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**FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY GIVES REMARKS AT THE NEW YORK STATE
FOUNDATION'S LAUNCH OF THE HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS FUND**

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

I am so excited about the Healthy Neighborhoods Fund and all of the essential resources it will bring to the Lower East Side, Brownsville, and right here—in East Harlem.

When I say “essential,” I mean it. With help from all of you, the New York State Health Foundation and the de Blasio administration are going to connect New Yorkers to some important building blocks of a healthy life: nutritious food; safe and walkable streets; active playgrounds; and open spaces to hang out and exercise.

And when I say “healthy,” I’m not just talking about physical health. I’m also talking about mental health—an issue I care about deeply.

Last week, I announced that the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City—which I lead as Chair—will spearhead an effort to create a more inclusive mental health system.

I talked about how we need to make sure everyone in the city has access to the mental health resources they need.

And a big part of that is making sure every New Yorker lives in a truly healthy neighborhood.

I speak from experience. For 22 years, my family and I were proud residents of Park Slope, Brooklyn. And while we are so honored to be the temporary caretakers of Gracie Mansion, Park Slope remains our home.

I love our neighborhood precisely because so many of the essential resources I mentioned earlier are just a short walk or bike ride away. And they played a big role in keeping me healthy, both mentally and physically.

Unsurprisingly, one of the best things about living in Park Slope is Prospect Park itself. It’s hard to believe that one place can hold so many memories.

Prospect Park is where Bill and I got married. It’s where I would go for long walks to unwind. It’s where Bill and I took our children to the playgrounds, and where he formed a special bond with them as the coach of their softball teams.

But a park alone—even a world-class one like Prospect Park— isn’t enough. We know that maintaining your physical and emotional health also requires easy access to affordable healthy food, cultural institutions, and high-quality schools.

Park Slope has all of those things. Too many neighborhoods in our great city don't.

That needs to change. The de Blasio administration is absolutely committed to restoring all of our neighborhoods to good health.

And we are so grateful for the support of partners like Jim and his team at the New York State Health Foundation.

I know that everyone at the Mayor's Fund is excited to work with the Foundation to advance our shared priorities.

Speaking of "shared priorities," it is now my pleasure to introduce a woman who has been beyond generous with her knowledge and expertise over the past year.

She has played a crucial role in shaping my work around mental health—and I know my debt to her will only grow as that work accelerates in the months and years to come.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Commissioner Mary Bassett!

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