

From: DSS Press <PRESS@dss.nyc.gov>

Date: July 12, 2018 at 3:02:54 PM EDT

To: DSS Press <PRESS@dss.nyc.gov>

Cc: "McGinn, Isaac" <mcginni@dss.nyc.gov>, "Fishman, Arianna" <fishmana@dss.nyc.gov>

Subject: GIRL SCOUTS OF GREATER NEW YORK TROOP 6000 NOW SERVING MORE THAN 500 GIRLS AND WOMEN ACROSS FIVE BOROUGHES

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2018

Contact:

- Isaac McGinn, mcginni@hra.nyc.gov (o: 929-221-5564 c: 646-946-9667)
- Arianna Fishman, fishmana@hra.nyc.gov (o: 929-221-5249 c: 646-761-8135)

GIRL SCOUTS OF GREATER NEW YORK TROOP 6000 NOW SERVING MORE THAN 500 GIRLS AND WOMEN ACROSS FIVE BOROUGHES

Thanks to public-private partnership and \$1-million City investment, Girl Scout Troop 6000 has expanded to 15 shelter locations citywide

NEW YORK—The de Blasio Administration today announced that Girl Scout Troop 6000, the first of its kind Girl Scout troop dedicated to serving girls and women in the shelter system as they get back on their feet, has expanded to 15 shelter facilities for families with children across all five boroughs, with more than 500 girls and women now participating in the leadership-and-community-development program. Girl Scout Troop 6000 was established in February 2017 through a partnership between the City’s Department of Homeless Services and the Girl Scouts of Greater New York.

“These bright, brilliant Scouts and future leaders of our City stole the hearts of New Yorkers and millions around the country with their story,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “We’re thrilled to be able to offer more homeless girls across the five boroughs the opportunity to participate in a program that helps build confidence in young women.”

“The Girl Scouts in Troop 6000 are an impressive representation of New York City’s next generation of entrepreneurs, leaders and humanitarians,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “With Troop 6000 in all five boroughs, any girl or young woman who wants to be a Scout, can be a Scout—no matter where she lives. Programs like these create continuity for young people whose families may need to relocate often. The ambition and endurance of Troop 6000 is a testament to the values of Girl Scouts USA, and the values of New Yorkers.”

"We are so excited that Troop 6000 has expanded across our city, giving girls and women experiencing housing instability across the five boroughs access to this unique program regardless of their housing status," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. "Through innovative partnerships like this that create new opportunities for families and young New Yorkers, we are transforming our approach to providing shelter as we turn the tide on the citywide challenge of homelessness."

Last July, the de Blasio administration announced a three-year grant investing more than \$1 million to expand the program to all five boroughs, with funding provided by DHS covering membership fees and

troop dues, starter kits for the girls, which include vest, pins, and workbooks, as well as program supplies and financial aid for summer camp and other Girl Scout programs. The investment from philanthropic and private sector partners through the Mayor's Fund provides for a social worker who has joined the Troop 6000 program team to support the girls and moms in the program, based out of the Girl Scouts of Greater New York.

"Troop 6000 continues to show us all the meaning of strength and positivity in the face of challenges like homelessness," said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. "We could not be prouder to expand this program across the five boroughs, giving more than 500 girls and women an opportunity to join an organization so committed to engaging young people, modeling leadership, and fostering community. Demonstrating incredible heart, smarts, and spirit in all they do, today's Girl Scouts will be tomorrow's decision-makers—watch out, world!"

"A wise woman once said, 'Who runs the world? Girls!' Never has that been more true than today," said **Department of Homeless Services Administrator Joslyn Carter**. "On behalf of the Department of Homeless Services, we are all overjoyed to celebrate and support Troop 6000, helping over 500 girls and women experiencing homelessness build the confidence, character and community to be our City's next generation of leaders."

"The partnership between the City, the Girl Scouts of Greater New York, and the Mayor's Fund represents the very best of what we can accomplish in collaboration," said **Darren Bloch, Executive Director of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City**. "We are grateful to the many philanthropic individuals and partners who have supported these inspiring girls in reaching their full potential and attaining their dreams."

"We are grateful to Mayor de Blasio and our city partners for helping us start and expand Troop 6000, which is critically important to helping girls cope with the challenges of homelessness. We believe every girl deserves the leadership opportunities and friendship only Girl Scouts provides," said **Meridith Maskara, CEO of Girl Scouts of Greater New York**. "We are also deeply moved by the generosity of thousands of individuals and organizations who are supporting Troop 6000, so we can continue to welcome more girls and moms into the Girl Scout family. We hope to be able to offer Girl Scouting to all homeless girls because we know the need is great and the benefit is even greater."

Homelessness today is driven by economic factors, including years of stagnant wages not keeping up with the rising costs of housing. Families comprise nearly 70 percent of the Department of Homeless Services shelter census—and roughly one third of the shelter census is school-age children 17 years old and younger. Programming like Girl Scouting engages young New Yorkers through positivity, promotes teamwork by strengthening the bonds between young New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, and preserves stability, all while demonstrating the importance of ongoing community involvement. Research has shown that Girl Scout alumnae have a stronger sense of self, achieve higher levels of education, and are more likely to reach a higher socio-economic status. Through innovative partnerships and supportive programming like this, the Department of Homeless Services is offering new opportunities to homeless New Yorkers, improving the experience for families with children during challenging times, and helping to turn the tide.

