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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. Well, another day fighting back COVID in New York city, another day moving forward. And the vaccine effort continues to reach deeper and deeper into communities. We have so many new approaches and they continue to bear fruit. As of today, 9,075,382 doses – amazing. Just stop and think of that number, the sheer extraordinary size of this effort. And always be thankful – all the vaccinators out there, all the people who are helping to bring New York City back with everything they do. So, that's good news, but we have some other good news when it comes to COVID today. And, as of midnight tonight, the State of Emergency in New York State ends. And that means the restoration of democracy in New York State. That means local control resumes. This is something that I stood shoulder to shoulder with county executives and mayors all over the state, Democrat and Republican, upstate, downstate. We all said we needed local control back. The crisis, thank God, is passing. It's time to restore normal democracy. Finally, this is happening and it's going to allow us to do so much more to serve our people and move our city, and the same for cities and counties all over the state, move us forward. So, a thank you to all my colleagues in local government, all the county executives, all the mayors – again, Democrat and Republican, both – who stood shoulder to shoulder to make sure this day would come.

Now, vaccines and the vaccination effort are the pathway to recovery. The vaccination effort is the reason we get to have the recovery, but we also have other important work to do to ensure a recovery for all of us. I've said many times, recovery equals public safety, public safety equals recovery. They go together and we have to keep building on our efforts. Yesterday, really powerful announcement from President Biden, a comprehensive vision to address the gun violence problem, which is plaguing the whole country, cities all over America. We've dealt with our challenges. Tragically, a number of cities have gone through much worse than us. It all needs to be addressed, and it all is a result of the perfect storm of COVID. The President put forward an extraordinary plan and it really mirrors some of the things we're doing here and we're very proud of. He talked about the importance of, of course, the federal government playing a more active role in stopping the flow of firearms in cities like New York. That mirrors what we're doing in our first-in-the-nation partnership with the ATF that we announced here a few weeks ago. The President's focusing on invest in community solutions to violence, like our years and years of investments in the Cure Violence Movement and the Crisis Management System, which is bearing fruit and bringing the community more deeply into the fight against violence. The President's focusing on expanding Summer Youth Program. New York City, we've continued to expand summer youth, highest level we've ever been this year. And the President's focused on successful re-entry efforts for folks coming back from incarceration. This is crucial – the question of how to manage people coming back, how to address parole. Commissioner Shea has been talking about this, and we were talking today. I remember the first conversation we had in 2014 on this topic, change and reform long needed. In the city, with folks in Rikers, we provide

training and education to get ready – people ready to come back. We provide re-entry planning. We provide transitional jobs. But the State of New York has not, historically. The State of New York sends people back to New York City without preparation, without support, and that's a huge problem. Some folks even are brought from prison directly to a homeless shelter, that's bad for everyone. We made real progress a few weeks ago in Albany, with the State Assembly, passing our parole reform bill. We're looking forward to the Senate coming back and taking the next big step. This is crucial for public safety and for decency in helping to rehabilitate people and move them away from negative influence, towards a more positive life.

So, the President's plan tracks so many of the things that we believe in, we've been working on here in New York City. The plan we announced for this summer, Safe Summer NYC, is about those community efforts to stop crime, it's about courts coming back, and, of course, it's about cops, precision policing, neighborhood policing, the things that work. Now, today, something momentous. Today, something long overdue. We are talking today about the focus on young people that is now central to the NYPD's approach. We're talking today about Kids First – NYPD Kids First, a new initiative, and there's a fantastic booklet that's been put together to describe the many, many pieces of this initiative. I want to harken back to just before the pandemic. I gave State of the City remarks before we knew the pandemic was coming. And with Commissioner Shea, we talked about the focus on young people. This is a passion of his, changing the orientation of the NYPD to focus on prevention, to focus on reaching young people, stopping problems before they occur, helping kids to a better path. This is something Dermot Shea cares about deeply. We were about to make it a major, major initiative, and COVID hit weeks later. We now get to come back and do this the right way as the city recovers. And this is the future, policing with a lens of focusing on young people, proactive, preemptive, positive, building deep connections to communities, taking neighborhood policing to the next level.

