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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT 4TH ANNUAL MAYOR'S DAY OF RECOGNITION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE RALLY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you. This is what we call a warm welcome on a cold day. Thank you, everyone. Thank you. Let me just take a moment to thank all of you for the extraordinary work you do – all the ways you make our City better, everything you do to contribute to the lives of others. I want to thank everyone – I'm looking at each and every one of you.

[Laughter]

Thank you for what you do, and thank you for the imprint it makes on our society, and the way it encourages other people to be as good as you and to get involved. Give yourselves a round of applause.

[Applause]

I want to thank Tashawn for the very kind introduction and for the great work he's done. He understood there was a need in the community – there was something that required time, and effort, and energy, and he stepped up, and he did it. And that's what this day is all about – recognizing the extraordinary impulse to help others, the impulse to service that makes our society great. But it's something we have to foster – it doesn't always happen by itself. We have to support it, encourage it, foster it in so many ways. And that's what this day is about – it's a day of recognition – absolutely a day to appreciate people who give of themselves, but it's a day to encourage others to do so much more and to let people know what a difference it makes.

There are so many people who simply would not get the help they deserve it weren't for those who step up, and volunteer, and serve. There are so many people who would not be connected to the possibilities of their lives if it weren't for people like all those behind me who decide to take the bold step of serving others. So, this is what this day is about.

I want to thank Paula Gavin, our wonderful Chief Service Officer for New York City.

[Cheers]

She is a force of nature. Anyone who meets her will volunteer to do good.

[Laughter]

Just need you to meet all 8.5 million New Yorkers and you'll have lots of volunteers. I want to thank our exceptional Commissioner for the Office of Emergency Management. Joe Esposito keeps us safe.

[Applause]

I want to thank the members of the City Council who are here – Councilman Mathieu Eugene; Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez. Thank you for your great support.

[Applause]

I want to thank the New York State Program Director for the Corporation for National and Community Service Jessica Vasquez. Thank you.

[Applause]

And is Roma Torre here? Where's Roma? Roma Torre – NY1 – thank you for your leadership and for supporting this great effort.

[Applause]

Look, when people go out and help in the community, here's what it means – it means someone who needed help with financial literacy, who did not know the best way to manage their own household budget, now can be on a firm footing, can take care of themselves and their family because volunteers step forward and help them to figure out the best way to manage their life. Think about what that means. Think about the difference between a family that might lose their way, that might have the bottom fall out because they don't know how to manage properly, versus a family that has that support – that's what one volunteer can do. Think about all the work being done to protect our environment. We only have one planet, and we have to constantly support and nurture it. And there's so many challenges that aren't going addressed, but people can do something to protect our waterways, to keep our City clean – and that's what folks here do. Or Tashawn, who reached out to members of the LGBT community who needed to know what rights they had, what services they had, how they could be helped and protected.

There are so many ways this manifests, so many ways that people are helped. Everyone here deserves our thanks, but everyone here needs to be a recruiter. You're recruiters by example because you show how much good can be done, but I need everyone to spread the word that every New Yorker can make a difference, every New Yorker can make this a better and stronger place.

Now, if you want to get involved, just call 3-1-1 – it's very simple. Any New Yorker who wants to make the City a better place, all you have to do is call –

Audience: 3-1-1!

Mayor: Thank you. We didn't even have to rehearse that. You did that beautifully.

[Laughter]

It makes a difference. It makes a difference. And I want to quote one of the greatest leaders this nation every produced – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – who reminded us that anyone can be a change agent, anyone can improve their society. He said, “You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

The people behind me have souls generated by love and they're making an incredible impact. We need a lot more people to step up. And this is day where we send that call out to every New Yorker to get involved, help make this a better place. And we do that not only in English, but we do it in Spanish too.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

So, the Spanish says something I didn't say in English, which is in addition to all the great work that these folks are doing, and all the lives that they're touching and supporting, here you're going to see some of the leaders of this City, going forward, because, through service, people learn leadership. Through service, people hear the needs of their fellow New Yorkers. They see, and touch, and understand what people are going through, and that generates great leaders.

So, I want to thank you all of the leaders of the future as well. God bless you all.

Thank you very much.

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