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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES THE NEXT PHASE OF NYC'S YOUNG MEN'S INITIATIVE,
OPENING NEW DOORS FOR YOUNG MEN OF COLOR**

YMI to offer critical support for President Obama's 'My Brother's Keeper' Initiative, boosting efforts in literacy, workforce training, and crime prevention

Cyrus Garrett, veteran of Everytown for Gun Safety and Organizing for America, named new director of YMI

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the next phase of New York City's Young Men's Initiative (YMI), including significant new commitments by the City to confront inequality and create opportunity for young men of color. First launched by Mayor Bloomberg in 2011, YMI's programming will align with President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, launching four new programs aimed at increasing literacy in young children, improving graduation rates and workforce readiness, as well as protecting youth from violent crime.

To spearhead the next phase of YMI, Mayor de Blasio named Cyrus Garrett, a veteran of Everytown for Gun Safety and Organizing for America, as its new executive director. The announcement was made at the new Jobs-Plus Center at the Van Dyke Houses in Brownsville, which opened this month and is funded by the Young Men's Initiative and administered by the NYC Human Resources Administration in partnership with the New York City Housing Authority, Center for Economic Opportunity, and Department of Consumer Affairs. The center expects to serve 1,600 local residents with job placements, training, financial counseling, and a range of supportive services.

YMI works to connect black and Latino young people to opportunities and support that can lead them to success. Black and Hispanic young men have 1.6 times the high school dropout rate of their white peers, and they are 1.3 times more likely to be unemployed and 6 times more likely to have a felony conviction. YMI seeks to address these disparities.

The initial phase of YMI focused on the launch of new programs targeting young men of color. This next phase will focus on overhauling City agencies' approach to interacting with and serving these populations. City efforts will focus on neighborhoods in central Brooklyn, southeast Queens, northern Manhattan, South Bronx, and the North Shore of Staten Island.

"By deepening New York City's commitment to the Young Men's Initiative, we are fighting inequality at its root in neighborhoods in every borough," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "New York City is answering President Obama's call and doubling down on its commitments to expanding literacy in our youngest children, ensuring our high school graduates are ready for college and career, and forging a deeper partnership between police and community to prevent crime."

“I applaud Mayor de Blasio and the city of New York for working to strengthen the lives of boys and young men of color, and all youth through the Young Men’s Initiative,” said **Broderick Johnson, Chair of President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper Task Force**. “In aligning this next phase of YMI with the President’s My Brother’s Keeper initiative, Mayor de Blasio joins more than 150 Mayors, County executives and tribal leaders across the country who recognize that our nation is stronger when every child has the tools they need to succeed. From making sure that every child is reading at grade level by second grade; to increasing graduation rates; to working to keep youth safe from violent crime; and to building stronger relationships between community and law enforcement, YMI continues to be a national leader in this vital work. We are excited about this next phase and look forward to working with the city of New York to ensure all youth can reach their full potential.”

“Growing up in East New York, I saw one reality play out in my own neighborhood and another on the streets of Manhattan, where I went to high school. We can’t reach our full potential as a city until every child and young person—regardless of the color of the skin or the zip code they were born in—has an opportunity to thrive. The Young Men’s Initiative has laid tremendous groundwork these past three years for us to build on. Now, we’re going to put the full weight of City government behind it to drive achievement and opportunity for more young men of color,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Richard Buery**.

“I’m honored to have the opportunity to lead such a critically important office on behalf of this great city. I look forward to building new bridges and forging strong relationships that increase avenues of opportunity for New York City’s young men of color. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and Deputy Mayor Buery for their tremendous leadership and look forward to building this movement together,” said **Cyrus Garrett, incoming Executive Director of the Young Men’s Initiative**.

Three goals within My Brother’s Keeper will provide the focal points for four new City programs under the Young Men’s Initiative:

Goal: Ensuring all children read at grade level by 2nd grade

- **Program: Increase Tutoring** – Provide direct support through tutoring and reading programs for 10,000 children age K-2.

