

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 25, 2021, 11:00 AM
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, POLICE COMMISSIONER SHEA DELIVER
REMARKS THE NYPD GRADUATION CEREMONY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Officers, you did it – you did it. Years and years, you dreamed of this day, and you worked hard, and your families were there with you every step of the way. And this is the culminating moment for all that incredible effort and commitment. And there are so many people who went down this path, but there is only you who made it in the end – the best of the best to serve this city. Now, no one stands alone. So, to all the family members, to all the loved ones, you were there every step of the way, you gave the love, and the support, and the encouragement. In some cases, starting with kids dreams when they were young that they would one day be an NYPD officer. All the family members, this is your day of triumph too. Look around you, family members, friends, loved ones – look around you, give each other a round of applause, because this is your day too.

[Applause]

Now, we are here today – we're back together and the greatest arena in the world, celebrating the greatest police force in the world. And it is so powerful when we renew this police force with new, talented, incredible people who join the NYPD. This is a powerful moment as the city comes back. Your presence as new officers of the NYPD epitomizes the resiliency and strength of this city. This city came through. We literally went through hell. We went through the greatest crisis in our history with this pandemic. And I want to thank everyone up on this stage. It's a moment to appreciate all the leadership of the NYPD who stayed strong, stayed firm no matter what was thrown at them and saw this city through. Thank you to all of you for the incredible work you did.

[Applause]

But now, we bring the city back. Now, it's about recovery – a recovery in every corner of this city, a recovery for all of us. And, yesterday, Commissioner Shea and I talked about the young people of this city, who we need to, every single day, move towards the right path – we need to encourage, we need to help. And the Commissioner's vision – I want to give Commissioner Shea credit for this. For the last few years, he has been saying the way forward is to put kids first. Yesterday, we announced the NYPD Kids First vision, where NYPD officers will engage young people in every neighborhood and be what they need – the role models, the mentors, the guides, the best way – the best way to stop threats to public safety is before they even begin by helping young people on the right path. And we were up in the Bronx yesterday, inaugurating a new basketball court in a public housing development. And to see kids playing with NYPD officers,

looking up to them, appreciating the leadership and the mentorship – that was a sign of things to come.

We know we can move this city in a better direction, come out of this pandemic, and go somewhere better. And you are going to be the leading edge. You are going to be the beginning of something extraordinary. To all of you, you're making this city a better place by the choice you made. And I want to emphasize, it was a choice. It was not an easy choice to decide to go through six months of incredibly rigorous, tough training, and everything that led up to it, and all the years ahead. It wasn't easy choice, but it was the right choice. I want to thank you for making that choice.

As of today, this city has 486 new guardians. And we need you, and we honor you, and we thank you for making that choice.

[Applause]

Now, really important that we give special honor. Amongst this class, there are amazing stories – 486 great stories. But I want to give special honor to those who are putting on a uniform for the second time, the 35 members of this class who served in the United States military. Let's thank them for all they've done for our country.

[Applause]

Looking out on this class, you look at everything that makes New York City great. You look at every part of the world represented here to make us stronger and better – 36 countries of origin represented; 31 languages spoken, and that's going to come in handy on the streets of New York City. People joining for all sorts of reasons, but what unites everyone is a commitment to making New York City a better place. Some are joining because they felt a calling – a personal calling, like today's valedictorian, Officer Dulae Ahn, who was also a former First Lieutenant in the United States Army. Congratulations, and we thank you for making that decision.

[Applause]

Some of you are following a family tradition, and that's a beautiful, powerful thing, one of the things that's made the NYPD great. Some of you are starting a new family tradition and others will follow in your footsteps in your family. Our job, all of us up here, is to make sure that the work you do is successful, to make sure you have the best training, the best technology, to make sure that all the things are there to help you make this the safest city in this country – and that's what we will be because of you. We will make sure together to bring this city back. So, on behalf of 8.5 million New Yorkers, I want to thank you. The comeback of New York City has already begun. But now, with you here, the comeback will get even better, even faster, and it will be the greatest comeback in the history of New York City. Thank you. And God bless you all.

[Applause]

Sergeant Kevin Heavey, NYPD: Thank you, Mayor de Blasio. It is now my pleasure to introduce the Police Commissioner of the City of New York, the honorable Dermot Shea.

