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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 14, 2018

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**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES NEW TASK FORCE TO PREVENT
AND END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN NEW YORK CITY**

Group of experts will coordinate a six-month community process resulting in a strategic plan that will inform the City's next steps for preventing and ending youth homelessness

NEW YORK—Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio today launched the Youth Homelessness Taskforce, a group comprised of 15 City agencies and initiatives, 26 nonprofits and 10 youth leaders from the Youth Action Board, in partnership with the NYC Coalition on the Continuum of Care. The taskforce will coordinate a six-month community process resulting in a strategic plan that will inform the City's next steps for preventing and ending youth homelessness. The Youth Homelessness Taskforce will also coordinate with the Interagency Homelessness Accountability Council – an ongoing effort to strengthen our citywide system to support homelessness prevention – to ensure the objectives of the two groups align.

“The Youth Homelessness Taskforce is another sign of the Administration’s unwavering commitment to addressing youth homelessness. Building on existing initiatives, this work group will put forth new ideas to prevent youth homelessness, while ensuring that those who are in our care have the ability to leave with the appropriate resources to live healthy and productive lives,” said **Dr. Herminia Palacio, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**. “I’m thrilled to bring together this excellent group of experts who will help us imagine new solutions to making New York City a place where no youth experiences homelessness.”

"I applaud the City's latest effort to end homelessness among our young people," said **New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray**. "This task force brings together a powerful group of agencies and experts in this administration who have already shown their commitment to making life better for our most vulnerable New Yorkers. Having a place to live is a basic human right. If we are to truly help New York youth reach their full potential and contribute their talents and energies to our city then we need to find some new solutions to the homeless problem."

“Addressing the needs of young people facing hard times is crucial. Through this taskforce, experts from City agencies, nonprofits and youth advocacy will come together to improve the delivery of services to help more and more young people transition back into permanent

housing,” said **Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Bill Chong**. “Homeless youth need a safe place to stay, supportive services and opportunities to succeed. The taskforce will deepen the City’s progress in improving and finding effective, innovative practices to work toward ending youth homelessness.”

“Giving all young people an opportunity to succeed is our top priority in New York City—and for youth facing homelessness, that means providing dedicated spaces, resources, and programming that will help them stabilize their lives in a safe and supportive environment,” said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. “This announcement demonstrates our City’s commitment to connecting young New Yorkers’ experiencing homelessness with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive and lead healthy, inclusive, successful lives. We look forward to continued collaboration with our Agency partners as we continue to turn the tide on homelessness citywide.”

“Every New York City child deserves a home, and that’s why the city’s first-ever Youth Homelessness Taskforce is so important: it is a groundbreaking step forward to help address youth homelessness here in New York City. The Administration for Children’s Services is proud to participate in this important initiative because it will ultimately provide our most vulnerable youth with the support they need to thrive,” said **David A. Hansell, Commissioner of the Administration for Children’s Services**.

To spearhead this effort, through a Deutsche Bank Americas grant secured by New Yorkers for Children, the City has hired Cole Giannone (they/them pronouns) as a Senior Consultant for Youth Homelessness. Giannone, working with the City’s Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI), will lead the process of coordinating the taskforce, as well as collecting, organizing and analyzing information and data from relevant stakeholders.

Prior to this role, Giannone spent seven years at the Ali Forney Center, a runaway homeless youth provider in New York City serving LGBTQ youth. In their time at AFC, Giannone created a Youth Advocate program to elevate the voices of and pay young people to help lead the efforts in the amendment of the NYS Runaway Homeless Youth Act. Giannone has a B.S. in Communications from NYU and a M.S. in Nonprofit Management from the New School.

“As someone who has worked with young people experiencing homelessness, an experience that no individual should ever have to endure, it is an honor and a privilege to help coordinate our city’s efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness. Our city leaders have been willing to listen, to make changes in our delivery of care and to add significant resources to our system in order to address this issue. To acknowledge that there are areas where we can make improvements is commendable and shows tremendous humility. In collaboration with service providers, city agencies and most importantly, young people with lived experience, we aim to ameliorate our system of care even more. Preventing and ending youth homelessness is possible, and through this project, we will be closer than ever,” said **Cole Giannone, Senior Consultant for Youth Homelessness to Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**.

“New Yorkers For Children is thrilled to be part of this groundbreaking effort to address youth homelessness and inter-generational poverty. We applaud the City and Deputy Mayor Palacio

for developing a solution-oriented approach to this epidemic and we are immensely grateful to Deutsche Bank for partnering with us to support this work,” said **Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez, Executive Director, New Yorkers For Children**. “Aligning inter-agency policies, developing a shared vision and plan, and establishing a consistent measurement system that evaluates the challenges will move us closer to the shared goal of eliminating youth homelessness altogether.”

“Homelessness in New York City - for youth and for all people - is a humanitarian crisis that merits the same urgency, resources, and coordination we give to similar crises like natural disasters. It is also a challenge that we’ve proven we can solve if we partner strategically across sectors and levels of government and bring dedicated resources to the effort. Deutsche Bank is committed to ending youth homelessness in New York City and is proud to be a founding member of the Task Force. We invite all private sector and philanthropic institutions committed to making New York an equitable, sustainable, community of opportunity to join us in this work,” said **John Kimble, Vice President of Philanthropic Initiatives with the Community Development Finance Group of Deutsche Bank**.

