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MAYOR ADAMS ANNOUNCES TWO KEY ADMINISTRATION APPOINTMENTS

Appoints Jasmine Ray as Director of Mayor's Office of Sports, Wellness, and Recreation

Appoints Karen Ford as Executive Director of Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced the appointment of Jasmine Ray as director of the newly created Mayor's Office of Sports, Wellness, and Recreation and Karen Ford as executive director of the Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services. Ray brings years of experience as a community leader, coach, and athlete dedicated to using sports to strengthen and build healthier communities across New York City. As the Mayor's Office of Sports, Wellness, and Recreation director, Ray will oversee creation and implementation of sports and wellness initiatives to build a healthier and more active city for all New Yorkers.

Ford brings nearly 30 years of experience in social and non-profit services to city government. At the Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services, Ford will make the office's efforts to engage and communicate critical information to nonprofits, develop and deliver a capacity-building program to support nonprofits to contract with the city more easily, and coordinate activities to advance the recommendations of the [Joint Task Force to Get Nonprofits Paid on Time](#).

"Jasmine Ray and Karen Ford are two passionate public servants who have dedicated their careers to empowering and advocating for New Yorkers across the five boroughs," said **Mayor Adams**. "These two new appointees will utilize these newly created offices to connect New Yorkers to an active lifestyle, build healthier communities, and create a smoother process for our nonprofit partners. Jasmine and Karen will bring not only a deep passion to their roles but also a wealth of experience to our team, and I'm proud to have them join our administration."

"New Yorkers are lucky that two highly qualified individuals like Jasmine Ray and Karen Ford are joining the ranks of city government, ready to roll up their sleeves," said **Chief of Staff Frank Carone**. "By harnessing the power of sports and recreation, we can build stronger, healthier, and more equitable communities. Jasmine has brought the transformative power of sports to countless New Yorkers, and I know she will bring that same expertise to her role leading the newly created Mayor's Office of Sports, Wellness, and Recreation. And Karen will bring her expertise from serving as COO at HELP USA to develop and deliver a capacity-

building office to support our city's nonprofit partners. Her appointment will make it easier to support New Yorkers by helping us cut red tape in the contract process with the city and help us 'Get Stuff Done' more quickly."

"The new Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services is a crucial step towards the Adams administration's long-term vision for supporting nonprofits through cross-sector collaboration, increased coordination across city agencies, and regular communication with the sector," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright**. "Karen Ford's rich nonprofit and government experience will be an incredible asset as she addresses the needs of our nonprofit partners. We are excited to have her on board and know that she is the right person to drive forward this crucial work to support nonprofits and the communities they serve."

"Nonprofits are so often our trusted partners across the city, delivering services within the communities they know best," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. "With Karen's appointment, our administration adds an experienced leader to elevate the voices of nonprofit providers. Importantly, Karen brings a person-centric approach to her work and her vision for how we can serve our nonprofits better and thereby serve every New Yorker that encounters those nonprofits in a richer, more efficient, and more effective way. I am grateful to Karen for taking on this role."

"Well-being begins with a healthy lifestyle, and sports and physical activity play a key role in building healthy communities," said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. "Jasmine's appointment sends a clear message to New Yorkers: Everyone in this city deserves access to life-changing opportunities to improve their personal well-being through sports and recreation. I know Jasmine will deliver that to New Yorkers across the five boroughs, and I am grateful for her service on behalf of our city."

"As a minority, woman business owner, and as a person who grew up in an underserved community, I know, firsthand, that sports are not only a vehicle to promote health and wellness, but also a tool that can be used for crime prevention, and I share Mayor Adams' vision for a safer, healthier, and more equitable New York City," said **Mayor's Office of Sports, Wellness and Recreation Director Ray**. "My journey into public service was a personal calling triggered by the tragic death of my youngest brother, Jonathan Ray. The following year, I created a sports organization and worked tirelessly to provide alternatives for at-risk youth — that was 13 years ago. That is the passion, conviction, and dedication that I am bringing to this new office. For me, this is not a job; it is a mission-driven life commitment, and I look forward to setting a standard of excellence as the first director for the Mayor's Office of Sports, Wellness and Recreation."