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea. Well, good morning, everyone. Smile – I see a lot of serious faces out there. How's it feel? Smile. Good, everyone happy? Well, welcome. On behalf of the leadership team assembled here on this stage, Mayor de Blasio, thank you, and the entire New York City Police Department. Everyone, welcome to our recruit graduation. And to all of our newest police officers that I am thrilled to be looking out upon, welcome to the NYPD.

Today, you begin what I know is the greatest job in the world. Today is one of those, I would say, unforgettable moments. When you look back on this – and, believe me, enjoy, because it's going to go quick. May not seem that way right now, but 10, 20, 30 years from now, you're going to look back on your life, and there was today, everything before, and everything after. Truly a special time, because now you are – once you've raised that right hand and Chief Morales came up here – you are now New York City police officers, and you've earned it.

So, I speak often about the world we live in right now – 24-hour news, you can't avoid it. Everything is bombarding us all the time. You have your cell phones in your pocket. Some of you, hopefully, all turned them off, and they're going to buzz, and people are texting you. I would just ask you for a half-hour or so right now, just relax. Separate yourself from that never-ending noise. Slow down. Enjoy this day. You have put in the time you have put in the effort. So, enjoy every minute.

Six months ago, and I would say – I'll say here talking to you now, six short months ago, I guarantee there's 486 people in front of me that say, well, it wasn't that short. It actually seemed like a long time. But you walked into that police academy in College Point Queens, you put the work in studying, you learned a lot about yourselves and each other. You put the physical work in. As I stand here, looking at you right now, I promise you something – you're just getting started. You are just getting started. It's going to be the beginning of a great story. And as excited as we are to see you – and, believe me, we are all thrilled to see you – I can tell you something even more important, there's over 8 million people that are even more excited to see you, and they're waiting for you to hit the streets. There's also more people from around the world, as the tourism comes back, as workers come back to the city, as we emerge from the pandemic, that the Mayor have referenced, people are coming back to visit everything that this great city has to offer. They are going to be thrilled to see you and they know that you're going to be out there protecting them.

How do I know? Because, literally, around the city, in every neighborhood, every day, as we are all out there, they tell us exactly that – how much they appreciate you. You may not always hear it – zone out that news media at times. I love the news media, but don't always go with the headlines. Listen to what people are saying – and people love you, they appreciate you, they know how much they need you. People in service – and this is my chance, so now you have to listen to me, so I have captives here, you can't go anywhere – that's what this job is all about. It's about people and it's about serving the great people of this city. And just think about that, you are now their guardians. It's a tremendous honor that is bestowed upon each and every one of you, you are the protectors of people across this great city. And whether it's – that protection comes in

many different ways. Whether it's protecting a crime victim, maybe it's a domestic violence victim, God forbid; maybe it's reassuring a frantic parent. And, trust me, I know from firsthand experience – and I know many of you do, and certainly people in the audience here today – parents, when you turn around for a second and your child has gone, no worse feeling in the world. Well, you are the people that is going to say to that parent – it's okay, relax, we've found your child. Everything's okay. Everything's all right.

Turn on the news, turn on the TV, you're going to see 8 million TV shows that they write about police work, particularly about the NYPD. I've lost track of how many shows there are. And it always focuses, generally speaking, on cops and robbers. But cops and robbers – that's never going to go away, but policing is about so much more than that. Policing is really about – and pay attention now – it's the every-day interactions that you have with people. Those are the ones that you're really going to be remembered for. The person who calls 9-1-1 maybe once in 10 years – hopefully nobody ever has to call 9-1-1, but when that person calls 9-1-1, for the rest of their life, they're going to remember that day. You and your partner are going to be the ones that responded to that call. Thank you for what you're doing to help that person, but how do you want to be remembered when you answered that call that day? Maybe it's a minor fender bender. Maybe nobody's even hurt, two cars, just – everyone knows New York City traffic, right? Two cars, a cab, a bike – Lord help us, right? It's getting crazier and crazier. Minor accident, you're going to be the one that responds to that call. How do you want to be remembered that day? And over and over, we can say these types of scenarios. Maybe it's going to be, as the Mayor said with kids – kind words to just a kid walking to school, or a kid that's getting bullied on his way home from school. You're going to be the person potentially that can mentor that kid that maybe has nobody else to mentor them.

