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**A RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: CITY ANNOUNCES PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP HAS  
DELIVERED WI-FI AND BROADBAND UPGRADES AT CORNERSTONE AND LEARNING LABS  
PROGRAMS IN 50 NYCHA COMMUNITY CENTERS**

*In partnership with The Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC), The Rockefeller Foundation, Zoom, Cielo Scholarship Foundation, and EducationSuperHighway, the City enhanced access to remote learning for thousands of young people in NYCHA communities with hi-speed Wi-Fi and broadband at existing Cornerstones*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio, the New York City Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO), the New York City Department of Education (DOE), the New York City Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD), and the COVID-19 Public-Private Partnership Czar today announced a public-private partnership with The Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC), The Rockefeller Foundation, Zoom, Cielo Scholarship Foundation, and EducationSuperHighway has delivered Wi-Fi and broadband upgrades to ensure that students learning remotely in the Learning Labs K-8 component of Learning Bridges at DYCD-funded Cornerstone Community Centers have access to free high-speed connectivity.

More than 12,000 young people and adults will benefit from the enhancements during active programming at the centers, in addition to thousands of community members who can access the free Wi-Fi hotspots provided by ITDRC as a result of this partnership.

“Supporting our students as they navigate distance learning is critical, and connectivity is key,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “These community centers will be hubs for Internet access, and I am grateful for our partners for working with us to get this done.”

The sites with the greatest need were prioritized to receive the in-kind upgrades valued at more than a half million dollars following a survey of 143 programs that included Cornerstones, Learning Labs based in Cornerstones, and COMPASS Learning Labs in non-DOE buildings across the five boroughs. Of the 50 unique Cornerstones identified, twenty had both Wi-Fi and broadband installed, twenty received broadband, and ten were outfitted with Wi-Fi. In addition to supporting students in Learning Labs programs at Cornerstones, the enhancements will benefit young people and adults for years to come at Cornerstone afterschool, evening and weekend programs, and through community-accessible hot spots provided by ITDRC at 30 of the sites.

The City will continue efforts to address the digital divide in underserved communities through the Universal Solicitation for Broadband RFP, announced this week.

“This impressive cross-sector partnership will bring crucial support to young New Yorkers whose schooling has been moved online due to the pandemic,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Laura Anglin**. “The City of New York thanks The Information Technology Disaster Resource Center, The Rockefeller Foundation, Zoom, Cielo Scholarship Foundation, and EducationSuperHighway for their donations, and continued commitment to New York City students’ equitable access to education and technology.”

The public-private initiative was made possible due to the partnership between the City and the following organizations:

**The Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC)** is a volunteer-driven non-profit that provides communities with the technical resources necessary to continue operations and recover after catastrophic events. As

part of its projectConnect initiative, ITDRC provided and managed the installation of Wi-Fi and network equipment upgrades at the designated Learning Labs sites and is overseeing the transition to the new broadband system.

**The Rockefeller Foundation**, which works to bring together and support innovative initiatives to create meaningful change and drive development, is providing funds to support high-speed internet connectivity for students at the Learning Labs sites.

**Zoom**, the communications technology company that provides video, telephone and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform, is providing funds to ensure quality, high-speed internet connectivity at each of the Learning Labs sites.

**EducationSuperHighway**, which works to create equitable digital learning opportunities for public school students by facilitating access to high-speed internet, played an integral role in creating this partnership. The national non-profit identified and brought together partners for this project, providing recommendations and expertise on broadband network architecture for the City.

