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Pepacton Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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**DEP Kicks Off 2011 Summer Fire Hydrant Abuse Prevention Campaign****Hydrant Education Action Teams Hit the Streets to Inform NYC Residents about the Dangers of Unauthorized Fire Hydrant Use**

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today kicked off the innovative Hydrant Education Action Team (HEAT) program to inform the public about the dangers of unauthorized and improper fire hydrant use. The program, run in partnership with the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO), deploys four teams of 10 - 12 students who will be on city streets in Manhattan and the Bronx for seven weeks informing residents that opening fire hydrants without spray caps is illegal, wasteful and dangerous. As part of the education campaign, HEAT team members will distribute information at parks, neighborhood events, churches and local streets to explain to residents that opening fire hydrants during hot days can significantly reduce local water pressure, potentially impairing firefighting operations and impacting local businesses and residences. Children can also be at risk from illegally-opened hydrants because the powerful force of an open hydrant can knock a child down, causing serious injuries. As an alternative to help local residents safely keep cool, hydrants can be opened legally if equipped with a city-approved spray cap. Spray caps can be obtained by an adult 18 or over, free of charge, at local firehouses. Individuals in the HEAT program were hired through the Department of Youth and Community Development as part of the Summer Youth Employment Program.

"Thanks to our partnership with SoBRO, more New Yorkers will stay safe when they keep cool on hot summer days," said Commissioner Holloway. "Illegally opening fire hydrants can have potentially dire consequences, injuring children and putting the lives of residents and firefighters at risk. This program, already in its fifth year, has been extremely successful, providing valuable information to residents about alternative ways to beat the heat, like FDNY-approved spray caps that can be picked up at any local firehouse. I want to thank SoBRO and all of the 48 students who are working with us on this important public safety

**MORE INFORMATION**

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initiative."

"Fire hydrants are one of the most vital tools our firefighters have at their disposal. Without water we simply cannot put out fires," said Fire Commissioner Salvatore J. Cassano.

"Using a spray cap to cool off rather than illegally opening a fire hydrant is crucial to keeping an adequate water supply available. We want everyone to beat the heat, but not at the expense of safety."

"The HEAT Program is a great example of the work that Summer Youth Employment Program participants are undertaking everyday, in every corner of our City," said DYCD Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav. "Whether it's working at a day camp or educating New Yorkers about the safety concerns of improper fire hydrant use, young people are contributing to making our City a safer, more livable place through their summer employment."

"We are extremely excited to implement the DEP HEAT SYEP program as a new addition to SoBRO's existing portfolio of Summer Youth Employment Programs!!!! This program supports our mission in developing and uplifting the South Bronx and neighboring communities to promote safe and healthy living. In closing, the SoBRO HEAT Team is committed to developing youth program participants to be life-long community leaders in pursuit of quality lifestyles," said Nilza Oyola, Sr. Vice President of Education and Career Development Division at SoBRO.

The HEAT outreach teams will be in several New York City neighborhoods that have a history of high numbers of complaints of unauthorized opened hydrants, including upper Manhattan and the Bronx. The HEAT teams work at public locations engaging local residents, children, and business owners who can display educational posters. They will also visit different community events or public areas, including parades, greenmarkets and libraries. Before the groups began their outreach, the teams went through special training for several days to learn about the NYC water system and how hydrant abuse can affect communities around the city. The annual cost of the program is approximately \$57,000.

The unauthorized opening of New York City fire hydrants often spikes during heat waves. One unauthorized open hydrant generally releases more than 1,000 gallons of water per minute, while a hydrant with a spray cap releases 20 to 25 gallons per minute. Spray caps converts the hydrant nozzle into shower sprinklers saving millions of gallons of water. Spray caps can be obtained by an adult 18 or over, free of charge, at local firehouses. Opening a hydrant without a spray cap lowers water pressure and can hinder firefighting by reducing the flow of water to hoses and pumps. Firefighters need adequate water pressure to put out fires. The reduction of water pressure resulting from illegally opened hydrants can also cause problems at hospitals and other medical facilities. Opening a hydrant illegally can result in fines of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both. New Yorkers should call 311 to report open fire hydrants.

SoBRO, a not-for-profit community development corporation, has been serving the South Bronx since 1972. SoBRO's programs include adult education and workforce training, real estate and community development, technical and financial assistance for businesses, and an array of programs for youth. For additional information about SoBRO, visit [www.sobro.org](http://www.sobro.org).

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) or follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater).

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