Great initiatives. Take a look at this booklet and you're going to see great initiatives. One I love called SASS – Sisters Assisting Sisters to Succeed. I love this name, Sisters Assisting Sisters to Succeed – amazing mentorship program, focusing on young women. Other mentorship and career prep initiatives, like the Law Enforcement Explorers, youth coordination officers, so many pieces that focus positively, productively, creatively on young people. I want you to hear from Commissioner Shea in a moment, but first a video NYPD put together to illustrate the impact these programs. It's very, very powerful. I want you to see it now.

[...]

Mayor: That's so beautiful. That is really, really striking, really moving. And that is the way forward. To me, that's the epitome of neighborhood policing. That's taking neighborhood policing to the next level, with the focus on young people. I'm going to turn to Commissioner Shea and say, this has been a labor of love for him and for so many members of his team, putting together this approach that I think is going to make a profound impact, going forward. My pleasure introduced Police Commissioner Dermot Shea.

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea: Mr. Mayor, thank you very much. And I'll try to be brief, but I could talk on this topic for a long time. When you look at that video, I can't help but smile.

And what I think about is the year – the year or two we've had and sometimes a polarizing time, but there's nothing polarizing that video. It's something that really – the common ground that we all strive for, that we're all coming together for. And really, who could argue with putting the kids first? And when you look at that video and it encapsulates, really, an umbrella policy of what we've been working on in the NYPD for quite a while. I spoke about it at my swearing in, but, you know, really I've been working on it for much longer than that. And I have to give credit to many, many people past commissioners – Commissioner Kelly, Jimmy O'Neill, Bill Bratton – this is a lot of work that has been done already and now built on and coming together. Chauncey Parker, Assistant Commissioner Kevin O'Connor, Jeff Maddrey, and many others, and all my youth coordination officers across the city. When you see that video, it's much more than sports. You see sports highlighted, but, really, it's giving kids in this city every – in the greatest city in the world, by the way – every single opportunity to succeed. And it's not an NYPD video, it's a New York video. It's with our partners. It's with community groups. It's with, as Chauncey Parker said, redirecting asset forfeiture money, taking money out of our own budget, working with NYCHA, and I could go on and on.

Are we doing everything we can for kids? When you see the courts, it kind of brings to the front there that this isn't something that we're starting now. We've been working on this all through COVID. Sometimes we may have been bending the rules and taking kids out and even working with them in that real tough time that they had with schools shut down and things of that nature. But that's the future right there and I would say that the future is bright. Mr. Mayor?

Mayor: Amen. And, Commissioner, I'll be seeing you later on. We're opening up another basketball court later today, and I know it's going to be important moment for that community. People just love seeing the investment in the community, in the kids, a lot more coming. I want you to hear from a couple of our elected leaders who really care and understand about youth and why we need to invest in them. Why investing in supporting young people is so important to public safety. The first person I wanted you to hear from spent several years as the Chair of the Public Safety Committee in the City Council. She's passionate on the topic of investing in our youth and she may – there's a full count going on, but she may just be the next Borough President of the Bronx. My pleasure to introduce Council Member Vanessa Gibson.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you so much Council Member, and good luck with everything ahead. Now, want you to hear from a member of the State Assembly. And I want to start by saying a tremendous thank you to David Weprin, and every Assembly Member for supporting our parole reform bill, which is really going to make a difference – took a major step, something that's been needed for years and years. The Assembly did that. That's going to have a powerful impact going forward when it's passed by the whole Legislature, powerful impact on public safety in this city. David Weprin and I go back together to our first years in the City Council together and I know he is passionate on the topic of neighborhood policing and bringing police and community together. So, welcome to our gathering, Assembly Member, and we would love to hear from you.

[...]

Thank you, so much Assembly Member. Thank you for everything you've been doing to support us in Albany. It's made a big difference and thank you for supporting this great new initiative today.

