



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 4, 2018

Contact: mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov,

'Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists' Shines a Light on Critical Work Protecting Kids and Supporting Families in NYC

2,000+ "First Responders for Children" investigate abuse cases and provide supportive services to families

NEW YORK, NY – June 3-10 is a Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists, an opportunity for New Yorkers to recognize and thank the 2,000-plus compassionate experts who investigate reports of abuse and neglect, take action to protect vulnerable kids, and help keep families together by providing supportive services.

Mayor Bill de Blasio today issued a Mayoral Proclamation declaring the Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists, saying: "CPS workers are first responders for children experiencing abuse and neglect, and the compassion, patience, and understanding they bring to these challenging situations helps to put young people on a path to a better and brighter future. I am proud to join with all those gathered in applauding our city's outstanding Child Protective Specialists who are helping to move our city forward in so many ways."

Child Protective Specialists, who are part of the City's Administration for Children's Services, investigate about 60,000 reports of abuse or neglect in New York City every year, in response to calls to the state hotline. They provide thousands of families a year with services ranging from free food and cribs to mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment. Child Protective Specialists meet education and background requirements, and they receive extensive training before they are deployed and on an ongoing basis.

"Child Protective Specialists care deeply about children, and they work around the clock to make sure kids are safe and families have the support they need," said **David A. Hansell, Commissioner of the Administration for Children's Services**. "Too often, the work of Child Protective Specialists is invisible or misunderstood, and this Citywide Week of Appreciation is a chance for New Yorkers to thank the people who serve as first responders for children."

Activities are planned across New York City to mark the Week of Appreciation, including:

- Today, the Mayoral Proclamation will be presented to Child Protective Specialists in a ceremony at City Hall

- Throughout the week, Child Protective Specialists and their families will attend appreciation events in all five boroughs, thanking them for their service to the city's kids and families
- Advertisements will appear in subways, bus shelters, newspapers, television, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pandora, Taxi TV, and NYC Link kiosks citywide. One set of ads features Child Protective Specialists, and one set features families they helped. ([View the ads here.](#))
- A social media campaign will drive people to a special website, www.nyc.gov/cps, where they can send thank-you notes to Child Protective Specialists or get information on becoming a Child Protective Specialist themselves
- Individuals, groups, and organizations from across different sectors in New York City will honor Child Protective Specialists throughout the week. On Tuesday evening, for example, the New York Mets will present an award to Child Protective Specialists during their home game.

"I became a Child Protective Specialist with ACS because I wanted to do work that I'm passionate about and that makes a difference in people's lives. I have two kids of my own, and I know that children can thrive when their families are supported," said Marie Henry, who has been a Child Protective Specialist in Brooklyn for 10 years and was recently promoted to be a Supervisor, overseeing frontline workers and handling higher-level cases.

"I initially met my Child Protective Specialist because she was investigating a safety complaint involving my kids. As she got to know our family, she saw that what was really happening was that my husband was abusing me. My Child Protective Specialist helped me leave my abusive husband, create a safe home for my children, and rebuild my life," said Maria Taveras of Manhattan.

Teams of several Child Protective Specialists work together and report to supervisors and managers who review their work and their recommendations. There are multiple units of Child Protective Specialists, including specialized teams that provide intensive support to parents and families, units that are based in hospitals, teams who specialize in sex abuse cases, and emergency-response teams who work overnight and on weekends to respond immediately to reports of abuse or neglect. In 2017, ACS hired more than 600 new Child Protective Specialists, and will hire another 400 in the next few months.

Child Protective Specialists work closely with families, community members, teachers, doctors, nurses, childcare providers, police, homeless shelter staff, and others to understand families' needs and provide support to children and families.

First Lady Chirlane McCray, who leads the City's mental health and substance misuse efforts:

"A citywide week of appreciation for the city's Child Protective Specialists is a wonderful opportunity to give thanks to these hard working women and men who give so much to our city. These highly-trained specialists are charged with supporting children and families under some of the most challenging conditions imaginable, from addressing physical abuse to untreated mental illness. What could be more important? Their efforts to promote the health,

safety and well-being of children is too often overlooked. Let's applaud them for all the ways they offer resources and healing."

Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro:

"Keeping New Yorkers and their loved ones safe is a core mission of the FDNY and ACS. With this appreciation week and our active inter-agency collaboration, we will continue to protect vulnerable children from danger and support families."

Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza:

"We are grateful to the Child Protective Specialists across the City who conduct critical and sometimes life-saving work to serve children in need and ensure that their safety and wellbeing extends beyond the classroom. These dedicated individuals passionately serve our youngest New Yorkers, and I join Mayor de Blasio in honoring these true heroes for their dedication to our children and their families."

Health Commissioner Mary T. Bassett:

"Every day the City's Child Protective Specialists strive to protect children from abuse and neglect, and provide our youngest New Yorkers emotional support and the resources they need to flourish – they are real New York City heroes. I want to thank Administration for Children's Services and Commissioner Hansell for recognizing these remarkable men and women."

Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks:

"In our efforts to continually protect, assist, and uplift New Yorkers in need, including the most vulnerable among us—our children—we're proud of our close collaboration with the Administration for Children's Services. This week, on behalf of the families we serve, we are grateful for and give thanks to ACS' Child Protective Specialists, whose day-in-day-out dedication and compassion makes them essential partners in this shared mission."

SSEU Local 371 President Anthony Wells:

"The job of Child Protective Specialist is challenging, rewarding, and critical to many families. These men and women deserve our appreciation and respect for all they do to protect the safety and well-being of New York City's children. I commend ACS Commissioner David Hansell for holding this Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists, and I am delighted to see so many New Yorkers standing up to applaud these workers. I am proud of our members and the work they do every day for the children and families they serve."

Jennifer March, Executive Director of Citizens' Committee for Children:

"On behalf of Citizens' Committee for Children, I want to thank the over 2,000 child protective specialists who dedicate themselves to protecting New York City's children while strengthening and supporting their families 24 hours a day, every day of the year."

Mary Pulido, PhD., Executive Director of The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (The NYSPCC):

"As the leader of the first child protection agency in the world, The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (The NYSPCC), I want to pay tribute to all of the

professionals who serve as Child Protective Specialists in New York City. When responding to the cases of child abuse and neglect that are reported, Child Protective Specialists have non-stop demands. The investigations can be very complicated, time-sensitive, anxiety provoking and at times downright dangerous. It takes a very strong and determined professional to do this work day in and day out. The NYSPCC applauds ACS for creating the Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists and we are delighted to join ACS in this effort. The NYSPCC is also proud to support all CPS workers through our crisis debriefing program to help them handle the on-going stressors inherent in the work. The NYSPCC salutes them!"

C. Brooks-Harrison, President, National Association of Social Workers-NYC:

"NASWNYC welcomes the opportunity to lift up the work of Child Protective Specialists. When the safety of New York City's children is in question, it is the Child Protective Specialists who are the first responders. Engaging in peoples' lives at some of the most sensitive and vulnerable times is not easy, and yet Child Protective Specialists have committed to keep children safe and support families. Please know that your work is appreciated."

Ariel Zwang, CEO, Safe Horizon:

"Safe Horizon operates a Child Advocacy Center in each New York City borough, responding to the needs of children who have suffered sexual abuse and/or severe physical abuse. ACS' Child Protective Specialists are important and valued members of the coordinated team that supports these children and their non-offending loved ones. The specialists are often navigating complex and painful circumstances, while doing their utmost to keep children safe. It's not an easy job. They are incredibly brave to do what they do day in and day out, and we value their partnership in our Child Advocacy Centers."

New York State Senator and former CPS Diane Savino:

"Some of the toughest workers in the City of New York do not carry a gun but they do walk the toughest beats in the city. Child Protection Specialists work with families at the most difficult times of their lives. They are compassionate professionals who never know what they may find on the other side of the door, but they do this knowing that they are providing a critical service to the families of NYC."

New York State Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi:

"Child Protective Specialists represent one of our most vital resources in New York City. In addition to investigating 60,000 cases of child abuse and neglect every year, this force provides essential support services to thousands of families. I am proud to join Mayor de Blasio, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), as well as my colleagues in government in honoring the important work these individuals provide to some of our youngest and most vulnerable New Yorkers."

City Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the General Welfare Committee:

"Our city depends on the hardworking heroes who go out every day to make sure our children are safe. I'm proud we are taking the time to highlight their mission and raise awareness. To the staff who make this work possible: thank you."

New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres:

“Child Protective Specialists are among New York City’s most unsung heroes. Each day more than 2,000 of these heroes fight against child abuse and neglect, and provide vital supportive services to families with children across our City. We are grateful for their tireless service.”

New York City Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik:

“Child protective specialists do incredible work every day to keep children safe. I thank them for their steadfast efforts on behalf of New York families in need.”