"It is an honor to be appointed the city's first executive director of the Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services," said **Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services Executive Director Karen Ford**. "Mayor Adams' commitment to thriving communities centers the value and importance of strong nonprofit partnerships. I am excited to work alongside Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright and Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom to carry out this commitment by amplifying and addressing the needs of nonprofit organizations. The nonprofit sector is a vital source in supporting communities, and we will be intentional in our efforts to ensure this administration is supporting their efforts."

“Jasmine is a dedicated, committed New Yorker who leveraged her passion for wallball to inspire and empower many young people,” said **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) First Deputy Commissioner Iris Rodriguez Rosa**. “Over the years, I witnessed, firsthand, Jasmine’s persistence and perseverance as she worked with hundreds of city youth, helping them explore their abilities on our parks’ courts. I applaud her appointment as director of the Mayor’s Office of Sports, Wellness, and Recreation, and I know the administration and our city will benefit from her years of successful grassroots sports advocacy.”

“We are delighted to see Karen Ford appointed as executive director the Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services. Karen’s extensive experience in the public and nonprofit sectors, including her time with the Department of Homeless Services, make her uniquely qualified for this critical role,” said **New York City Department of Social Services Commissioner Gary P. Jenkins**. “Our provider partners are essential to our efforts to serve New York’s most vulnerable populations, and we look forward to working closely with Executive Director Ford to more efficiently and effectively support these partners through enhanced partnership, coordination, and contracting.”

“Karen is the perfect person for the job,” said **Mayor’s Office of Contract Services Director Lisa Flores**. “The newly formed Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services needs a passionate executive director who understands and appreciates the crucial responsibilities that come with the office and, more importantly, understands the inner workings and needs of our nonprofit sector. In the more than 30 years Karen has been dedicated to public service, she has had a hand in shaping every aspect of the sector — from housing to veteran services to welfare reform and everything in between. The Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services has exciting work ahead, and her experience will undoubtedly assist the office in meeting its mission of strengthening the relationship between our nonprofit provider partners and the city. Congratulations on your appointment, Karen! I very much look forward to collaborating with you and the Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services to ‘Get Stuff Done.’”

“Anyone who has been fortunate to work with Jasmine knows how passionate she is to harness the power of sports to improve lives,” said **Steven Matteo, executive director, United Activities Unlimited; and former New York City Councilmember**. “I had the opportunity to see her in action through her advocacy for the sport of wallball, and I know she will bring the same persistence and commitment to her new role. Thank you to Mayor Adams for creating this new office that will improve the health of New Yorkers.”

“Jasmine is a passionate leader and advocate for health, wellness, and recreation,” said **Mitchell J. Silver, former commissioner, NYC Parks**. “Her lifelong mission to elevate wallball into an inclusive and accessible sport is just one example of Jasmine’s commitment to making New York City a healthier, better place to live. Jasmine is tenacious, focused, intentional, purpose-driven, and inspirational. In her role as the newly appointed director of the Mayor’s Office of Sports, Wellness, and Recreation, I am confident Jasmine will transform New York City to be a more active place for all.”

“The Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services can reset the partnership between government and the nonprofit sector, and Karen Ford is an outstanding choice to lead it,” said **Michelle Jackson, executive director, Human Services Council**. “As unnecessary administrative burdens stretch New York City’s nonprofit sector to a breaking point, I know Karen understands the pressure points, bottlenecks, and opportunities facing our sector. I’ve seen her tackle the challenges of COVID-19, mentor her peers on crucial operations issues, and partner with the Human Services Council in our time of need. She is ready for the task ahead of her, and I’m excited to fight alongside her for our members and communities.”

“Karen Ford is a transformational professional who excels at leading strong, talented teams and building consensus to effect real change,” said **Tom Hameline, Ph.D., president and CEO, HELP USA**. “Karen’s success at HELP has left us well-positioned to continue our life-changing efforts without interruption. We congratulate her on this richly deserved opportunity and anticipate working closely with her and the Adams administration to address New York City’s housing crisis.”

“I cannot think of a better person to fill the new position of executive director of the Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services than Karen Ford,” said **Mitchell Netburn, president and CEO, Samaritan Daytop Village**. “Karen’s stellar accomplishments led her to rise through the ranks at Samaritan Daytop Village — from frontline staff to the executive management team. She has worked directly with clients, managed alongside nonprofit executives, and collaborated with city and state officials. Karen understands well the struggles and needs of both the nonprofit and government sectors. She brings a unique 360-degree perspective to the position and will surely hit the ground running.”