Each week, Troop 6000 meets in shelters across the city, led by trained troop leaders—women also living in the shelter system as well as community volunteers in conjunction with shelter staff. To accommodate the mobility of these girls and women, troop leaders and girls alike can attend meetings at any shelter knowing they are all already part of the same welcoming troop.

"I like Girl Scouts. It's fun and I love my troop leaders. I get to learn new things about different cultures. I love my Girl Scout sisters. They are nice, kind and the older girls help me. It means so much to be a part of Troop 6000 because it makes me feel happy," said **Hazel, a Troop 6000 Girl Scout residing in Manhattan.**

"I love that I have the opportunity to participate in Troop 6000. It's the only place I can really be myself and it makes me happy," said **Lexy, a Troop 6000 Girl Scout residing in Brooklyn.**

"Being a Girl Scout has opened up a new experience for me. I've met new girls, created bonds with people I wouldn't have met otherwise. Being a part of Troop 6000 has allowed me to connect with other girls who understand me and I have accepted them all as my sisters," said **Daisy, a Troop 6000 Girl Scout residing in the Bronx.**

"Girl Scouting showed me that I shouldn't be ashamed of who I am, what I look like, or where I live, and that homelessness does not define me. Troop 6000 taught me about sisterhood, how to be courageous and how to advocate for girls just like myself," said **Karina, a Troop 6000 Girl Scout residing in Queens.**

To contribute to the expansion of Girl Scout Troop 6000, visit:
<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/fund/initiatives/support-girl-scout-troop-6000.page>.

To contribute to the Girl Scouts of Greater New York, visit: <https://www.girlscoutsnyc.org/donate>.

"The girls and women of Troop 6000 are an inspiration and a bright spot in our city's fight against homelessness," said **City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**. "I applaud Mayor de Blasio for investing in this worthy cause, and I look forward to the continued success of Girl Scout Troop 6000. Hopefully, we can share some cookies along the way."

"I am so proud to join Troop 6000 in announcing this expansion – this will mean the world to families and children who can now join the Girl Scouts of America family," said **City Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the Committee on General Welfare**. "And we will all benefit from a new generation of leaders who will be prepared and equipped to take on any challenge the world throws at them. No matter the adversity our children may face, together, there is nothing they cannot accomplish."

"Every single girl in the City of New York deserves the opportunity to join a community where they are told that they are welcome, that they belong and that they are loved," said **City Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer**. "Troop 6000 helps girls have a place where they can feel home even when they are homeless. This program changes lives. I am so happy to have helped create Troop 6000 and am thrilled that it is expanding to serve more young people."

"I applaud the effort of the mayor to ensure children in transitional housing has access to good programming and leadership development with organization such as the Girl Scouts," said **Assembly Member Harvey Epstein**. "While no child should be homeless, while they are, I am proud that my district will be serve as a home to Troop 6000."

"Troop 6000 represents the values of the Girl Scouts perfectly," said **Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte**. "The Mayor's decision to provide a \$1 million grant to Troop 6000 to extend the program to all five-boroughs will ensure that homeless girls across the city will benefit from participating in the Girl Scouts. Research has shown that many Girl Scout alumnae achieve higher levels of education and gain self-confidence. The expansion of this program will lead to more vulnerable young girls securing their futures."

“As a former Girl Scout, troop leader and mother of a scout, I know firsthand how the Girl Scouts molds young women into the next generation of leaders. In their training and everyday acts of kindness, they have been instrumental in exemplifying the ideals of fairness, equality and community service we should all strive to live by,” said **Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright**. “I couldn’t be more thrilled that Troop 6000 is expanding its reach to 15 additional shelters citywide. This expansion will leave young women with the same important life lessons and leadership skills I received and will prepare them with the confidence, character and compassion to live by the Scout Law in making.

“I’m so ecstatic for the launch of Girl Scout Troop 6000 and I commend Mayor de Blasio and the Girl Scouts of Greater New York for providing this amazing opportunity for more than 500 girls and women in New York City,” said **Assembly Member Latrice Walker**. “In my district alone, we have a number of young women and girls that do not have the resources to be a part of an organization of that stature but yearn for the support, guidance, and mentorship that the Girl Scouts of Greater New York provide.”

###

About the Department of Homeless Services:

The Department of Homeless Services (DHS) works to prevent homelessness before it occurs, address street homelessness and assist homeless New Yorkers in transitioning from shelter and the street to permanent housing. DHS collaborates with not-for profit partners to provide temporary shelter and services that homeless New Yorkers need to achieve and maintain housing permanency. In April 2016 Mayor de Blasio announced a major restructuring of homeless services in New York City, followed by the release of a comprehensive plan in February 2017 to turn the tide on homelessness, neighborhood by neighborhood. The plan’s guiding principle is community and people first; giving homeless New Yorkers, who come from every community across the five boroughs, the opportunity to be sheltered closer to their support networks and anchors of life in the communities they called home in order to more quickly stabilize their lives. Learn more about how DHS is turning the tide on homelessness, neighborhood by neighborhood, at nyc.gov/tide.