All right, everybody, we're going to go as always to our indicators in a moment, but I want to do something special first, because we've got some people in this city who are just treasures. There are folks who have given their whole life to New York City and made a difference, and particularly this absolutely sacred issue of keeping this beautiful city together, the most diverse place on earth, needs shepherds who make sure that all our communities stay in communication, that even in times of crisis, we find unity and that we support each other, create solidarity between communities. No one has done that more for years and years for the city, more than Rabbi Michael Miller. This is a personally very, very important moment to me to be able to thank him on behalf of the people in New York City because I have known him going back decades. His extraordinary work at the Jewish Community Relations Council has been of course about bringing forward the concerns of the Jewish community and supporting the needs of the community, but it's gone so much farther. He has been one of the great agents of unity, one of the great voices of the beauty of this city, the power of the city, the diversity of the city, you see some photos there were Rabbi Miller has been one of the go-to people, and we needed faith leaders to think together about how to address a challenge, any challenge, everyone knows, one of the first calls you make is to Rabbi Michael Miller, 36 years of outstanding leadership to this city, for this city, fighting antisemitism, but also fighting racism and every other form of bias, building relationships between people of all communities in a city that needs those special people who know how to do that.

I've also had the honor of going with Rabbi Miller to Israel, and he's been the person who led delegations and taught me a lot, and for Chirlane and I, we hold him dear as a friend and as a guide. Very recently, one more thing to say. We had the extraordinary challenge of COVID and within that challenge, the threat to our seniors, and then within that, something that grabbed at my heart, the fact that we had Holocaust survivors in this city who had been through so much and yet survived, move forward, showed strength and faith, and now COVID was the danger of confronting them. We had to reach them. Rabbi Miller was one of the leaders of the effort to create a vaccination drive, specifically focused on Holocaust survivors. We reached thousands of people in need. It made a big, big impact. So, I want to take a moment to honor this extraordinary work and to wish him the very best in everything he does ahead. And I have a proclamation which I'm going to hold up and you're going to hold the other side and then you're going to speak, but I have one more thing to say, this is my – proclamations, as always, I say wonderful verbiage that summarizes why someone is great and worthy, but I like the last part. Now, therefore I, Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York do hereby proclaim, Thursday, June 24th, 2021, in the City of New York as Michael Miller Day. Congratulations my friend. Well-deserved.

[...]

Thank you. Well, that's very, very kind to you. I think God's going to give you many years because you have more than earned them, but you've been the teacher, you've been the guide. So, thank you, but I'm going to turn it back and say, nope, you've been the teacher, you've been the

guide, and you've been an incredible unifying force in this city. So, my friend, you couldn't have done better. This is one thing. I've given – I gave you the grade, you got A+, you could not have done better. Thank you for everything. Thank you.

All right, after that, indicators are a little anticlimactic, but we'll do them anyway. But I want to thank the indicators, you've been a good friend too, and you've been moving in the right direction. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, today's report, 78 patients, confirmed positivity of 16.25 percent. Hospitalization rate per 100,000, 0.31. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, today's report is 175 cases. Number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, today's report on a seven-day rolling average, 0.53 percent. Now a few words in Spanish, and I want to go back to NYPD Kids First, I'm going to make another plug check out this booklet. It's really powerful and really moving.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media and please let me know the name and the outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Hi guys. We'll now begin our Q-and-A. With us today is Rabbi Michael Miller Police Commissioner Shea, Dr. Katz, Dr. Varma, and Kapil Longani, Counsel to the Mayor with that, we'll go to Siff from WNBC.

Question: Hello? Can you guys hear me?

Mayor: Yes, indeed. How are you doing?

Question: Impressive job by Avery still calling on me, even though I had lowered my hand. So, I'm going to honor the system and ask a question anyway. Mayor, I wanted to, now that you've had a day – a full day to absorb the mayoral results, I wanted to get your sense of how you would advise New Yorkers to, to make sense of what happened given that we have around a ranked choice voting to be unveiled next week, and then a week after that, and then no certification until mid-July. Should – what should New Yorkers make of this uncertain period?

