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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES KICKS OFF ANNUAL "CITYWIDE WEEK OF APPRECIATION FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SPECIALISTS," RECOGNIZING 2,000+ FIRST RESPONDERS FOR NYC CHILDREN

Child Protective Specialists at ACS Work Around the Clock to Keep NYC Kids Safe By Investigating 60,000 Reports of Child Abuse & Neglect Each Year; CPS Also Provide Supportive Services to Families: Diapers, Cribs, Food, Clothing, Counseling & More

NEW YORK, NY – NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell today kicked off the second-annual Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists, an opportunity to recognize the 2,000-plus compassionate, highly skilled New Yorkers who investigate reports of child abuse and neglect, take action to protect New York City's most vulnerable children and help keep families together by providing supportive services.

Mayor Bill de Blasio issued a Mayoral Proclamation declaring the Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists and said: "Child Protective Specialists are our city's unsung heroes. They demonstrate compassion and understanding even in the toughest of situations, and work night and day to keep our kids out of harm. This week and every week, I thank them for their service to our city."

Each year, Child Protective Specialists (CPS) investigate approximately 60,000 reports of child abuse or neglect in New York City, in response to calls to the state hotline. Child protective specialists travel throughout the City to conduct investigations from 16 offices in neighborhoods in all five boroughs, as well as a citywide Emergency Children's Services unit, which provides investigative coverage during evenings, holidays and weekends. As they identify needs, CPS provide thousands of families each year with services ranging from free food and cribs to mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment. CPS meet education and background requirements, and they receive extensive training before being deploying and on an ongoing basis.

"Child Protective Specialists work with one goal in mind: to ensure the safety and wellbeing of New York City's children," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. "The Citywide Week of Appreciation is a chance for New Yorkers to thank the City's Child Protective Specialists for the important work they do. Thank you to the thousands of CPS who work hard to keep kids safe and make sure families are supported."

"Child Protective Specialists at ACS care deeply about New York City's children, and they work around the clock to make sure kids are safe and families have the support they need. Too often, the work of Child Protective Specialists is invisible or misunderstood, and the annual Citywide Week of Appreciation is a chance for New Yorkers to better understand the work that they do as

first responders for children and thank them for their important work,” **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.**

Teams of several CPS work together and report to supervisors and managers who review their work and their recommendations. There are multiple units of CPS, 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. Over the last two years, ACS has hired more than 1,100 new CPS. In 2018 alone, ACS hired 597 new CPS.

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.

In addition to the kickoff event, Child Protective Specialists and their families will attend appreciation events in all five boroughs, thanking them for their service to the city’s children and families. Those interested in expressing their thanks can post on social media using the hashtag #CPSAppreciationWeek.

“I knew I wanted a fulfilling career where I could help others and feel I was making a positive impact on my community. There is no greater reward than serving children and families in dire need,” said **Jill Campbell, Child Protective Specialist.**

“What motivates me to do this work is to be a voice for children who don’t have one. As CPS our goal is to make sure children and families are safe and have the resources they need to thrive like housing, financial aid and emotional support,” **said Oswald Pardo, Child Protective Specialist.**

Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Commissioner Cecile Noel:

“In our mission to protect and connect vulnerable New Yorkers with resources and services, we are proud of our ongoing collaboration with ACS. This week and every day, we thank New York City’s Child Protective Specialists, whose compassion and dedication to keeping children and families safe makes them essential partners.”

Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro:

“Keeping New Yorkers of all ages safe is a core mission of the FDNY and ACS. With this appreciation week and our active inter-agency fire safety education collaboration, we will continue to protect vulnerable children from danger and support families.”

Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza:

“We are grateful for the partnership of the Administration for Children’s Services and our Child Protective Specialists, who go above and beyond to make sure our children and families have the support they need. The incredible work of the individuals who dedicate their lives to our children too often goes unnoticed, and this Citywide Week of Appreciation is an opportunity for all New Yorkers to say ‘thank you.’”

NYC Health + Hospitals President and CEO Mitchell Katz:

“NYC Health + Hospitals is proud to support the tireless work child protective specialists carry out to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our youngest, and often times most vulnerable, New Yorkers. We value our collaboration, which further enables the critical work of protecting kids and keeping families together.”

Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks:

“In our mission to support New Yorkers in need, close collaboration with our Agency partners at ACS is key to ensuring we connect families and children to the resources they need to succeed. This week, we express our appreciation for the incredible commitment to this mission displayed every day by ACS’ Child Protective Specialists, who provide essential services to our City’s children, and thank them for their crucial work.”

Department of Youth & Community Development Commissioner Bill Chong:

“Child Protective Specialists ensure the safety and well-being of thousands of children throughout the City, including those in DYCD’s funded programs. As we celebrate these dedicated individuals this week, we are reminded that they are on the front lines of protecting the next generation of New Yorkers. It takes special commitment, training and knowledge to be a Child Protective Specialist, and the City is fortunate to have so many good people who have dedicated their careers to this vital work.”

New York State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud:

“Today begins a week of appreciation, recognition and gratitude for child protective specialists, dedicated professionals who work hard towards protecting New York City’s most susceptible children and helping keep families together. Let us commend these passionate employees who tirelessly provide New Yorkers in the foster system with services and resources to help them become and remain safe, healthy and at ease.”

New York State Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi:

“I’m proud to recognize the hard-work and dedication of CPS workers, especially during Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists. These workers aim to protect the children of New York and work closely with families, government agencies, and community groups to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed.”

City Council Member I. Daneek Miller:

“Child Protective Specialists are among the first lines of support for many of our city’s most vulnerable, providing resources and assistance to families, and ensuring the safety of children,” said. “These are skilled professionals, empathetic to the struggles of families in crisis, and eager to help them achieve stability. Despite the uncertainty Child Protective Specialists face behind each door they knock on, these dedicated civil servants meet every challenge set before them in the fulfillment of their duty, and for that we owe them our unwavering gratitude and support.”

Ariel Zwang, CEO, Safe Horizon:

“Safe Horizon’s partnership with ACS’ Child Protective Specialists serves a critical role in our Child Advocacy Centers throughout New York City in response to the needs of children who have suffered sexual abuse and/or severe physical abuse. We truly value the dedication and commitment of these specialists for the work they conduct daily under extremely challenging conditions to ensure children are kept safe. This week is a true opportunity to recognize them for their selfless contribution.”

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

“The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (The NYSPCC) is proud to honor the over 2,000 first responders in New York City who work tirelessly to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. Child Protective Specialists work nonstop on harrowing cases that are stressful and sometimes dangerous – it takes a selfless and determined professional, willing to step in and defend the most vulnerable, to succeed in this line of work. We are thrilled to help

celebrate this second annual Citywide Week of Appreciation for Child Protective Specialists, and we're proud to continue our support through our crisis debriefing program, to help these heroes handle the intrinsic stressors of their important work."

The National Association of Social Workers-NYC:

"NASW-NYC welcomes the opportunity to highlight the work of Child Protective Specialists. Thank you for elevating the safety of New York City's children and families and for engaging in peoples' lives at some of the most sensitive and vulnerable times. As Child Protective Specialists' your commitment is a true testament of our social work values and we at NASW-NYC appreciate your work and thank you for elevating the profession."

Since taking office as ACS Commissioner last year, Commissioner Hansell has made widespread reforms to strengthen the agency's protective work and ensure that CPS have the tools, support and guidance they need to do their jobs well, including:

- Re-launched CHILD-STAT quality improvement process, a regular review of high-risk cases under current investigation and an analysis of performance data.
- Created a new Quality Assurance Unit to improve case practice on investigations involving high-risk families.
- Strengthened transportation options for CPS, including the use of ZipCar's "local motion technology," allowing CPS to find and reserve cars online so that they can respond even more quickly to reports of child abuse and neglect.
- Provided CPS with upgraded technology, including high-speed tablets and "Safe Measures" software, which can automatically identify and flag high-risk cases that need additional review by managerial staff.
- Enhanced review protocols by implementing a new Heightened Oversight Protocol for investigations involving alleged physical or sexual abuse of a child under the age of three.
- Increased collaboration with other agencies that can partner in investigations and in getting supportive services to families, including the Department of Education, Department of Homeless Services and NYPD.



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