The Youth Homelessness Taskforce includes participation from the Administration for Children’s Services, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Social Services/Department of Homeless Services, Department of Social Services/Human Resources Administration, Department of Youth and Community Development, Housing Preservation Department, Department of Education, and City University of New York. Other city initiatives participating in these efforts include the Unity Project, Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, NYC Economic Opportunity, Center for Youth Employment, Office of Food Policy, Young Men’s Initiative and Center for Youth Employment.

Nonprofit providers include The Coalition for Homeless Youth, Ali Forney Center, The Legal Aid Society, The Door, Sheltering Arms, Good Shepherd Services, Covenant House, Supportive Housing Network of New York, Jericho Project, Safe Horizon, Bailey House, GEMS, CSH, Children’s Village, West End Residences, Point Source Youth, Urban Justice Center, Princess Janae Place, Destination Tomorrow, Hetrick-Martin Institute, Advocates for Children, Youth Invincibles, Homeless Services United, Coalition for the Homeless, Gay Men’s Health Crisis, and Volunteers of America Greater New York.

“This task force is a major step forward in addressing the city’s youth homelessness crisis and I am proud to have contributed to the creation of the city’s first ever youth shelter as well as expanded hours at drop-in centers. Youth homelessness is a heartbreaking problem that requires bold ideas and innovative solutions as we work to address this issue,” said **New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**. “I look forward to working with this task force to ensure we are doing everything we can to prevent and eventually end youth homelessness in our city.”

“I’m proud that my administration was at the forefront of moving the needle in the State Legislature and City Council to raise the age at which homeless youth can stay in shelters to 24. Tackling the youth homelessness crisis requires a coordinated effort from various stakeholders across community-based organizations and government agencies that have a committed understanding of the demand for housing and how to address it,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. “This comprehensive task force is a further step in the right direction to

ensuring all of Brooklyn’s young people, particularly LGBTQ+ and vulnerable youth, have a loving and warm place to call home, regardless of their circumstances.”

“I commend Deputy Mayor Palacio and the de Blasio administration for launching this important taskforce to end homelessness among one of our city’s most vulnerable populations,” said **State Senator José Serrano**. “Homeless youth, often LGBT, face unique challenges in accessing essential housing and services. I am hopeful that this effort will provide our young people with the support and resources they need not only to live, but to thrive in New York City.”

“We know that effectively addressing youth homelessness requires a coordinated community response. It is fantastic to see such a robust team representing a range of city agencies working together in NYC. I can’t think of a better person to lead the effort than Cole Giannone. They have been working alongside youth experiencing homelessness in NYC for years,” said **Jama Shelton, PhD, Silberman School of Social Work, Hunter College**.

“The Ali Forney Center takes heart in these efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness in New York City, and are further heartened to see our beloved Cole Giannone coordinate those efforts,” said **Carl Siciliano, Executive Director, Ali Forney Center**.

“For far too long NYC has put the needs of homeless young people on the back burner. Whether it be by downplaying the number of homeless youth that exist, or by not providing programs adequate resources to address the overwhelming need. With the creation of the Youth Homelessness Taskforce, NYC is taking a critical step in assuring that no young person is forced to sleep on the street or in other unsafe situations, by identifying gaps in the current system, and proposing solutions that are informed by professionals in the field and homeless young people themselves. CHY is proud to be a part of this initiative, and is looking forward to see the end result,” said **Jamie Powlovich, Executive Director, Coalition for Homeless Youth**.

“LGBT young people need a comprehensive system of caring providers working together to support them,” said **Glennnda Testone, Executive Director LGBT Community Center**. “This task force is a step in the right direction. We appreciate the city’s commitment to helping the young people who need it most.”

The Youth Homelessness Taskforce builds upon a number of significant initiatives taken by the de Blasio Administration to prevent and reduce youth homelessness, including:

- The recent NYC Unity Project announcement, a new \$9.5 million investment to prevent and address homelessness for LGBTQ youth across the City. This investment includes funding for the City’s first ever youth shelter for young people up to age 24 and an expansion of hours at the City’s youth drop-in centers.
- The Adopted budget increased the commitment to 60 new beds for Runaway and Homeless Youth up to age 24.
- In 2017, the City's Department of Homeless Services also opened Marsha's House in the Bronx, the first-ever shelter for LGBTQ young people in the New York City adult shelter system. Named after famed LGBTQ activist Marsha P. Johnson, this facility gives more than 80 homeless individuals aged 21 to 30 years the opportunity to be sheltered in a

welcoming and supportive space providing targeted resources and demonstrates this Administration's leadership ensuring LGBTQ homeless youth have the tools, resources and opportunities to lead healthy, inclusive and successful lives. As we transform a DHS shelter system that has built up in a haphazard way over many decades, DHS continues to improve and increase collaboration with partner agencies across the City to ensure we effectively address the unique needs of young LGBTQ New Yorkers with dignity and the services they deserve.

- The addition of 500 beds for 16-20 year olds who are homeless and deployment of additional staff to coordinate services for youth entering City shelters, bringing the total beds to 753 by July 2019, up from 253.
- The commitment to allocate of 1,700 supportive housing units for youth through the Supportive Housing NYC 15/15.

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