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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE WAGNER  
HOUSES AS PART OF SAFE SUMMER NYC**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Alright, everybody. It is – this is definitely a beautiful day, because something beautiful is happening here, right?

[Applause]

Right? Something that everyone who lives here at Wagner deserves –

[Applause]

And we've got a lot more work to do to continue to support you and invest in you. I want to say to everyone that lives in this community, you are going to help lead the comeback of New York City right here at Wagner Houses. We're going to do the things to bring our city back and we need a recovery for everybody, right? Not just a few people, everyone has to recover together, bring this city back together. And that's what this is an example of here today, investing in the people and especially investing in our children. We want our children to have positive alternatives. This is part of our Safe Summer NYC plan. This is about how we work together to keep everyone safe this summer. It can only be done with community, working together with police. We're all in this together and investing. So, I want to thank everyone. We're going to be talking very quickly today, everybody – brief remarks. Who's in favor of brief remarks?

[Laughter]

All right, the people have spoken. So, I want to – I'm going to thank some people really quickly. Someone who did this work as a labor of love, he's the Deputy Commissioner for Community Partnerships at NYPD, Chauncey Parker, who really championed this, thank you.

[Applause]

I want to thank everyone who here from federal law enforcement – the federal government helped us do this too. Thank you to our colleagues from federal law enforcement. Thank you to the New York City Police Foundation for donating money to make this happen. Thank you to the First Responders Children Foundation, the Mandela Foundation, and Union Settlement. Everyone contributed, because everyone wanted the people of Wagner Houses and the children of Wagner Houses to have a better summer. So, that's what's happening here.

Also, leaders of the NYPD that you need to know, because they're helping to create a new and better approach, bringing community in more and more. Chief of Patrol, Juanita Holmes, take a bow.

[Applause]

Chief of Community Affairs Jeff Maddrey, thank you.

[Applause]

And everybody, we're not going to let a few people who do violence hold the rest of us back, because all of us believe in peace in this community, right? We believe in peace. We need peace and we're going to work together for peace. So, now, I want to introduce someone who, every day, his job is to protect all of us. And he knows that begins with working with the communities of this city, our Police Commissioner Dermot Shea.

[Applause]

**Police Commissioner Dermot Shea:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I will be brief. I just want to say this is what it's all about. When I had the privilege of being sworn in a little over a year ago by the Mayor, I talked about the youth and I talked about kids. And this is a commitment on our part that we're putting our money where our mouth is, taking money, resources from the PD, working with all of the partners up here. And that's the beauty of this effort, it's a collaborative effort of elected officials, State and federal authorities, NYPD, mostly community grassroots organizations all coming together because we all know what's important. And you're looking at it right here, the kids of this community. So, God bless everyone. We're going to be out there to keep you safe and can't wait to beat the pastor again in a second game of one-on-one.

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** Just hold on, don't go away. Okay, I just want to say the Police Commissioner has offended a man of the cloth. I want to formally apologize.

[Laughter]

I'm sure between your exceptional athletic skills and divine intervention, you will never lose again. Okay. Now, Chauncey Parker.

**Deputy Commissioner Chauncey Parker, Community Partnerships, NYPD:** Mr. Mayor, this truly is an example, a shining example of what you always say – it's just incredible what we can do if we all work together. And I would just want to say briefly where the NYPD comes in and when we came in. When I started in December of 2019, I had the honor of working for Commissioner Shea. He said, look, my north star for the NYPD is very simple – it's that we going to do everything we possibly can to help kids across this city. That's the north star, working with our community partners, our agency partners – that's the north star.

About six months later, I was standing here with Mike Parker, one of – as you know, probably, maybe the mayor of the community – a different kind of mayor. And Mike Parker, showed us – you know, we looked at the court and said – you know, and it was in really tough condition and NYCHA doesn't have a lot of resources. And he said, you know, imagine, you know, what could happen if you could activate this and make this beautiful for the children in this community. I spoke to the Police Commissioner. He said, speak to our federal partners. Is there a way we could find new money, so to speak, in asset forfeiture that normally just goes into criminal cases. Could we take some of that money and redirect it, money that drug dealers are making, all sorts of things that's being taken away from them – they're hurting our communities so much, could we invest that in our communities? And our friends from the federal law enforcement together with the Police Commissioner, they dedicated \$4 million to set aside to start to activate spaces across New York City. We spoke to Vito from NYCHA, just an amazing partner who, together with MOCJ, and the Mayor's Office to prevent neighborhood violence, they all came together –

[Applause]

All those great partners, NYCHA, foundation partners, federal law enforcement partners, everybody came together and made this possible. And this is just the beginning, this is one of 15 basketball courts that are going to be renovated across New York City before the summer. Across the city, they're all going to be restored to this condition and it is just the beginning. So, it's an honor to be a part of this team and it is just the beginning. Thank you.