**Cielo Scholarship Foundation** provided funding for broadband upgrades.

The following sites received upgrades (\* denotes centers with community-accessible hot spots provided by ITDRC):

<b>Cornerstone</b>	<b>Provider Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Borough</b>
Melrose*	BronxWorks	286 East 156 Street	Bronx
Butler*	Directions For Our Youth (DFOY)	1368 Webster Avenue	Bronx
Edenwald	Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MCCC)	1150 East 229 Street	Bronx
Marble Hill	Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC)	5365 Broadway	Bronx
Boston Secor*	Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC)	3540 Bivona Street	Bronx
Davidson*	SoBro	1221 Prospect Avenue	Bronx

Fort Independence*	Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC)	3350 Bailey Avenue	Bronx
Glenwood*	Flatbush Development Corporation (FDC)	5816 Farragut Road	Brooklyn
Marcus Garvey*	Research Foundation of CUNY	20 Amboy Street	Brooklyn
Surfside	HeartShare St. Vincent's	2923 West 28 Street	Brooklyn
Carey Garden*	HeartShare St. Vincent's	2315 Surf Avenue	Brooklyn
Bushwick-Hylan	Grand Street Settlement	50 Humboldt Street	Brooklyn
Williamsburg	Grand Street Settlement	195 Graham Avenue	Brooklyn
Cooper Park*	Coalition of Children and Family Services	76 Kingsland Avenue	Brooklyn
Kingsborough*	Flatbush Development Corporation (FDC)	129 Kingsborough 1st Walk	Brooklyn
Lafayette	Grand Street Settlement	442 Dekalb Avenue	Brooklyn
Taylor-Wythe*	El Puente	80 Clymer Street	Brooklyn
Albany	CAMBA	164 Troy Avenue	Brooklyn
Atlantic Terminal*	University Settlement	501 Carlton Avenue	Brooklyn
Boulevard	CAMBA	726 Stanley Avenue	Brooklyn
Howard	CAMBA	90 Watkins Street	Brooklyn
Sheepshead Bay	CAMBA	3679 Nostrand Avenue	Brooklyn

Brevoort	CAMBA	280 Ralph Avenue	Brooklyn
Penn-Wortman	CAMBA	895 Pennsylvania Avenue	Brooklyn
Williams Plaza*	El Puente	323 Roebling Street	Brooklyn
O'Dwyer Gardens*	Brooklyn Community Services (BCS)	2945 West 33 Street	Brooklyn
Langston Hughes*	Research Foundation of CUNY	301 Sutter Avenue	Brooklyn
Tilden*	Research Foundation of CUNY	630 Mother Gaston Boulevard	Brooklyn
Breukelen*	Police Athletic League (PAL)	715 East 105 Street	Brooklyn
Independence Towers*	El Puente	114 Taylor Street	Brooklyn
Van Dyke*	Research Foundation of CUNY	392 Blake Avenue	Brooklyn
Manhattanville*	Graham Windham	530 West 133 Street	Manhattan
Clinton*	Supportive Children's Advocacy Network (SCAN)	120 East 110 Street	Manhattan
Johnson	Supportive Children's Advocacy Network (SCAN)	1833 Lexington Avenue	Manhattan
King Towers*	Supportive Children's Advocacy Network (SCAN)	2 West 115 Street	Manhattan

East River*	SCAN-New York Volunteer Parent-Aides Association, Inc. (SCAN)	404 East 105 Street	Manhattan
Drew Hamilton	The Children's Village	220 West 143 Street	Manhattan
Dyckman*	Children's Arts & Science Workshops, Inc. (CASW)	3782 Tenth Avenue	Manhattan
Baruch	Grand Street Settlement	605 FDR Drive	Manhattan
Polo	Police Athletic League (PAL)	3005 Frederick Douglass Boulevard	Manhattan
Rutgers	Grand Street Settlement	200 Madison Street	Manhattan
Grant*	Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC)	1301 Amsterdam Avenue	Manhattan
Astoria*	HANAC	4-05 Astoria Boulevard	Queens
Ravenswood*	Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement	35-40 21 Street	Queens
Ocean Bay*	Child Center of NY	57-10 Beach Channel Drive	Queens
South Jamaica II	Southern Queens Park Association (SQPA)	109-04 160 Street	Queens
Todt Hill*	Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Staten Island	255 Westwood Avenue	Staten Island