Never underestimate the impact that you are going to have in the next 20, 30 years on people that you interact with each and every day. Maybe it's going to be, you're coming home from work, and you step into – you intercede when two people are fighting on the train, or a woman getting off the train at night, walking home, and you're going to be standing there proudly in your uniform. It's only three blocks, but it's late at night and there's been a couple of robberies in this neighborhood. And then she's going to see you and she's going to exhale – I'm okay, I'm going to get home to my children that night. Think of all the people that come here from around the world – maybe you, maybe some of the people in this audience for the American dream. The American dream doesn't happen without you. You are the rock that provides the foundation in this great city.

So, I could go on and on. Could talk about – I laugh at this one, I've used this joke before. It's not really that funny, but I'll try it again, maybe it'll go over better this time. You know, you're going to walk out of this great arena today and no one is going to care that you just graduated. You immediately have every answer in the world. So, guaranteed, somebody here is going to walk out of this arena today, and they're going to say, where's the Empire State Building. And it's going to be a tourist. Be patient with them. Just tell them a couple blocks down, go east, big building on the corner of 34th Street and Fifth Avenue, you can't miss it. Patience.

Some of you may even get the exact question, as I said, when you leave today. When you're out on patrol, maybe it's going to be a person in crisis that you're going to talk off the ledge. You're

going to do amazing things. Somebody here is going to deliver a baby and it's not going to be your baby. Think about the impact you're going to have. How you handle yourself [inaudible] but in every one of these interactions is how you're going to be remembered and what makes this job so memorable. There's going to be many, many great days where your pride in this department is going to overwhelm you. It's a drug. Enjoy it. Relish it. You're going to be lifted up. The reality, there's going to be some bad days too – days when the pain and the grief may temporarily push you down. In spite of that, you are going to get up. You're going to bring each other up. You'll get back up, because our work is never done. And that's how we honor our fallen heroes. Those who've we've lost, those who have come before you. We honor their devotion to service and their sacrifice. And I want you to never forget, as you look down at that patch that is on your shoulder, at that shield that's on your chest – that that's the same patch that those heroes that have come before you have worn. You carry on their legacies. It's a huge responsibility. I know – I know it is, but you won't be doing any of this alone. You now have – think about this, 35,000 men and women working alongside you. These veteran cops that are all throughout New York City, listen to them. Your field training offices, listen to them, take their advice. I guarantee, 99.9 percent of what you hear is going to be right on point. Disregard the 0.1 percent, don't worry, nobody's perfect. Listen to the people you serve. They're going to help and guide you as well. Absorb it all. I'm pretty sure that they have been through some variation of what you're about to face, so learn from it. And they're going to be the first to tell you how lucky we all are and that the work that we're doing now has never – certainly not in my career – never been more meaningful and more important than it is right now.

We have a very simple job in many ways. It doesn't always seem that way. It's about service and people, as I mentioned before. And what is our mission? Well, the mission is pretty simple. Fight crime and keep people safe. Be the guardian. Talk about policing – are you the warrior or the guardian? Well, you going to be both at times, but never forget the guardian piece. Be the servant of the people, that is our police department's legacy. And now, after you've raised your right hand, it's your legacy too. It's your job to keep building on everything that has come before you by the thousands and thousands and thousands of people that have come before you and worn that same uniform. You continue the legacy. You build on their accomplishments.

We talked about the good, we talked about the bad – should we get this out of the way right now? Sorry, everyone in the stands, July 4th, the picnic, right? New Year's Eve. As we talk the, the tougher times of policing, let us just say to the audience here, it's the perfect time to just give everyone in the audience a round of applause.

[Applause]

You are now part of our police family. And, today, everyone on this stage, we are honored to welcome you into our family. Finally, I want to thank everyone that's behind me as well. Everyone from the Police Academy for your work over the last six months and getting our recruits ready. We rely on you to turn these men and women into cops and you did a phenomenal job.

In closing, to our newest police officers, welcome to the most noble profession in the world. Never forget who you are, why you came onto this job. The city – this great city of ours is built

on the foundation that you provide. And now, it's even stronger. I know you're going to accomplish great things over your career and today it starts. God bless you. God bless your families. And God bless the NYPD.

###