[Applause]

**Mayor:** So, this only happens with community leadership, voices of the community saying we can create something together and we can make things better. *Si se puede* – yes, we can. One of the great leaders, and he has really shown heart and soul in believing the community can overcome all the challenges together – where's Michael Parker? Come up here, Michael. Come up here.

[...]

**Mayor:** Okay. Now, I'm going to say something real – ready? Ready? Sometimes, when you hear the word politician, you don't get a good feeling, right? Right?

[Inaudible]

Yeah, and I'm about to go there – but there are some people who are elected officials – I don't even want to use the word politician – there are some people elected officials who actually live up to the title of representing the community, do something for the community, make you proud. They make you proud they represent the community.

[Applause]

And I've got someone to introduce – and, you know what, she may not be the tallest elected official – hold on –

[Laughter]

In your eyes, she's real tall and she's amazing. She's a force of nature and she's of, and by, and for the people. Council Member Diana Ayala.

[...]

**Mayor:** I hope all of you are feeling the emotion I'm feeling when Diane Ayala says to the children, I hope one day you're old and wrinkly. That's just beautiful, isn't that? I'm like, Diana, what are you talking about?

[Laughter]

That's not inspirational, they're going to be strong and young their whole life through.

[Laughter]

Okay. We love Diane Ayala. Do we love her?

[Cheers]

We love her and we thank her. And we're all going to get together for that beautiful new community center. Is that going to be great?

[Applause]

I want to hear from one more person, I'll come back for it. I'll come back for it – you're going to be here, I'm going to be here. One more person I want to hear from, because she's doing extraordinarily important work at NYCHA, helping to make things happen for residents of public housing, but she's also leading something for the whole city, and I want you to hear about this. It's called the Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity. What this is, is something we've never seen the history of New York City before. It is all the leaders of all the City agencies who are people of color joined together, representing all the people of color in this city and making decisions for their own communities. This is a different approach to government. It's an innovative approach. It's a representative approach. And the leader of that is also the Executive Vice President for NYCHA. My pleasure introduced to Sideya Sherman.

**Executive Director Sideya Sherman, Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity:** I also need the –

[Laughter]

Small but mighty. Thank you so much and I'm so excited to be here. You know, we know that a basketball court is more than just a place for play. It's where we build community, it's how we stay active, it's how we keep safe. It's also how many of us, particularly when we were young,

learn the lessons that we need to be able to reach our full potential in life. So, I'm excited to be here. I want to reiterate all the thank you to PD, to the DA's Office, to Mr. Parker – and Mr. Parker – and all of our partners in government, Council Member Ayala, for all of their partnership. But I also want to give a real big shout out to the MAP team and the MOCJ team, not only for their partnership here, but across the city, making real change on the ground, empowering residents to be part of the process. And that that's close to my heart, it's close to the work that we do at NYCHA. I think what's exciting about this project is that we've had a new approach to the way we do capital projects at NYCHA, where residents who live at our developments who are the experts, right, in your own community, where we're leveraging your knowledge, your expertise to make decisions. And so, the residents of Wagner Houses chose the paint, and the pattern, and the design, and they develop this basketball court. And so, you should be proud. The young people of Wagner in particular should be proud, because this is all you, you should take a bow. Our resident association, all of our partners on the ground should take a bow for this accomplishment. It is a testament to what we can do when we work together. I know communities like East Harlem – I'm in Harlem, right nearby – were hit hard, particularly by COVID. This is the beginning of us coming back and working together and there's more to come. Thank you.

[Applause]

**Mayor:** I'm going to conclude before we cut this ribbon with a little New York vignette. One day – I know the Commissioner will appreciate this – one day, I walked up to two police officers, part of our Critical Response Command that protects us against terrorism. And the two officers were standing next to each other, and it was a great New York City moment. One was an African-American man with dreadlocks, the other was a Chinese man. I got talking with him. I looked at their nameplates. I saw the African American man's name – his last name was Lee. I then looked at the Chinese man – his last name was Lee. I said, this is a New York City moment. And now, I just want to conclude by thanking the Parker brothers –

[Laughter]

The Parker brothers, who have done so much for this community. Thank you, everybody.

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