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**DEP Launches 2012 Summer Fire Hydrant Abuse Prevention Campaign**

*Education Action Teams Alert NYC Residents to Dangers of Unauthorized Hydrant Use*

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced that Hydrant Education Action Teams (HEAT) have been deployed in Manhattan and the Bronx to inform residents of the dangers of unauthorized and improper fire hydrant use. The HEAT program has four teams, each consisting of between 10 and 12 students who alert residents to the danger, waste, and illegality of opening fire hydrants improperly and without authorization. As an alternative, hydrants can be opened legally when equipped with a City-approved spray cap obtained at a local fire house. HEAT team members will be distributing information at parks, outdoor neighborhood events, churches and street corners. The program will be conducted through August 17, and is run in partnership with the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO) and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development.

“Opening a fire hydrant without an approved spray cap is dangerous, wasteful and illegal,” said Commissioner Strickland. “For six consecutive years, the extremely successful HEAT program has offered valuable information to residents about the safe and proper use of fire hydrants. We thank SoBRO and the program’s 40 student participants for helping us promote the safety of all communities through this campaign.”

“DYCD is pleased to partner with DEP on this vital initiative. We appreciate DEP’s commitment to providing rewarding work experience for young people and exposing them to potential careers,” said Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav. “The HEAT program demonstrates how the Summer Youth Employment Program builds 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and serves as a vehicle for teaching youth about future career paths, civic responsibility and the importance of giving back to the community.”

“We are excited to operate the HEAT Program for the second year in a row, welcoming a fresh group of young participants from our Summer Youth Employment Program,” said Phillip Morrow, SoBRO’s President and CEO. “SoBRO is proud to partner with DEP and DYCD on this initiative which has adopted a creative and participatory solution to the issue of illegally opened hydrants in New York City. The HEAT team is ready to go out to neighboring communities and educate community members and their peers on how to stay cool, safe, and still have fun during hot summer days.”

HEAT teams work at public locations to encourage local residents and business owners to display educational posters, in addition to visiting community events, parades, greenmarkets, and libraries. Teams underwent a one-day special training session to learn about the City water distribution system, and how the unauthorized opening of fire hydrants can adversely impact communities throughout the five boroughs. HEAT teams will focus on neighborhoods in

northern Manhattan and the Bronx that have historically seen high rates of unauthorized open hydrants during heat waves. HEAT team staff members were hired through the Department of Youth and Community Development as part of the Summer Youth Employment Program.

An open hydrant generally releases more than 1,000 gallons of water per minute, while a hydrant with a City-approved spray cap releases only up to 25 gallons per minute. Opening a hydrant without a spray cap lowers the water pressure in the distribution system and can hinder firefighting by reducing the flow of water to other hydrants. The reduction of water pressure can also cause problems at hospitals and other medical facilities. Spray caps save millions of gallons of water during heat waves by converting hydrant nozzles into shower-like sprinklers, and can be obtained free of charge at local firehouses by an adult age 18 or over. Opening a hydrant illegally can result in fines of up to \$1,000, up to 30 days' imprisonment, or both. To report illegally opened fire hydrants, New Yorkers should call 311.

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 one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 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 and 95 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. DEP has a robust capital program with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](http://www.twitter.com/nycwater).

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