South Beach	United Activities Unlimited (UAU)	155 Norway Avenue	Staten Island
Gerard Carter*	Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Staten Island	230 Broad Street	Staten Island
West Brighton I	United Activities Unlimited (UAU)	230 Broadway	Staten Island

“Private sector expertise and resources leveraging an innovative City program to better serve our students in a moment of unprecedented challenge—that’s what this partnership is about,” said **Peter Hatch, the City’s COVID-19 Public-Private Partnership Czar**. “I would like to thank ITDRC, EducationSuperHighway, Rockefeller Foundation, Zoom and Cielo for their generous commitments to equity in connectivity for our students at Learning Bridges sites.”

“We’re proud to work with our agency and community partners on this important Learning Bridges initiative to support New York City students during this critical moment,” said **Josh Wallack, Deputy Chancellor, Division of Early Childhood Education and Student Enrollment**. “This cross-sector partnership builds on our continued commitment to equip every student with the tools they need to access a high-quality education no matter where they are learning.”

“This important cross-sector technology partnership provides invaluable support to Learning Bridges sites and brings the City one step closer to closing the digital divide,” said **John Paul Farmer, Chief Technology Officer of New York City**. “Now more than ever, it is key that all students—no matter their zip codes—have equitable access to broadband connectivity so they can reach their full potential while learning remotely.”

“Access to quality broadband connectivity is essential to the success of our students,” said **Gary Johnson, Associate Chief Technology Officer for Inclusive Innovation**. “It’s exciting to work alongside dedicated public and private partners to take an important step towards addressing the digital divide and advancing equitable broadband access for students in communities where the needs are greatest.”

“The future of providing high-quality education is inextricably linked to ensuring students have access to reliable high-speed internet,” said **Jorge Luis Paniagua Valle, Deputy Executive Director of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City**. “The Mayor’s Fund is thankful to the dedication and generosity demonstrated by the Cielo Scholarship Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, EducationSuperHighway, Zoom, and the Information Technology Disaster Resource Center through this partnership.”

“Reliable high-speed internet connectivity is no longer a luxury—it’s a necessity. Particularly at a time when our young people and their families may feel more disconnected than ever, these upgrades at DYCD-funded Cornerstone Community Centers will help bring more equity to technology access. DYCD is proud to team up with our sister agencies and generous partners in bringing the world of learning to the fingertips of young people in Learning Labs programs,” said **DYCD Commissioner Bill Chong**.

“Accelerating broadband access for NYCHA families and young people is essential to ensuring that our residents are able to keep pace in a learning environment drastically altered by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **NYCHA EVP for Community Engagement and Partnerships Sideya Sherman**. “We are excited to be a part of an initiative that will create additional hubs for expanding access to the technological resources public housing communities need and deserve during this unprecedented time.”

“We’re proud to participate in such an important initiative to expand connectivity at community centers throughout the city,” said **Joe Hillis, Operations Director of ITDRC**. “These enhancements will enable more students to connect for distance learning and improve the overall learning experience.”

“New York City has been home to The Rockefeller Foundation for over 100 years, and we’re proud to work with the city to support equitable access to technology that students need to continue their educations now and in the future,” said **Zia Khan, Senior Vice President for Innovation, The Rockefeller Foundation**.

“Zoom is honored to partner with New York City to make sure every young person has access to learning and to connecting to their teachers and classmates. This pandemic has called us together across public, private, and social sectors to ensure excellence, care and equity for this generation of students,” said **Janine Pelosi, Chief Marketing Officer, Zoom**.

“In order to alleviate future debt, The Cielo Scholarship Foundation is committed to funding underprivileged individuals’ education in trade and technology to ensure stable future employment. We understand that when students do not have access to technology, this can limit their ability to further their education. Cielo is committed to helping close this gap at all ages,” said the **Cielo Scholarship Foundation**.