Goal: Ensuring all youth complete post-secondary education and training

- **Program: High School Mentoring** – Increase mentoring opportunities focused on preparing young people for college by engaging with existing non-profits who provide mentorship. Engage 5,000 young men of color by 2017.
- **Program: Education Career Recruitment** – Develop new initiatives and programs aiming to put an additional 1,000 men of color on course to become NYC public school teachers over the next three years.

Goal: Ensuring all youth remain safe from violent crime

- **Program: NYPD Community Relations** – Establish a central role for YMI in efforts to improve community/police relations. This will include meaningful opportunities for police officers and young men of color to interact in positive spaces.

The City has a \$22.5 million annual commitment to the Young Men’s Initiative, nearly half of which is dedicated to employment-services programs such as Jobs-Plus, with additional investments in the areas of education, health and justice. The City will leverage existing agency programs and resources to augment YMI’s reach. The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City will seek to maintain and expand private support for programming.

To align City government fully with YMI's priorities, agencies including the Human Resources Administration, Department of Education, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and Administration for Children's Services are undertaking agency-wide reviews to evaluate their outcomes and interactions with young men of color. Those reviews will be articulated in an annual report tracking disparities facing African American and Latino men in New York City, and the steps being undertaken to address them. The City will also reconstitute the YMI Advisory Board, undertake a new public engagement campaign, and convene officials and thought leaders at both the city and national level.

"The New York City's Young Men's Initiative works to improve the life outcomes of our city's young men, regardless of who they are and where they come from," said **Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. "I applaud the Mayor for addressing the opportunity gaps faced by black and Latino males and providing opportunities and support to help our students reach their full potential."

"We are proud to work with YMI to expand programs like Jobs-Plus, which help connect young men to jobs and services," said **HRA Commissioner Steven Banks**. "We are also reforming our employment programs to serve our clients' individual needs, including a new initiative designed specifically for youth with a focus on education, including college, to ensure they have access to the opportunities that will help them succeed."

"NYCHA is proud to support the City's Young Men's Initiative, which has empowered so many young people both in public housing and citywide," said **NYCHA Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye**. "Through the expansion of programs such as Jobs-Plus, which connects public housing residents to vital job training and placements, we are helping our youth to secure their futures."

"DCA could not be prouder of our partnership with Jobs-Plus, and today's announcement will allow us to work with the administration and other agencies with an even greater emphasis of bringing opportunities to men of color," said **DCA Commissioner Julie Menin**. "Our Financial Empowerment Center counselors work with participants to determine their best course of action for building long-term financial stability through setting wage goals in their job search, reducing debt accrued during their un- or under-employment, and reviewing their credit reports, all which have proven beneficial."

"The Young Men's Initiative is a critical component of the Department of Probation's ability to work with, and develop sustainable change for, men most impacted by the Criminal Justice system. We work closely with our community partners to offer comprehensive, engaging, wrap-around services for our clients, laying the ground work for them to earn a high school diploma, learn and develop marketable skills, earn a college degree, attain gainful employment, significantly increase creative involvement with their families, and participate productively in civic life. We thank Mayor de Blasio for his leadership on this issue and continued support of young men in New York City," said **Ana Bermudez, Commissioner, Department of Probation**.

"Our City non-profit partners from the Mayor's Fund to the Fund for Public Schools have been proud partners of the YMI work. We look forward to continuing to foster public-private partnerships that support our City's efforts to expand opportunities for young men of color across educational, health, employment, and criminal justice systems," said **Gabrielle Fialkoff, Senior Advisor to the Mayor and Director of the Office of Strategic Partnerships**.

