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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, FAIR FUTURES COALITION & COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN ANNOUNCE THOUSANDS OF YOUTH IN NYC FOSTER CARE TO GET DEDICATED COACHES; \$10 MILLION EFFORT WILL SERVE AS NATIONAL MODEL

NYC is First in the Nation to Provide Dedicated Coaches for Youth in Foster Care; Providing Kids With Long-Term Coaching Can Help Put Them On a Better Pathway to Becoming Successful Adults

NEW YORK, NY – NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell, along with the Fair Futures Coalition and NYC Council Member Stephen Levin, today announced a first-of-its-kind effort that will connect thousands of youth in New York City foster care to dedicated coaches. As part of the \$10 million citywide effort, coaches will be made available to youth in foster care between the ages of 11 and 21 in order to provide them with social and emotional support to build life skills, set academic and career goals, plan for successful transitions from foster care and much more. New York City will become the first jurisdiction in the nation to provide dedicated coaches for youth in foster care. Commissioner Hansell said the new effort will serve as a national model for jurisdictions working to improve educational and employment outcomes for youth in foster care.

"In New York City, we're doing everything we can to make sure more doors of opportunity are opened for youth in foster care," said **ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. "With this \$10 million investment, New York City will serve as a national model by becoming the first city in the nation to provide dedicated coaches for youth in foster care. Promoting educational opportunities for young people in care, and providing support and guidance, are critical for ensuring success in adulthood and that's why ACS will continue to make critical investments and support programs that focus on these priorities."

"Some of the most successful people report having mentors who have helped guide them. People, regardless of their status, benefit from having someone to motivate, push, and believe in them. This \$10 million in funding, allocated for the Fair Futures campaign, shows NYC's commitment to caring for the lives of those in the foster care system beyond meeting their most basic needs," said **Gabbie Rodriguez**, a 22-year-old college student who has had experience in the NYC foster care system.

"Needless to say, New York is now the first in the nation to offer long-term comprehensive support for foster youth ages 11-21! I am excited to see the effect this will have in the lives of our youth in the near future. I am happy to congratulate the Fair Futures coalition on this amazing achievement," said **Dareth Ogle**, a 23-year-old paralegal who has had experience in the NYC foster care system.

"I am very proud to see the launch of Fair Futures, a program that will transform the lives of young people in foster care and is the first-of-its kind in the nation. This \$10 million investment will help youth in foster care succeed in school and work, stay healthy and have stable housing. The City Council began funding dedicated coaches for youth in foster care in 2016 with just \$500,000 but this year's historic investment will mean more worthy young people will get the support they need to thrive. Thank you to the Fair Futures Coalition, Council Member Levin, Council Member Dromm, Commissioner Hansell and the Administration for working with us to create this program. There is no doubt in my mind that other cities will follow New York's leads in providing Fair Futures to all young people in foster care," said **City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

"Fair Futures will empower foster children throughout the five boroughs of our city," said **NYC Council Finance Chair Daniel Dromm**. "The guidance our foster children will receive from these coaches will open up avenues to academic achievement and meaningful careers. I applaud Commissioner Hansell and Council Member Levin for leading this important effort. When you invest in NYC youth, it pays off in dividends."

"I am so proud to join with Commissioner Hansell and the Fair Futures coalition in today's announcement that will connect thousands of youth in foster care to dedicated coaches and support from age 11 to 21," said **Council Member Stephen Levin**. "The funding secured in this year's budget will enable young people to have access to the social and emotional support, and academic resources they deserve to thrive. Thank you to the young people who fought to make today possible and the coalition for fighting for all of New York City's youth."

"The Fair Futures Coalition is guided by the voices of young people in foster care. We are thrilled and grateful that the Mayor's Office, Administration for Children's Services, City Council, Office of Management and Budget and leading philanthropic Foundations are making this historic first-of-its-kind \$10M investment in the supports young people say help them the most. It sends a clear and powerful message that this City hears them, believes in them and will stick by them. As called for in the NYC Foster Care Taskforce recommendations, we look forward to working with the de Blasio Administration and City Council towards full implementation of Fair Futures related supports to age 26 so that all young people in or leaving foster care have equal opportunity to succeed," said **Jess Dannhauser, President & CEO of Graham Windham**.

"Young people who have spent time in foster care are resilient but need strong, long-term support from dedicated adults to ensure their success," said **Natasha Lifton, Senior Program Officer at The New York Community Trust**. "On behalf of the Fair Futures Steering Committee, I thank Commissioner Hansell and Councilmember Levin for their leadership and partnership to ensure that more foster youth throughout the city have access to the coaching and other services they need to thrive."

"Youth and young adults in foster care have incredible potential and resilience, but they also need assistance across many aspects of their lives to maximize this potential," said **Jim Purcell, President and CEO of the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies**. "We are happy to see that ACS and New York City's foster care agencies will be leading the way in providing this much-needed support for their academic success."

Today's announcement comes at a time when New York City's foster care system is undergoing significant transformation. While the number of young people in foster care has been on the rise

nationally, in New York City, the number of young people in foster care is at a historic, 25-year low of approximately 8,300 children. Youth in foster care are among the nation's most vulnerable young people as many have experienced abuse or neglect as well as other traumas. As part of its Foster Care Strategic Blueprint, ACS has been working to improve permanency outcomes, reduce the number of youth that age out of care and help youth transition successfully to adulthood. In addition to this work, long-term coaching and mentoring can help put youth on a better pathway to becoming successful adults.

In an effort to improve education and employment outcomes for youth in New York City foster care, Mayor Bill de Blasio, along with ACS, Council Member Levin and the Fair Futures Coalition, helped deliver \$10 million in the New York City budget for FY2020. As part of this first-of-its-kind effort, foster care provider agencies in New York City will receive city funding based on their census of youth ages 11 through 21. Funds may be used towards:

- **Coaches:** Provide youth with social and emotional support to build life skills, set academic and career goals, facilitate connections to programs/services that support goal attainment, and plan for successful transitions from foster care.
- **Case Aides:** Support a range of case practice functions including support for foster parents; for parents working toward reunification; and for education and employment service delivery. Case aides support the integration of family stability and permanency with the availability of social and emotional support--all of which are critical to achieving educational and employment success.
- **College/Education Specialists:** Provide caseworkers and parents/caretakers, as well as foster and kinship parents, with assistance in meeting the educational needs of children and youth by navigating the education system and advocating for educational services and supports like tutoring. College/Educational Specialists proactively monitor academic performance to ensure that children and youth are on grade level/on track to graduate. Specialists also provide support for college-bound youth with college applications, enrollment, and financial aid.
- **Housing Specialists:** Provide youth who are aging out of care with support in identifying and obtaining stable housing, including assisting them with all aspects of the application process for NYCHA, supportive housing and/or affordable housing, as well as monitoring the status of housing applications.
- **Employment/Internship Specialists:** Make referrals for assessments for internship/job readiness and placement, identify internship/job placement opportunities, and support youth in navigating internship/job issues.
- **Tutoring:** Providers may include tutors and tutoring in their plans to be funded through this Fair Futures initiative. Providers may leverage existing tutoring programs (including those supported by the NYC Department of Education and the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development).

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