“Since the earliest days of the pandemic, collaborations between the public and private sectors have created new opportunities to ensure every student has equal access to educational opportunity,” said **Evan Marwell, Founder and CEO at EducationSuperHighway**. “We are proud to be part of this partnership, ensuring New York City students have the connectivity they need to continue learning and fulfill their potential.”

“Directions for Our Youth is thankful to DYCD for providing the Butler Community Center a much-needed internet and Wi-Fi upgrade, making it possible for children and youth to participate in remote learning. These have been difficult times for our City’s most vulnerable who are at risk for learning loss and falling greatly behind academically. DFOY is proud to partner with DYCD to ensure that they are not left behind,” said **Robert A. Brown, Program Assistant Director, Directions for Our Youth (DFOY) Butler Cornerstone Community Center**.

“Prior to the internet upgrade, students were having a lot of difficulties logging onto their classes and completing their schoolwork. The slow internet service was impeding their ability to log on to their classes consistently and on time. Since the upgrade, they are able to complete their assignments within a timely manner. This would not be possible without the upgrade in the internet service. It has been a huge help to the parents of our participants, as a lot of families do not have the best internet quality at home and depend on our site for support. Thank you!” said **Cynthia Katwaru, Community Coordinator, Graham Windham Manhattanville Cornerstone Community Center**.

“During these unprecedented times we have witnessed an even greater digital divide, which has prevented many students and families from accessing learning opportunities,” said **NYS Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie**. “With the introduction of public-private collaborations like these, we are bridging that gap and ensuring our young people have access to the resources they need to succeed, while receiving the quality education they deserve. Thank you to all parties who made this possible, we appreciate your efforts in keeping the needs of NYC’s families at the forefront.”

“One lesson our city has learned from the pandemic is just how essential it is for all our children to have reliable access to WiFi—simply put, they can’t learn without it,” said **Assembly Member Steven Cymbrowitz, Chair of the Assembly’s Housing Committee**. “I commend this public-private partnership for addressing an inequity that has put thousands of kids in NYCHA complexes at an academic disadvantage and for providing a valuable service that people of all ages will use for years to come.”

“I am glad to see the announcement of this collaborative public-private initiative that will bring equitable internet access and a greater technological investment to our communities. Today, broadband internet and Wi-Fi access are just as essential to students as having a paper, pencil, and calculator to do math. Internet service is arguably just as essential as any other utility, and it is important that our Cornerstone Community Centers are equipped with tools for success. Community Cornerstone Centers and Learning Labs are not only a vital educational resource for young

students but also serve as community assets for working-class families. We have witnessed in our lifetime the rapid proliferation of internet service, and I am hopeful that this initiative will be the first of many focused on equitable internet access,” said **Assembly Member Khaleel Anderson**.

“Ensuring that 100% of New Yorkers have easy and affordable access to broadband wireless internet must be a top priority in the immediate future. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the digital divide that has existed for a generation, and I am very excited to see tangible steps of progress with these NYCHA Community Centers. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio and his administration as well as the numerous private groups that have stepped up to facilitate these upgrades,” said **Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz**.

“NYCHA Community Centers are hubs of resources and recreation for our seniors, families, and young people. It is exciting to learn that the City will be expanding broadband access to these treasured spaces in our communities. Our community-based partners are ready to continue to provide outstanding programming and now will have the opportunity to expand their services thanks to this investment. I applaud the Mayor and his team for their commitment to connecting our communities,” said **Assembly Member Robert J. Rodriguez**.