"Until the popularity of our city translates into prosperity for all of its residents, our mission as public servants will be far from complete. Institutional and cultural factors have long disadvantaged young men of color from reaching their full potential. Tackling the challenges youth face from an early age, including the support provided by tutoring and mentoring programs, can go a long way toward leading them to positive outcomes. Additionally, ensuring that they are directly involved in advancing police-community relations will keep them safer and make our policing even stronger. I thank Mayor de Blasio for his attention to the welfare of our young men of color, in central Brooklyn and beyond, and I look forward to working with the Young Men's Initiative to ensure we achieve its lofty goals," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

“On behalf of the people of the Ninth Congressional District of New York, I commend Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to the Young Men’s Initiative, by introducing programs that will allow young men to develop their talents and to share in the promise of our civil society. We have here an opportunity to reduce the disparities that prevent many young men from completing high school and college and acquiring the skills required to find work. By starting with young children and continuing our focus on their development, we will reduce and ultimately eliminate these disparities. I will work with Mayor de Blasio and Executive Director Cyrus Garrett to support this Young Men’s Initiative and its high purpose for our young men,” said **Congresswoman Yvette Clarke**.

“I thank Mayor de Blasio for his unwavering commitment to expanding opportunities for our constituents to build a better future for their families and our City. I welcome Cyrus Garrett and look forward to supporting him as he carries out the extremely vital work of equipping our young men with the necessary resources to walk on a path to success and thrive,” said **Congressman Charles Rangel**.

“The New York City’s Young Men’s initiative is a crucial resource for our young Black and Latino men and for our community as a whole. Thanks to this program, young men in the Bronx can access the tools and support they need to succeed academically and reach their full potential. I applaud Mayor de Blasio’s efforts to close the opportunity and achievement gap of minority men, and working to make sure New York City offers them the best counseling possible,” said **Congressman Jose E. Serrano**.

“I applaud Mayor de Blasio for taking these steps today. These five initiatives represent an approach that puts young men of color in a position to succeed. Mentoring, teacher engagement, and high expectations help communities face complex challenges and overcome the obstacles inequality presents. I also commend Mayor de Blasio for pursuing a whole-of-government approach to these challenges. Enlisting multiple agencies to examine their current practices and provide annual updates builds a firm foundation for future action,” said **State Senator Jesse Hamilton**.

“Often, the challenges facing men of color can be quite formidable, but with the right education, guidance and opportunities, our community can—and will—succeed. I applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio’s efforts through NYC’s Young Men’s Initiative for targeting the areas that need it most, and giving our community the best shot at achieving great things,” said **State Senator Jose Serrano**.

“This comprehensive initiative represents a potentially profound step forward in our fight against inequality,” said **State Senator Jose Peralta**. “Closing the achievement gap and providing meaningful access to quality education and job-training are perhaps the most important challenges of our time. I applaud Mayor de Blasio for making this investment in the future of our youth.”

“I’m proud join Mayor de Blasio in welcoming Executive Director Cyrus Garret to the NYC Young Men’s Initiative. This new experienced leadership and the efforts to align YMI to President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper program will truly offer the resources and mentorship needed by so many youths as they aim for academic and career success while avoiding the perils of gang related activity. As the City continues to grow its physical infrastructure, YMI helps uplift something more important, the lives and opportunities of our next generation,” said **Assemblyman Marcos Crespo**.

“In order to truly move towards a better future we must ensure that all our children have the resources to obtain an adequate education and a support system to guide and motivate them. This combination is the key to their success and the Mayor’s Young Men’s Initiative will provide a lifeline that will ensure success is reached. Each day the need to properly invest in our young men of color becomes more evident. Under Mayor de Blasio’s Young Men’s Initiative youth in communities across the city will not only been given the tools to attend college but also to graduate and succeed beyond the classroom,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**.

“As the Chair of the Youth Services Committee, I am delighted with the positive changes that Mayor Bill de Blasio is making to the Young Men’s Initiative. The five new City programs that are being instituted as part of the initiative will go a long way towards ensuring that our youth graduate high school and do not become victims of violent crime. I am confident that Cyrus Garrett, Mayor de Blasio’s newly appointed Executive Director of the Young Men’s Initiative, will do a fine job in seeing that the new programs are properly administered and successfully fulfilled. Mr. Garrett has extensive experience in strategic education policy, communications and planning, a background which prepares him well for his new position,” said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene**.

