



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** July 9, 2022

**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT FROM SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2022: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS  
ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF SATURDAY NIGHT LIGHT YOUTH PROGRAM**

**Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright:** So happy to see all of these beautiful, young people. Let's give them a clap up.

[Applause]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Yeah. Summer is here, and I want to start off by publicly thanking Jayden. Jayden, give a [inaudible]. That's right. He's good. You got to watch him. But he helped me learn how to make a basket today. I feel very accomplished. That's what Saturday Night Lights is all about. Really providing an incredible experience for our young people, in partnership with our NYPD officers who are there to really be partners and mentors and supporters. DYCD is an amazing organization that helps connect them to community-based organizations.

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** This is truly, truly an amazing program that has been in existence. And we're so happy to launch it today and to continue the work going forward. First up, I want to introduce our DYCD Commissioner Keith Howard, who told me -

[Applause]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** I'm going to say. He said that he played D1 basketball, so we are going to see tonight. Okay.

**Commissioner Keith Howard, Department of Youth and Community Development:** I got no problem with that, okay? I am so glad to be back. I am from the Bronx. Okay?

[Applause]

**Commissioner Howard:** That's right. Repping the Bronx. There you go. Okay? Grew up 149th Street, Walton Avenue. Moved over to Sedgwick Avenue, 1849. Played in Roberto Clemente State Park.

**Commissioner Howard:** School of the Art legend. Ask somebody. Okay? This is one of our biggest programs, and it just energized me, as the deputy mayor stated, just to be here with the young people. I actually played here when PAL had their league. Okay, coach, I don't know if they still have it, but I used to play in this very building. So, I know about the investment that's needed in young people. I know that they need a safe haven to be able to come to.

**Commissioner Howard:** And if you go upstairs, and I hope you do go upstairs to the game room, which I just went up there, an amazing activity up there. So, I think that we should continue to invest in these types of programs. We need to expand beyond what we're currently doing. Okay? And I know that we'll get into that. But I also want to thank our partners in city government for making this happen. So, let's play some ball afterwards. I know the man's going to be playing with you. I'm going to try, but my knees and my back, you know, it's all good. But okay. Thank you, deputy mayor.

[Applause]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Already making excuses. Already making excuses. I don't know. All right, I do have to give a shout-out and acknowledge that I am from the Boogie Down as well, south, south Bronx, and want to introduce our next speaker, our very own Bronx District Attorney, Darcel Clark.

[...]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much, District Attorney Clark. And next up is the Borough President of the Bronx. Where is she? There she is. Vanessa Gibson.

[...]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much, Borough President Vanessa Gibson. We are so pleased to have the partnership of all of our elected officials. And I'd like to next introduce Council Member Oswald Feliz.

[...]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much, council member. And now, I'd like to bring up the ED of the PAL, Carlos Velazquez. There he is. Makes it all happen. Yeah!

[...]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much. Next up, we have our Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia. I'm sure I did that [inaudible].

[...]

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you so much. Thank you so much. And for the young people, you've seen all these very fancy people with all their fancy titles. President of the borough, assembly, city council, the DA. And I want you to know that everybody that you've seen comes from communities like this. We come from this community and communities like this. So, I hope that makes you appreciate that there is nothing that you cannot do. You can be anything or anybody you want to be. You can even be the Police Commissioner of the New York Police Department. That's our next speaker. Keechant - Commissioner Keechant Sewell.

**Commissioner Keechant Sewell, Police Department:** Thank you very much. Thank you so much. This is very exciting to be here. This is so important. And I have to say, I'm going to echo some of the things people said here, but I'll be brief because I think I know you want to play. So, I won't talk so much. I'm not going to embarrass myself by trying to play with you as well. But the NYPD always steps forward to look out for our youth, to have initiatives and programs and options to keep them safe. And programs like Saturday Night Lights, it's just one thing that we do. But there is so much more that we can do for our youth.

**Commissioner Sewell:** We have to continue to invest in our people. And this type of program should be where we interact with the NYPD, where you see an officer and play with an officer and talk to an officer, so you see that we are all part of the same community. That we are here together. And we will never stop that. We will always have our mentors, our coaches, our partners. I want to thank Mayor Adams, Commissioner Howard. And we have our coaches, Deputy Mayor Wright. We have our DAs, we have elected officials. It shows the whole of government, the whole of the city approach we have to taking care of our youth. This holistic atmosphere we want to create to show you that we are here for you, and that you can indeed be anything that you want to be, in this city and beyond. And we're always going to be here for you. Thank you.

**Deputy Mayor Wright:** Thank you, Commissioner Sewell. And it absolutely takes a village, and I'm so grateful for the NYPD. One of the officers just showed me how to make a shot. Officer... yeah, thank you. I made a basket earlier. And it does take a village, which you've heard. And what we absolutely appreciate is that this summer was so important, coming out of

COVID-19. This summer was so important, just what we've been through and what we've been faced with. And Mayor Eric Adams said that this is something we're going to double down on. This is something we're going to lean all the way into because it works, and it's valuable and important. So next up, our mayor, Eric Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thank you. Thank you, deputy mayor, police commissioner, and my partners in the Bronx. We spend so much time in the Bronx, in seven and six months and a few days, because we believe that, for so many years, the Bronx has been ignored, has not received the support that they deserve. And so, our Bronx BP, Vanessa Gibson, we're just really proud of what you're doing here. And our amazing Councilman Oswald, you have been just on the grind. Our district attorney, our Assemblywoman Tapia, DA Clark, the entire team. We just want to thank you. This is an investment.

**Mayor Adams:** And we have been rolling out this throughout the entire week. You have saw what we were doing. It's about our scholars and making sure that they get every opportunity that they deserve. And I know all the speakers already touched on it, but when you look at the Summer Rising, when you look at Saturday Night Lights, look at what we're doing around childcare, we are really going after the foundational issues that is really holding our young people back.

**Mayor Adams:** And as we do the intervention of public safety, we need to do the prevention. Because if they can bounce the ball on the basketball court, they can wear a black robe on the Supreme Court. That is why we're here. That is why we're making these connections.

[Applause]

**Mayor Adams:** That is why we're doing what we're doing. So, I want to thank all of you for coming out today. It shows that you have the high end of government, the high end of those who are making these decisions. And I just want to say thank you. And thank you to the team and some of the officers who are here. If you want to build bridges, pass a ball, engage in something. Sports really gives us a way of connecting with each other and realize that we're the same people wanting the same things. So, thanks so much. Let's play ball.

###