“This public private sector partnership is movement in the right direction to provide broadband service to all. This is just the beginning of the investment that must be done in communities of Brownsville and East New York, which are broadband deserts, and home to over 25 NYCHA complexes. The digital divide is not a new phenomenon but it was exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic as we were forced to turn to remote learning and tele health services for the health and safety of the state. Learning did not stop for the children in New York, but the educational gap was further widened as children were given additional barriers to access due to connectivity issues throughout the state, particularly the 55th Assembly district. Thank you to all the companies who saw the need and are attempting to address it through this partnership. Learning and access to healthcare should not be dependent on your zip code. We look forward to continued partnerships to allow broadband access for all households regardless of where you reside in the state, and city of New York,” said **Assembly Member Latrice Walker**.

“The increase in Wi-fi and broadband will not only help with better quality of life but will continue to help those attending school and work remotely. The partnership between public and private is and will always be a model to follow,” said **Assembly Member Jaime Williams**.

“Access to reliable and affordable WiFi / Broadband is a necessity in the 21st Century and is vital when dealing with a pandemic. Case in point, remote learning has been challenging for many students who had inadequate internet service or none at all. Our seniors and others with limited or no service could not access the essential COVID-19 vaccine because they are required to sign up online. The pandemic has further disenfranchised underserved communities of color including but not limited to the constituents of the 56th AD. I commend the Mayor and his staff for establishing partnerships designed to respond to these inequities and provide access to those who need it most,” said **Assembly Member Stefani Zinerman**.

“Access to high-speed internet is necessary for the success of our students now and will be in the post-pandemic world,” said **State Senator Leroy Comrie**. “I applaud Mayor de Blasio for forming this partnership, and I thank our city’s private sector partners for remaining committed to the success of New York City public school students.”

“The digital divide that has existed for years for working-class families, especially the Black and Brown communities I represent in Northern Manhattan, has proven to be detrimental to Cornerstone Programs during this pandemic. While we still have a long way to go in bridging this divide, I welcome the good news that the City will begin to provide Wi-Fi and broadband upgrades for these programs, including at Dyckman and Manhattanville Houses in my district. This will allow them to continue to provide engaging, high-quality, year-round programs for adults and young people who have been historically underserved, with the much-needed and reliable access to the Internet,” said **Senator Robert Jackson**.

“We live in a digital age where coronavirus has now compounded the need for virtual communication and learning. It is more important than ever that we crush the digital divide and ensure that everyone has readily available access to the Internet. These Wi-Fi and broadband upgrades in Cornerstone Community Centers at NYCHA developments across the city will help residents of all ages, but particularly youth improve their education and quality of life,” said **State Senator James Sanders Jr.**



“I am really excited about the opportunities this public-private partnership will bring to young people in my district. Remote learning has been challenging for most students, but it has been particularly hard on students with little to no connectivity at home. Expanding and improving Broadband Wi-Fi access will go a long way to ensure that all children have access to spaces that help promote and enhance their educational well-being,” said **Council Member Diana Ayala**. “Special thanks to the Mayor’s Office, The Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC), The Rockefeller Foundation, Zoom, Cielo Scholarship Foundation, and EducationSuperHighway for making this happen.”

“Like far too many parts of our city, western Queens suffered from decades of disinvestment,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides**. “The digital divide, unfortunately, was most acutely felt at the Astoria Houses. With this partnership, however, families will have an opportunity to connect to educational and inspirational programming that can foster a lifelong love of learning. I want to thank everyone from the Information Technology Disaster Resource Center, The Rockefeller Foundation, Zoom, Cielo Scholarship Foundation, and EducationSuperHighway for making this possible.”

“Students in poorer neighborhoods do not succeed academically as well as students in rich neighborhoods. But that is not because they are more or less capable—it’s because adults fail to give them the resources they need to succeed. No matter how much work my community and I do to give students the social emotional and academic tools they need, they will fail in 2021 without adequate Wi-fi. This announcement gives students in my neighborhood and beyond a chance to compete on equal playing field. I am so glad to support these efforts to erase the digital divide,” said **Council Member Robert Cornegy**.

