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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION HONORS DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WITH DAY OF SERVICE, CALLS NEW YORKERS TO LIFELONG CIVIC ACTION

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NEW YORK—Marking Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the de Blasio administration today held a Day of Service, spotlighting educational excellence and student mentorship through various service activities across New York City. The City also encouraged New Yorkers to commit to volunteering and deeper civic engagement year-round.

“Today we reflect on the powerful lessons of Dr. King—his calls for justice and healing, and his ability to unite people in common cause. We must not only remember, but ennoble Dr. King’s legacy through our own action and community involvement. I thank each volunteer who has committed to serve others and invite more New Yorkers to engage in their neighborhoods,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Let us resolve to turn toward each other, rather than turning on each other. Let us give back to one another. And let us rededicate ourselves to fight for every New Yorker’s safety and economic opportunity. That’s the legacy of Dr. King—a mission we will achieve as one New York family, working each day to rise together.”

This morning, First Lady Chirlane McCray joined students in crafts and letter writing, as part of a series of workshops and service learning events held by the Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation in partnership with NYC Service. Students wrote letters of gratitude to troops serving overseas, made bracelets with notes of hope for local domestic violence shelters, and created peace quilts.

“To all those who are volunteering today, I extend my thanks,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “Among the many things we learned from Dr. King is that service is not just a series of discrete acts—it’s a way of life.”

NYC Service Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin, Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro, and many FDNY members hosted a speed mentoring event for high school students to help them gain career and college preparation knowledge from FDNY professionals, through 15-minute interactions with several adults. FDNY members also took part in college and career mentoring for high school students, as well as middle school community service projects, in Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx. Throughout the year, FDNY and NYC Service are partnering with the Department of Education to train more than 5,000 New York City high school students to perform compressions-only CPR.

“NYC Service is proud to honor the legacy of Dr. King through community service in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. Dr. King wholeheartedly believed—and manifested by his own example—that activism can effect social change. At NYC Service, we seek to promote Dr. King’s belief—today and every day—that “Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.” From student mentorship events marking National

Mentoring Month to our long-term efforts to boost volunteerism, we urge all New York City residents to give back to their fellow New Yorkers and commit to service. Volunteering. Good for You. Good for Your City,” said **Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin**.

“Mentors are absolutely crucial to educate, provide support, and set an example for young people to follow,” said **FDNY Commissioner Nigro**. “FDNY members are proud to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King by taking part in this important service project that will help shape the lives of many young men and women in our city for years to come.”

“In a school system as dynamic and diverse as New York City’s—with some of the best and brightest minds sitting in our classrooms—today is an important chance to reflect on how best to further Dr. King’s vision of equality and justice,” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. “I encourage students, educators and families to give back to their communities by becoming a mentor or volunteering in our schools. Together, we can help educate future generations of great leaders.”

“With the support of partners like NYC Service attracting the best and brightest mentors and volunteers in our City, DYCD’s SONYC (School’s Out NYC) initiative and other programs such as Teen ACTION (Achieving Change Together In Our Neighborhood) are making a real difference in the lives of young people and their communities—not just in the spirit of Dr. King on this special day, but throughout the year,” said **Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Bill Chong**.

“The Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation is so proud to honor Dr. King’s legacy by joining our neighbors for a day of service,” said **Jessica Jarahian, Leadership Curriculum Coordinator at SASF**. “We could not be more grateful for the help and leadership we’ve received from NYC Service. With their help, our students will spend the day learning healthy communication methods; how to be dedicated, peaceful community leaders; and the importance of supporting positive forces in our communities. And the leadership curriculum will be supported by service activities that reinforce those themes.”

“This time of the year is an exciting opportunity to be able to add my own contributions to a legacy of national service for the benefit of our communities. The opportunities I had to work with my mentors greatly impacted my personal and professional development. My mentors acted as a network of support that provided me with guidance, friendship, and new skills. Their influence has motivated me to serve my community, so that I can create positive change in the lives of others,” said **Antony Colon, NYC Civic Corps Member**.

“As a current AmeriCorps member, MLK Day is a reminder of what might be possible if every young American committed to not just a day of service, but a service year. Imagine the impact it would have—not only on the issues these corps members were addressing, but also on the young people themselves—if we all had a shared experience based in service. MLK Day provides a window through which we can see a sliver of this possibility,” said **Adam Coretz, NYC Civic Corps Member**.

“I believe national service is always important, especially on a day like MLK Day. Besides being a pathway to a career, national service is a way to become an active citizen—engaging your community and working toward a common purpose of serving others,” said **Jacqueline Moran, NYC Civic Corps Member**.

About NYC Service

NYC Service is fulfilling its mission and its goals of promoting volunteerism for all New Yorkers and helping more New Yorkers connect to service opportunities more easily. NYC Service targets volunteers to address New York City’s greatest needs by mobilizing the power of volunteers to impact six areas: Strengthening Communities, Education Excellence, Economic and Workforce Development, Health and Well Being, Environment and Emergency Preparedness and Response. In addition to these six areas, NYC Service seeks to elevate Youth Volunteer Service as a leadership and development strategy for our city.

About SASF

SASF is the largest CBO provider of school-based extended learning programs in NYC. In the current school year, SASF has almost 200 programs around the city, providing services to more than 20,000 students this year alone. Research shows that after-school programs like those provided by SASF improve students' academic performance, increase high school completion rates and college admission results, and strengthen students' resilience, self-esteem, and self-discipline.

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