Mayor: I don't think there's a lot to worry about. The, you know, back in the day we had September primaries. This would be a really challenging moment if we had a September primary and November general election and we were waiting weeks and weeks to know who won the primary, that would be really problematic, but it's a June prime right now, and there's time. I don't find this particularly problematic at all. I think what we're seeing is a functioning system. Some races, some of the Council races got decided outright, no need for further counting, others, a lot of races, obviously, it's going to be a few weeks, but the good news is, Andrew, that every vote is going to be counted and votes are going to have much more impact than ever before, because this is the good part of ranked choice. It's frustrating, I'm not going to lie. They're frustrating elements of ranked choice voting, but the good part is if you have voted, for example, for a mayoral candidate who didn't do so well, your vote continues to stay alive and until it finds a home and has the maximum impact, that's pretty cool. So, I think people should just recognize

there's going to be plenty of scrutiny to make sure the process goes well, it's only a few weeks, and then there's plenty of time for general election campaigns. Go ahead, Andrew.

Question: Kathryn Garcia team analyzed the results today and reminded folks that with more than 100,000 absentee ballots returned already and possibly closer to 200,000, by the time it's all done, that she has a viable path to overtake Eric Adams in ranked choice voting. Do you agree with that assessment?

Mayor: I think the history of ranked choice voting and just elections in general, when absentee ballots are involved, suggest that whoever's leading on election day typically does win. If it's a pretty decisive margin, we certainly see that here. Eric Adams had a really good night, that said, yesterday, I identified three leading candidates, Eric Adams, Maya Wiley, and Kathryn Garcia, all of whom can legitimately say until every vote is counted, this isn't over. They all had strong enough showings to say there's more to play out here. So, we should all wait for the full result and the whole process, and we want every vote counted, and we want the whole ranked choice process to proceed, and we all want to be able to watch it to see how votes continued to have power, even if their first choice didn't win. So, that's the way I see the state of affairs right now.

Moderator: Next is Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good, Shant, how you been?

Question: Pretty good, pretty good. So yeah, on the occasion of the primary, the Governor kind of held forth yesterday and took some shots at you, not the first time he's done that. He said your administration was hyper political and incompetent, making him look forward to your successor. Any response to that?

Mayor: You know, I'm going to borrow from something Commissioner Shea said some weeks ago after something else the Governor said, my message is I stopped listening to him a long time ago. Go ahead, Shant.

Question: Fair enough. And yeah, with the state of emergency ending, understand that carry out booze will also be a thing of the past. Any thoughts on that very popular program? Is there anything the city can do to allow people to - to have shops to perpetuate carry out booze?

Mayor: It actually worked pretty well. I don't blame anyone who thought maybe that could be a little dicey, but it actually worked pretty well. And I am concerned, of course, about all the restaurants and bars that we want to survive as part of the life of the city, all the jobs they provide, the future of our tourism, you know, depends on as well. So, I think that should be looked at to see if there's some way to appropriately continue it, at least for the foreseeable future while we're trying to bring back the hospitality industry.

Moderator: Next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing? That was a moving tribute to Rabbi Miller.

Mayor: Thank you, Henry. Well, from the heart, really from the heart. Also, he knew me when I had long, curly dark hair. Those were the days. So, when I see him, I feel young again. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Fair enough. I want to go back to the question I asked actually about the budget. I wanted to know what the points of contention are between you and members of the City Council that still needs to be resolved. What are those issues that remain outstanding?

Mayor: Henry, I appreciate the question, but I'm honestly going to tell you, I don't think it's an issue of points of contention. I think it is an issue of figuring out priorities and refining them. And this is a part of the budget process where there's a lot of back and forth on exactly what dollar figure to put into certain initiatives, what will work, what's viable, what's a priority. It's not a contentious moment. There's been lots of negotiation over weeks and weeks, and at this moment, I think it's leading us to a good place. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: What are the issues? Which areas are, are still in the air in terms of how much you want to spend on what? What are the various issues that must be resolved before you have the budget agreement?

Mayor: For example, historically Henry, Council has a very strong interest in cultural organizations. Let's use that as an example, determining what's the right dollar figure is the conversation we're going through now. It's always been a priority for the Council. We want to figure out with them what makes sense, in light of other priorities as well. They've always focused heavily on libraries, an other area. This is well-known. Figuring out though, what is the exact right number? What is exact type of initiative? These are things we're working through. The Council to their great credit. And I mean, really great credit in recent years has focused a lot on reserves. We've continued to build up reserves. That's a real conversation too. What's the next step we should take in building reserves further? These are all the kinds of topics, but again, they're – the topics are being discussed collegially, trying to figure out what is the right balance.