“I’m thrilled to support Karen Ford’s appointment as the new executive director the Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services,” said **Dr. Darlene Williams, president and CEO, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow**. “Karen is a visionary leader with deep insight into the needs of nonprofit organizations and our essential partnership with New York City government. She is uniquely positioned to advocate, support, and assist in navigating cross-agency initiatives and address emerging issues to ensure that we are well-equipped to serve the New York City community. Thank you to the Adams administration for creating the Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services and appointing a thought partner to help us ‘Get Stuff Done.’”

“Congratulations to Karen Ford on her appointment to lead the Mayor’s Office of Nonprofit Services! Nonprofits are the backbone of this city, providing critical services that New Yorkers rely upon,” said **Catherine Trapani, executive director, Homeless Services United**. “We need a leader that understands the sector, our strengths, and our challenges, and who is ready and able to partner with us to make New York stronger than ever. Karen is that leader. She understands the value of working in community and lifting up others to help them reach their full potential. Karen’s expertise working with both people and systems in and out of government makes her uniquely qualified to lead this office. We are thrilled to continue to work with her in this new capacity.”

“On behalf of Urban Resource Institute (URI), our staff, and our clients, I applaud the appointment of Karen Ford to the position of executive director of the Mayor’s Office of

Nonprofit Services,” said **Nathaniel M. Fields, CEO, URI**. “The entire nonprofit sector, including the areas of domestic violence and homeless families services in which URI works, faces both challenges and opportunities to increase our impact. Karen brings a wealth of experience and expertise to help lead the nonprofit sector in New York City, and we look forward to working with her in this new role.”

About Jasmine Ray

Jasmine Ray is a dedicated public servant, avid athlete, entrepreneur, former recording artist, and public speaker. As founder of Wallball World LLC and the U.S. Wallball Association Inc., Ray — inspired by the tragic death of her little brother, Jonathan Robert Ray, in 2009 — has worked tirelessly to motivate young people in underserved communities to stay in school, embrace healthy lifestyles, and pursue alternatives to drug use and violence. Ray’s work has contributed to the evolution of wallball from what was once considered a “street sport” into one now being played in over 45 countries.

As the former executive director of Cornerstone Daycare, located in Brooklyn, and an executive board member of the Black and Minority Chamber of Commerce, Ray has dedicated her career to serving New Yorkers and has been recognized as one of El Diario’s “Most Influential Latinas in New York City,” NY1’s “New Yorker of the Week,” and a CNN “Woman of the Week.”

Also a talented singer, Ray was a member of MVP (Most Valuable Playas), a hip-hop group signed to Casablanca/Universal Records that scored hits in Europe in 2005 and 2006. A certified fourth degree black belt in Shotokan Karate, Ray has been a volunteer martial arts instructor in Sunset Park, Brooklyn for over 15 years.

Ray will report to Chief of-Staff Frank Carone.

About Karen Ford

Karen Ford has served New Yorkers for over 30 years, across numerous areas in the social service sector, including housing, health care, veterans, addiction, domestic and intimate partner violence, and welfare reform. Most recently, Ford served as the chief operating officer of HELP USA, a national homeless service and housing organization based in the city. At HELP, Ford led a team that served tens of thousands of unhoused and housing insecure individuals and families each year — providing them with homelessness prevention, transitional housing, and supportive services.

Ford’s work fighting homelessness began at the New York City Department of Homeless Services’ Street Outreach Team. Two decades later, Ford returned to the department as the deputy commissioner for family services, overseeing DHS’s Family Intake Center and the Family Transitional Services Unit. Ford’s experience in government service also included working as the New York City Housing Authority’s borough administrator and as program administrator for the New York State AIDS Institute.

She is an adjunct professor and advisory board member of Alliance University School of Social Work. Ford was previously honored by the National Association of Social Workers. She is a U.S. Housing and Urban Development community builder fellow and New York leadership fellow at Baruch College and the City University of New York Center for Nonprofit Strategy and Management. She is a graduate of Adelphi University and Fordham University.

Ford will report to Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright.

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