for their unwavering commitment.”

“Safe Horizon is proud to be a member of the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, and participate in creating recommendations that will help foster a safer New York City for domestic violence victims and their children. The funded recommendations of the Task Force will not only go a long way in responding to the safety needs of survivors, but will also raise important awareness of the programs and services that can help them. Safe Horizon is deeply grateful to First Lady Chirlane McCray; Police Commissioner James O’Neill; MOCDV Commissioner Cecile Noel; MOCJ Director Liz Glazer; Executive Director of the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, Bea Hanson; our partners; and the survivor community for their leadership. Only by working together can we truly reduce domestic violence in New York City,” said **Ariel Zwang, CEO of Safe Horizon**.

“The recommendations from the Domestic Violence Task Force are the bold, innovative tactics we need to raise awareness and end the cycle of domestic violence,” said **Nathaniel M. Fields, President/CEO of Urban Resource Institute**. “We applaud the City’s commitment to provide an additional \$3 million in funding to implement these recommendations and make sustainable progress in preventing and ending domestic violence.”

“The STEPS RAPP program gave us students a space to not only learn and be taught by coordinators and our peers, but to focus on the importance of community in changing the world around us. With that sense of community, we learned how to healthily express our individuality and how activism can foster and nourish our sense of self. We were given a chance to grow, aware of the limitations of our society but given the tools to help surpass them. With those tools we are prepared to not only be a part of but lead the change in our communities and schools,” said **Nalo Turner, Peer Leader of the Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP)**.

"STEPS to End Family Violence is inspired by and enduringly grateful to First Lady Chirlane McCray, Commissioner Cecile Noel, and the entire Domestic Violence Task Force for their collective vision in funding recommendations that will have real and

significant impact on the City's efforts to prevent the continuation of intimate partner violence. As one of the City's first facilitators of the Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP), a school-based primary prevention program, we are thrilled about the creation of Early RAPP and excited to bring healthy relationship training to additional middle school students throughout the City, said **Anne Patterson, Division Director at STEPS to End Family Violence** and **Connie Marquez, Director of Teen Services at STEPS to End Family Violence**.

"Born of my own experience of domestic abuse, I have worked to raise awareness and help heal other victims...by offering the compassion, encouragement and hope that was not so forthcoming over twenty years ago. Yet, time has a way of transforming attitudes. Our lives are given greater meaning, our hearts more fulfillment, when we realize that we are all connected and need to support and serve one another. First Lady Chirlane McCray is not only called to serve, but with this project, it is evident that she has answered the call," said **Robin Givens, Actress, Author and Advocate**.

About the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force

The NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, launched in November 2016 by Mayor Bill de Blasio, is charged with developing a coordinated, citywide strategy to address one of the most urgent challenges facing New York City. Today's announcement builds on the initial investment of \$7 million announced in May 2017 with the [Domestic Violence Task Force Recommendations](#), bringing the city's total investment in preventing and combating domestic violence to nearly \$11 million.

Co-chaired by First Lady Chirlane McCray and NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill, the work of the Task Force is led by Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Elizabeth Glazer, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Cecile Noel, and the Task Force's Executive Director Bea Hanson.

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