Moderator: Next, we'll go to James from PIX 11.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call. And congratulations to Rabbi Miller.

Mayor: And James, you forgot to say it is once again, objectively, and truly a beautiful day in New York City.

Question: That it is, that it is. And onto my question. You talked about the lifting of the State's state of emergency, bringing back local control. The state of emergency included daily updates on COVID numbers from the State. The Governor said that will now end. Will it end on the city level? And by the way, I'm not encouraging that, especially if it involves ending these daily news conferences, which have boosted our access to government and to you. But please elaborate on the changes that local control will bring?

Mayor: Yeah, James. I think these briefings have been very important and they will certainly continue. We did a little analysis about the kind of briefings that have been given around the country by mayors, governors, in the context of COVID particularly in the year 2021. And I can safely say I'm taking the most questions, or one of the most – the largest groups of questions of any chief executive in the nation. And I think it's been very healthy for everyone. So, we'll continue these briefings. I would say as has been the case often, the City of New York takes a cautious approach. And so, we are going to keep a close eye on the data. We're going to keep updating people for the foreseeable future on the indicators. So far our experience dealing with the variants has been very successful. But this ball game ain't over. A lot to play out, to continue the vaccination effort, to guard against any new challenges with COVID, obviously getting ready for our schools to open fully in September. So, James, my answer is, I think we'll stick with this regular briefing approach for the foreseeable future. Go ahead.

Question: Good to hear. You've also had praise for essential workers and yesterday the Governor unveiled renderings of the Circle of Heroes monument to those we've lost into essential workers who helped New York get through the tragedy. Journalists are not mentioned specifically as essential workers in the Memorial, even though we were essential workers and still are. What might you do to single out journalists for our work and sacrifices during the state of emergency during the pandemic?

Mayor: It's a great, great point. And I really want to say I appreciate how many journalists went out there and put themselves in harm's way, got people information they needed. It was often very tough to do during COVID. But you, and so many of your colleagues did the work that was needed to help the people of the city. I want to thank you. And that needs to be recognized in our Hometown Heroes parade on July 7th. And we will do that in other ways as well. I think it's really important to understand – and, you know, we talked about this James along the way. I've tried to express thankfulness to journalists who have raised important issues that we need to address. Things we didn't necessarily see playing out that they heard from the grassroots, that I needed to know, my team needed to know. But also people were so hungry for information and they needed it during this crisis. And you and your colleagues were there. So, real appreciation for that. And we're certainly going to honor it, including on July 7th.

Moderator: Next is Nolan from the Post.

Question: Morning, everybody.

Mayor: Good morning, Nolan. How you doing?

Question: I'm doing all right, Mr. Mayor. How are you?

Mayor: Good. I had some extra coffee this morning in honor of you.

Question: Well, I appreciate that. I hope you got it from a local coffee provider.

Mayor: That is always the goal.

Question: Is there a plan to save/revive The Wooly? Are we going to be stuck going the five and dime for the foreseeable future?

Mayor: Wait a minute. Is there a plan to what?

Question: The Wooly? The coffee shop?

Mayor: The Wooly? Okay. We're moving on.

Question: Fair enough. You had nice words for the President's announcement on crime and guns yesterday, which will give the City some latitude to redirect COVID funds towards public safety. How much money are you guys planning to move and to which programs?

Mayor: Well, we just heard the announcement Nolan. So, that's something we're going to work through. The direction of the President's plan is absolutely right. And I'm very appreciative of President Biden for what he's doing. And we're going to look now at what those resources could mean for us. What we do know is a lot of the approaches that we're investing in are having an impact and will have more impact as they grow. And this is only going to help us. Absolutely. Go ahead, Nolan.

Question: All right. And I guess just something of a related matter, you said yesterday that it behooves the Council to tweak the ban on chokeholds that they passed. I believe it was last summer. You did not mention that this –

Mayor: Wait a minute, wait a minute. Make sure we understand. You're saying, you're saying the legislation?