“We have witnessed notable improvements in closing the achievement gaps for young men of color since the inception of the Young Men’s Initiative. Now, the My Brother’s Keeper program will provide support to our most vulnerable students of color starting from kindergarten, by ensuring they read at the appropriate grade levels, graduate high school, and have mentorship opportunities in safe neighborhoods, enabling them to achieve success in college; leading to enriching career paths for them to choose. I am confident that under the new leadership of Cyrus Garrett, our young men will continue to overcome the systemic challenges that have long plagued our communities, and have a chance at a successful and vibrant future,” said **Council Member Anabel Palma**.

“I applaud Mayor de Blasio’s commitment to focus on strategic efforts to advance opportunities for young men through the Young Men’s Initiative. This creative approach, brings together tutoring and mentoring services, access to higher education and careers while addressing the challenges facing our young men, will make a significant impact on their future. As the Chair of Public Safety, it is important that our young men have opportunities to engage with law enforcement in a positive way. I welcome the new Executive Director, Cyrus Garrett and his wealth of experience in community and police relations, and look forward to working with the administration on this initiative,” said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson**.

“Just a few months ago President Obama delivered a challenge to communities across the nation. He urged us to reach for new levels of education, opportunity, and safety for our children,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller**. “Today it is with great pride that New York City accepts the My Brother’s Keeper community challenge and, through the Young Men’s Initiative, seeks to build on it. The initiative’s new goals prioritize youth literacy, foster pathways into higher education and career training, and will improve the dynamic in which law enforcement interacts with communities of color. I applaud this investment, as well as the selection of Cyrus Garrett to direct the program, and thank Mayor de Blasio for his leadership and consideration of the initiative.”

“The Young Men’s Initiative will save lives. Its goals—and the programs that support those goals—are critical to the development of young New Yorkers who aspire to greatness, but who may require additional support or encouragement in their navigation of the world. This program is also particularly positioned to help young immigrants in their experience of our city. Although as a young man of color growing up in Texas, I didn’t have the privilege of a program such as this, but I recognize now how crucial that may have been in helping me to make the decisions of my life. The commitment of Mayor de Blasio, and the leadership of Cyrus Garret will ensure the success of this initiative citywide,” said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**.

“I am pleased to see Mayor de Blasio investing in resources for young men of color. We need to do everything we can to end the school-to-prison pipeline, and the mentoring and tutoring programs included in this initiative can make a big difference. I am especially glad that this program includes creating the opportunity for young men of color to interact with the NYPD in a positive way. I look forward to working with Mr. Garrett to move these programs forward,” said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso**.

“YMI is an integral piece to addressing the many disparities faced particularly by young men of color,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “The \$22 million infusion, along with the introduction of programs that emphasize education, employment opportunity and crime prevention, will equip young men in New York City with the tools needed to guarantee their individual success.”

“I am thrilled to witness the beginning of this necessary expansion of the Young Men’s Initiative. I applaud Mayor de Blasio on extending the reach of the initiative to better serve our city’s most vulnerable young men. The goals of the initiative continue to be laudable, and I look forward to helping in any way I can with its implementation,” said **Council Member Darlene Mealy**.

About Cyrus Garrett

Garrett, most recently the political advisor at Everytown for Gun Safety and national deputy director at Mayors Against Illegal Guns, brings extensive experience in strategic education policy, communications, and planning to his new position. Beforehand, Garrett worked as deputy director of secretary planning on the Presidential Inaugural Committee, and as deputy field director for Organizing for America. Prior to that, Garrett worked at the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Counternarcotics Enforcement (CNE) as special advisor to the director.

He has also served at the Federal Department of Education in strategic communication and as speechwriter, and has helped design and implement the White House Internship program. Previously, Garrett served on the 2008 and 2012 Obama presidential campaigns in Indiana and Ohio. Before joining the ‘08 campaign, Garrett worked as a gang and drug counselor at the Eldora State Training School for Boys in Iowa.

Garrett earned his degree in criminology University of Northern Iowa.

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