“The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the inequities that persist in our city, and that includes the digital divide. As we all continue to rely heavily on technology, it is imperative that we address this crisis that is disproportionately affecting communities of color and low-income New Yorkers. Broadband access cannot be seen as a privilege for a select few that can afford it but instead is a necessity in today’s world. I commend the de Blasio administration for taking a step forward today towards tech equity and ensuring New Yorkers, regardless of their zip code or socioeconomic status, have the necessary tools for success,” said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson**.

“Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the achievement gap has worsened because of the digital divide. In the 21st century, Black and Brown households are disconnected and lagging behind in their coursework, unable to fully pivot from in-person to remote or blended learning in the past year. As the nation’s largest public school system, we must lead by example to connect our students and families to online educational resources where they can learn and excel. By expanding public access to Wi-Fi and broadband, we are deepening our commitments to ending the racial, economic, and educational inequities across our city,” said **Council Member Farah Louis**.

“Together we get more done. I am truly grateful for this public private partnership with the Information Technology Disaster Resource Center, The Rockefeller Foundation, Zoom, Cielo Scholarship Foundation, and EducationSuperHighway to ensure that our students receive adequate access while learning remotely,” said **Council Member Kevin C. Riley**. “Ensuring equitable access to communities of color, specifically our young scholars, is essential during these unprecedented times. Students that reside in NYCHA developments have been disenfranchised for years and finally we can give them a bit more optimism by providing them with relief during these challenging times. I am elated that the students residing in NYCHA Edenwald and Boston Secor housing will be receiving this access. I commend Mayor de Blasio for his hard work and I look forward to the continued partnership in ensuring equitable accessibility throughout District 12.”

“Lack of access to broadband is one of the greatest challenges our low- and moderate-income communities face in gaining opportunity in education and career development. While universal, public access to broadband should be the ultimate goal, I applaud this step to outfit Cornerstones with this essential infrastructure and look forward to its speedy implementation,” said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**.

“I thank Mayor de Blasio for bringing broadband connectivity to students living in NYCHA communities. Remote learning has been especially difficult for low-income Black, Latino, & Asian students who either had limited or no access to reliable internet services,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**. “I am happy to hear that Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC) is among one of the NYCHA locations to receive WIFI and broadband

upgrades. I look forward to continuing to work alongside Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, and my colleagues at the City Council to ensure we continue expanding this initiative into all underserved communities.

“The pandemic has not only exposed inequalities in health care, education and digital access, it has also shown us that high-speed internet access is a necessity for all New Yorkers, especially young people in remote learning. This public-private initiative bridges the digital divide in places that need it most, connecting students with remote education and, in many cases, extending that access to seniors and others in the surrounding community,” said **Council Member Debi Rose**.

“It has taken way too long to close our digital divide. High-speed, high-quality broadband access is not a luxury good, but a basic necessity in our interconnected age: for remote learning, working from home, and even getting an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine. Expanding connectivity through public-private partnerships, reaching the communities with the highest level of need, must be a top priority for our City. I am encouraged by this new partnership at our NYCHA community centers, an important step toward meeting long-term accessibility needs for all residents of public housing. I put forward a clear roadmap to building on this progress and achieve universal broadband recently with Council Member Kallos, and urge the City to expeditiously adopt those recommendations in full. We cannot operate a 21st century city while still depending on 20th century infrastructure,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

#### **About the Learning Bridges Program**

When the New York City Department of Education (DOE) resumed in-person schooling last fall, most schools and early childhood programs operated on a blended learning model to ensure educator and student health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that each week, many students have some school days in person and some school days remotely. Learning Bridges launched with in-person school in September as a new program to provide free childcare for DOE students enrolled in blended learning from 3-K through 8th grade on days when they are scheduled for remote learning. The Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) is working in partnership with the DOE to support Learning Bridges for students in grades K-8, referred to as Learning Labs. Learn more at [www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enrollment-help/learning-bridges](https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enrollment-help/learning-bridges).

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