Question: The diaphragm bill, the diaphragm bill.

Mayor: Right. Right.

Question: That they passed, that you signed. The courts struck it down. You said it behooves the Council to take action to fix it. You made no mention of an appeal. Does the City plan to appeal that ruling? And if not, why not?

Mayor: Nolan, we want it just to get the legislation amended to address the concerns raised by the court. If we can do that quickly and I do believe we can, then there's no need for an appeal. So that's plan A, here. Let's just fix the law.

Moderator: Next is Reuvain from Hamodia.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Hi, Reuvain.

Question: So, Eric Adams, we know that he opposed the defund movement and also you know, supported a modified version of stop-and-frisk. Three of the top four finishers actually oppose many of the more liberal police reforms. What do you think the results of the elections say about what New Yorkers want from their policing?

Mayor: I want to, again because this came up yesterday. On what Eric has said on stop-and-frisk, and I've looked at a lot of what he said, not just this year, but years and years before. I really think there's a little bit of looseness in how people are interpreting it. He has said consistently that the previous policy, the unconstitutional and broken policy of stop-and-frisk in the previous administration was wrong. He was one of the leaders in the effort to get changed. He's also said that when used properly, constitutionally, appropriately, it is a valid policing tool, but it's one you use sparingly. So, I really think it's important to be fair to what he has said historically on that. I think what the election results say, Reuvain, is that people want balance. They want fair policing, respectful policing. They want to make sure that there's not discrimination. But they also want safety. They want to know that when they need help from a police officer, there's an officer going to be there. They want to make sure their communities are working with the police. That's what the vast majority of New York City residents want. And that's where I think neighborhood policing, as we found for years, represented the vast majority view of the people of this city. Neighborhood policing epitomized what the vast majority of people wanted. And I spent a lot of times – excuse me a lot of time, in working class communities around the city, in communities of color around the city. And that's what I heard overwhelmingly. Fair, respectful policing is what people want. Go ahead Reuvain.

Question: So, it looks like at least one DSA candidate won a Council race, possibly more. I'm wondering what you think of that? And what you think of the DSA movement in general?

Mayor: What I think – what was the last part?

Question: Sorry, the DSA movement.

Mayor: I think the underlying principles are ones I feel a lot of alignment to. I think the approach depending on the individual sometimes makes a lot of sense and sometimes it doesn't. I mean, obviously I very energetically supported Bernie Sanders in this last election. I think he epitomizes a lot of the good we've seen in that movement. I think there's some other folks in the movement who need to do more work to listen to communities, to work with other people collegially. I think it's a mixed bag like any other movement, any other organization. The underlying principles, there's some very good stuff. Some of the specifics, obviously I might disagree on,

Moderator: We have time for two more. First, we'll go to Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. Just in the context of the State emergency declaration ending, there was a component that the City had something similar, and forgive me if you've already addressed this, but is that ending at the same time, you know, the emergency contracting and those types of things?

Mayor: It's a really good question, Yoav. We're in a different situation because we're where the rubber hits the road. So, we have to assess first what the State has done and then the ramifications for us and how we might make adjustments. I think we have made a lot of progress coming out of this crisis. As I said, there are still elements of this crisis that we're attending to, and that we have to be ready to deal with if we see any changes. So, we're going to assess that now and have more to say on that in the next few days. Go ahead, Yoav.

Question: Okay. Well, just to drill down, let's focus on emergency contracting, for example. Why would that still be necessary at this point?

Mayor: The question is always going to be what we need ready in the event of any resurgence. I don't predict a resurgence right now. I think we're doing really, really well. The level of vaccinations is outstanding. It continues to grow, but we do need to be mindful. There's still a challenge out there. We have to be able to address it. That's something we're going to look at to make sure God forbid, there's something else we have to do, that we are well positioned to do it. We obviously have a strategic reserve we've built up. All of these pieces have to be evaluated. Whatever happens, Yoav, I want to make sure we're ready for any change, any development thrown at us.

Moderator: Last, we'll go to Kevin from the Brooklyn Paper.

