



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
BROOKLYN, NY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 20, 2018

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE
GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE NEW EDENWALD YMCA**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, Sharon. I was at the Y yesterday, Sharon, and it's doing very, very well.

I commend you. I commend everyone at the Y, and Sharon, and to everyone at the Y, congratulations. I know everything you do is a labor of love. And for all of us who have spent a lot of our lives at Ys, we know the passion that people bring to the work. We know the impact it makes. And the fact that so many Bronxites are about to benefit because of what will be built here is truly, truly inspiring. And what a great example in Ethan Viera. Ethan, I am so impressed by you. Let's give him a big round of applause.

[Applause]

Ethan, if you're a indication of what the Y can do, it's a very bright future ahead for the young people of the Bronx. So, congratulations and thank you.

[Applause]

Thank you to all the members of the community who are here, all the elected officials, and community leaders. I want to just say this is a day that's been a long time coming, and people in this community fought for it.

And in a world that we're trying to make better every day, it's fair to say you shouldn't have had to fight so long and hard for this day because you were right all along to demand this opportunity for our young people, for our seniors, for everyone in the community. I wish it didn't take such a long and persistent fight but it did and you were up to the challenge.

This community never let go of this vision even when it didn't seem like it was going to happen. Now, I also want to say you did a very smart thing some years ago and you elected a young man to be your Assembly member and he also persisted and his talent rose – you know they say cream rises – so the talent became more and more evident to others around him. And then I say it's a very good thing for a community when your Assembly member gets elected Speaker of the State Assembly. That is a good idea.

[Applause]

So, you handled that exactly right. That is another good way to make sure your Y is going to happen and one of the great reasons it is finally happening. And you'll hear from the Speaker in a little bit but I want to thank him at the outset because he has been the indispensable piece of this equation.

And also I can tell you from all the conversations we've had – talk about a labor of love. This is something that Speaker Heastie feels in his heart so thank you, Speaker, for all you have done to make this happen.

[Applause]

I know all the elected officials would agree, I know the Borough President would especially agree, the Bronx never quits. It never quits. And this is an example of that persistence.

Now – long road and one that reminds us of the inequities we have to overcome every day because we know the Bronx didn't get its fair share and we are trying every day to even up the score and provide the support and the investments that the Bronx deserves. We know that there were so many people who all these years would have benefitted and finally will.

All the folks who live in Co-op City – Co-op City, the largest affordable housing development in the country deserved this a long time ago, now will finally have it. All the folks who live in Edenwald in the Baychester Houses will finally have the recreation they deserve. This is about fairness.

And I want you to note, if anyone ever challenges these investments here's a fact. Across this great city we all know we have a whole lot of people and only so much space. The average park land in this city is 13 acres for every 1,000 kids but here in Community Board 12 it's just three acres for every 1,000 kids.

It's another reason, in the name of equity and fairness, why we needed this facility so badly, to give our young people a place to play. It took a long time but now all the pieces have come together and I'm proud to say that my administration is making a major financial commitment but more importantly we will move heaven and earth in every way to get this done and get it done on time because we can't get it done early enough.

[Applause]

We need this for our kids. We need it for our seniors. We need it to improve people's lives. And I will just finish by saying my own personal testimony. I have been a member of the Y in my community since 1996, so 22 years, and I know you're looking at this awesome physique and you're saying, how can I do that?

[Laughter]

Where can I get one of those? Well you just have to – you just have to go to the Y. It's quite clear.

[Laughter]

Alright, I've told you what to do now it's up to you. March on over to the Y. But I am the junior member in my couple because like Ethan our First Lady, Chirlane McCray, started out at the Y a long, long time ago. She – I believe she was eight when she started at the Y. And the Y had something called Leader Corp and Chirlane's parents got her involved in Leader Corp and that worked out because she became a leader, and that's been true of so many young people.

The Y helped them realize their potential. So we talk about what we hope to do in this city over the next four years. We want it to be the fairest big city in America. We want there to be a reality of fairness in people's lives. Equity. Decency. People living to their potential.

There is nowhere that does that better than the Y, and this community will finally get the Y it deserves. Congratulations, everybody.

[Applause]

###