



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 16, 2019

Contact: [mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov)

**NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMISSIONER DAVID A. HANSELL RECOGNIZED AS NATIONAL LEADER IN CHILD WELFARE**

*ACS Commissioner Hansell Presented With the Casey Family Programs' "2019 Excellence for Children Leadership Award"*

**New York, NY** – The NYC Administration for Children's Services today announced that Commissioner David A. Hansell has been awarded the prestigious "2019 Casey Excellence for Children Leadership Award" by [Casey Family Programs](#), a Seattle-based national foundation dedicated to safely reducing the need for foster care and building Communities of Hope for children and families. The leadership award recognizes child welfare leaders who have had a significant impact in improving outcomes for children and families.

"Casey Family Programs is the north star for child welfare agencies across the country and it's an honor to be recognized by this organization as a national leader," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. "I want to extend my sincere gratitude and thanks to the NYC Administration for Children's Services team because without their support, this opportunity would not have been possible. I will continue to work towards building a 21<sup>st</sup> century child welfare system that focuses on strengthening services and supports for children and families in New York City."

"The winners of these awards are making the world a better place for children and families," **said David C. Mills, chair of the Board of Trustees of Casey Family Programs**. "They are helping others navigate life's challenges, serving as role models and advocating for improvements to the systems that help ensure the safety and success of children and their families. We are honored to recognize their accomplishments and the critical work they are doing."

"Every day in communities across America, leaders from every sector and at all levels are working to build Communities of Hope for children and families," **said Dr. William C. Bell, President and CEO of Casey Family Programs**. "These awards are a recognition that everyone has a role to play in safely reducing the need for foster care by strengthening families and ensuring every child has what they need in their lives to reach their fullest potential. It is an honor each year to recognize a few of the people who are making a real difference today in their communities and in the lives of children by building hope."

At the awards ceremony in Seattle, Casey Family Programs recognized Commissioner Hansell, along with Lisa Opoku, chief operating officer for the engineering organization at Goldman Sachs, for their work in the Fostering College Success Mentoring Program. The program is a public-private partnership among ACS, Goldman Sachs and Casey Family Programs, and aims

to build a better tomorrow for young adults in foster care. The program pairs students from foster care with Goldman Sachs employees in a meaningful mentoring relationship with the goal of helping them graduate from college and secure employment, and providing guidance in their transition to adulthood. Goldman Sachs mentors receive training on the unique experiences and challenges facing foster youth. Students in the program have provided firsthand feedback about the incredible support they have received.

Since becoming Commissioner last year, Hansell has made widespread reforms aimed at strengthening the agency's protective and prevention services, including:

**Opened three innovative Family Enrichment Centers, which provide community-driven, comprehensive services to support families.** O.U.R. Place opened in Hunts Point and is managed by Graham Windham; Circle of Dreams opened in Highbridge and is managed by Bridge Builders; the C.R.I.B opened in East New York and is managed by Good Shepherd Services.

**Launched first-ever Safe Sleep Toolkit, in partnership with the Health Department and NYC Health + Hospitals, to be provided to parents of newborns at H+H hospitals.** The items in the Safe Sleep Toolkit were thoughtfully selected based on barriers to practicing safe sleep that parents and caregivers identified in focus groups convened by ACS and the Health Department. Those barriers included poor heating and pest infestations in the home. Parents disclosed that they often shared a bed with their babies as a protective measure. The toolkit addresses those concerns by providing netting to prevent insects from getting in the crib, and a wearable blanket to keep babies warm instead of using a loose blanket that can interfere with breathing.

**Provided more than 2,000 frontline child welfare workers 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.** The new tablets, equipped with high-speed internet and advanced features, will allow workers to access the state's child-welfare database in the field, so that they can immediately see a family's past history with ACS and other relevant data. Each tablet also features Microsoft OneNote, which is similar to a "digital notebook" because it provides "speech-to-text" technology as well as the opportunity to handwrite notes using a stylus. This will allow workers to type their case notes while out in the field and complete reports more quickly. ACS also launched a new Safe Measures Dashboard, which gives caseworkers, supervisors, and other staff a streamlined overview of case details. For instance, Safe Measures provides a calendar of tasks and deadlines in cases, tracks interviews that were conducted or are still outstanding, and prioritizes workloads. Safe Measures also allows supervisors to view caseworkers' workload and progress.

**Strengthened infrastructure to support child protective work, including additional transportation options and the use of ZipCar's "local motion technology," allowing CPS the ability to find and reserve cars online so that they can respond even more quickly to reports of child abuse and neglect.** Child Protective Specialists now have access to Zipcar Local Motion technology, enabling them to quickly reserve city vehicles online before traveling to a home visit. The mobile app and website allow CPS to easily find and book available vehicles with a color-coded LED that shows the status of the vehicle. GPS tracking, vehicle status and detailed usage history will allow managers to monitor the fleet in real-time and ensure that cars are available. With this technology, CPS can unlock and drive any authorized vehicle, day or night.

**Increased efforts to help ensure children in foster care are placed with relatives and close friends (kinship guardians).** ACS established 10 new kinship specialist positions in the ACS Division of Child Protection (DCP). These staff have the dedicated function of finding and engaging kin caregivers for children entering foster care. Kinship Specialists support child protection staff by finding a kin caregiver to place a child with when the youth can no longer safely remain in a home. ACS has engaged nationally known kinship care organization A Second Chance to provide training to these staff. ACS launched a \$366k pilot in Fall 2018 with two foster care provider agencies, Children’s Village and Little Flower Children and Family Services of NY. Each agency will receive additional funding to implement strategies to increase the proportion of children placed with kin. ACS, in partnership with national experts Public Catalyst and Action Research, is continuing to provide intensive technical assistance on kinship placement to foster care agencies through ACS’ Home Away from Home initiative.

“Congratulations to my friend Commissioner Hansell on this prestigious award,” Senator Roxanne J. Persaud said. “It is my hope that the ACS and other child welfare agencies continue to strive towards ensuring every child finds a safe and loving family,” said **Senator Roxanne Persaud**.

“My warmest congratulations to ACS Commissioner Hansell who is a fitting recipient of The Casey Family Programs’ ‘2019 Excellence for Children Leadership Award’,” said **Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families**. “I applaud the significant progress he has made in strengthening our child welfare system and look forward to continuing our work together to improve outcomes and ensure the safety and success of our most vulnerable children, youth and families.”

"Casey Family Programs could not have selected a better, more deserving recipient for their “2019 Casey Excellence for Children Leadership Award”. ACS Commissioner David Hansell has been a strong advocate and supporter of children throughout NYC, fighting to ensure kids are protected and have access to some of the best care and services our country has to offer. I am proud to be able to partner with him on the state level in my capacity as Chair of the Assembly's Standing Committee on Social Services. I look forward to seeing what continued great work ACS will accomplish under his leadership," said **Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi**.

“When it comes to protecting and working for the betterment of children and families in our city, Commissioner Hansell has never backed down,” said NYC Council Member Andy King, chair of the Council’s Committee on Juvenile Justice. “The future of the next generation is being strengthened through Commissioner Hansell’s widespread reforms and supportive services. Congratulations to the Commissioner and his team on receiving the 2019 Casey Excellence for Children Leadership Award,” said **Council Member Andy King**.



###