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Kevin. How are you doing?

Question: Can't complain. I wanted to see if I could get some more details about the NYPD Kids First program? It sounds like it's an umbrella of a lot of existing programs. Can you say what specifically is new about this? And how much funding is being directed towards it?

Mayor: I will start and I'll turn to Commissioner Shea. Kevin, look, I think the best way to think about this is it is a shift in orientation. It is a strategic shift to declare throughout the entire NYPD and the entire city, the focus needs to be on young people and these proactive, positive attempts to reach young people. The Commissioner can speak more eloquently than I can, but I heard him when we first started working together, talk about this with real passion, about the difference between encountering a young person after some real problems had occurred in their life. And now we were dealing with a challenge and a problem, and that kid was in a problem versus seeing a warning sign and dealing with it right then. Or reaching a young person even before there's a problem, giving them a positive path. It is a difference of strategy and orientation. I think it's going to make a big difference. A lot of pieces, some of which have been around for a while, some of which are more newly created, but this is a powerful direction. Commissioner to the specifics, all yours.

Commissioner Shea: I think that's a great question. And you're right, Mr. Mayor. It's a combination. There's an awful lot that is new. I would bring you back a step, if you think about crime fighting in New York City and with the NYPD, it's something that we've been extremely proud of for a long time. If a robbery happens or there's a pattern of crimes in an area, we knew

how to attack it. We knew how to attack it and solve the problem in a concentrated area. We were a little spread out on services with youth. So, now since last year with the addition of the Youth Coordination officers and providing additional training to them, we're kind of looking at it in the same venue. What do we do with a child that lives in a particular area that we've run into that needs services, or maybe on the wrong track? And are those police officers aware of every potential avenue that's available to them? The answer was no from a police department perspective. The answer today is a firm yes. There's a lot that's been done in the last year and a half. I'll just point towards you again, that track the kids are on, are we doing everything possible? And we've historically done a lot to help kids, but we're doing more than ever. We are partnering more than ever with local community groups, with – I'd be remiss if I didn't mention, for example, the New York City Police Foundation. Absolutely, you know, firm support that they're providing to us. The amount of internships that we're providing, working with the Police Foundation and steering kids toward private public partnerships with businesses. Incredibly proud. And again, I touched on sports before, but not every kid is involved in sports. So, we are doing programs with robotics. We are doing programs with mentoring. Yes, we are teaching kids how to draw up resumes. We are teaching kids how to open up bank accounts. So, there's a whole umbrella of services that are now being provided at local levels, at 127 Penn. And there is quite a bit new. And if you want to know more, I advise you to come out to the 42nd precinct tonight at four o'clock, and you're going to hear more of what we're doing.

Mayor: Thank you. And Kevin, you know, just the fact that there's Youth Coordination officers. I think that just really bears recognition. Officers whose focus is to develop relationships with young people and find ways to help proactively. Incredibly powerful, positive initiative. And the fact that so many kids are going to be given hope, are going to be given opportunity, are going to feel what their potential is in new ways. What better way to avert problems and crisis than to reach a young person and actually show them their positive potential? I think it's really, really powerful. Go ahead, Kevin.

Question: My other question was how much funding was going to go to this initiative? You haven't answered that. How much –

Mayor: Sorry. Commissioner, I know a lot of this was from existing resources and from a forfeit, asset forfeiture. I don't think there's many new needs because you're using existing funds. But please clarify that?

Commissioner Shea: That's correct. We're using the existing budget within the NYPD and shifting resources. I'm sorry, on the basketball courts and activating public spaces and even larger planned things that Chauncey Parker and his great mind is envisioning. We're working with a number of agencies where that's what we're redirecting some of the asset forfeiture money. And we're trying to organize a movement to get donations, to see a few things come to fruition.

Mayor: And I would strongly urge folks to get involved in this Kids First approach and support it in communities all over the city. And as the Commissioner said, four o'clock today will be a great example of this approach coming to life. So, bottom line recovery equals public safety, public safety equals recovery. These pieces go together hand in hand. This is how we bring back

our city. And this is the kind of thing that's going to make a huge difference. Thank you, everyone.

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