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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES EIGHT PROVIDERS SELECTED TO DEVELOP
THE CITY'S FIRST 'INNOVATIVE SENIOR CENTERS'**

*Centers Are Cornerstone of the City's Age Friendly NYC Initiative Announced in
2008 State of the City Address*

*Senior Centers Represent New Models of Excellence in Senior Center Services; New Centers
include Programs Designed for Visually-Impaired and LGBT Senior Communities*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs and Department for the Aging Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli today announced the eight community-based service providers that have been selected to develop the City's first Innovative Senior Centers, including one specifically for adults with vision problems and the first center for LGBT seniors in the nation. The Innovative Senior Center model, conceived in partnership with the Council of Senior Centers and Services, will offer a comprehensive array of services. These centers, which will open in January, deliver on the commitment made by the City in August 2009 when the Mayor, the Speaker and the New York Academy of Medicine launched Age-Friendly NYC, a blueprint aimed at making New York a more livable City for its growing senior population. Using public and private funds, the City will provide innovation grants to these first eight organizations for enhanced programming that will include robust health and wellness programs and provide seniors with additional access to health care services, arts and cultural programs, as well as technology and volunteer opportunities. The Mayor was also joined at the announcement by Igal Jellinek, Executive Director of the Council on Senior Centers and Services and David Sorkin, Executive Director of the Joan and Alan Bernikow JCC of Staten Island.

"The needs of seniors have evolved since centers were created 50 years ago and now is the time to re-envision the one-size-fits-all approach that has traditionally shaped many of our centers," said Mayor Bloomberg. "We will continue innovating our City services to help our growing senior population lead healthier, more dynamic lives and make New York the most age-friendly city in the 21st century."

"These innovative senior centers are the latest achievement in the City's Age-friendly NYC efforts and further demonstrates the administration's commitment to addressing the needs of the City's growing number of seniors," said Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs. "Since the launch of Age-Friendly NYC, we have installed hundreds of countdown traffic clocks to help make our streets safer to cross, created landmark Silver Alert legislation, and utilized school buses in the off-hours to

(more)

transport older New Yorkers to supermarkets as we make our city the most age-friendly in the country. This is truly a collaborative effort between City agencies, the City Council, the New York Academy of Medicine, and all of our community-based partners.”

“After a competitive process, we have found the most qualified providers to enhance and transform our senior center network,” said Department for the Aging Commissioner Barrios-Paoli. “We’ve set the bar very high and I am confident that these providers can create and implement quality programming for the City’s older adults.”

“We are very excited about the innovative senior centers and would like to thank the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, and the Commissioner for the Department for the Aging for their commitment to older New Yorkers,” said CSCS Executive Director Igal Jellinek. “This process has been extremely collaborative and truly marks the success of this initiative.”

Enhancing senior centers to better serve a larger, more active and diverse senior population is a key part of creating a more age-friendly city. While still providing meals and opportunities to socialize with their peers, Innovative Senior Centers will be held accountable for producing vibrant programs, high participation rates and better health outcomes for older New Yorkers. Innovative Senior Centers will work with individual members to obtain baseline health information upon enrollment and will measure critical health outcomes over time.

The centers will encourage health and wellness by educating older adults on topics such as nutrition and methods for managing chronic diseases, as well as through fitness and recreational activities such as swimming and community gardening. Innovative Senior Centers will offer flexible and expanded hours and additional transportation options that will better allow seniors of all ages to access their facilities. To meet the individual needs of the communities they serve, some centers have proposed offering dinner meals, evening and weekend hours, café-style flexible meal times, and meal vouchers to offer their members greater flexibility. Innovative centers, particularly in areas such as outer Queens and Staten Island, will provide extensive transportation services to allow additional seniors from neighboring communities to access to their center’s programming.

The establishment of Innovative Senior Centers is the cornerstone of Age-friendly NYC, a citywide effort that includes 59 initiatives announced by the Bloomberg Administration, the New York City Council and the New York Academy of Medicine in 2009 to make New York City more livable for the City’s growing population of older adults. The City’s senior population—today at 1.3 million older New Yorkers—is expected to grow by 46 percent in the next 25 years. A \$3.5 million investment by the City will be supplemented with philanthropic dollars.

The providers selected to be Innovative Senior Centers were chosen based on highly selective criteria, including years of experience serving seniors, organizational capability, and fiscal soundness. Specific high-need communities were targeted for Innovative Senior Centers which had few DFTA-funded senior centers. The sponsors are: Lenox Hill (Manhattan): YMYWHA (Manhattan): Bronxworks (Bronx), Selfhelp Ben Rosenthal (Queens), SNAP (Queens), JCC of Staten Island, and two citywide organizations, Visions and SAGE. The announcement of sponsors to operate Innovative Senior Centers followed a new, streamlined procurement process that is the first of its kind in City government. The method differed significantly from the traditional Request for Proposals process by shortening processing time, reducing the volume and complexity of paperwork and promoting innovation in the development of programs and services.

Examples of specialized programming proposed by contract winners:

Bronxworks (Bronx)

- Community gardening through City’s Green Thumb program;
- Nutrition programs to help seniors who may have nutrition-related health issues; and
- Expansion of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (both English and Spanish versions); and
- Geriatric mental health programming.

Lenox Hill (Manhattan)

- Vegetarian and locally sourced organic meals;
- Access to a swimming pool for activities like a “Watercize” class and an underwater photography class, and a garden club to create a rooftop garden;
- Pro-bono legal clinics; and
- Depression and alcohol screenings.

YM & YWHA (Manhattan)

- Dinner cafe with self-service option;
- Programs such as classes on SKYPE communication and bird watching; and
- NY Public Library "Satellite branch" to sign seniors up for library cards and run a monthly book club.

Selfhelp Ben Rosenthal Senior Center (Queens)

- Using technology in health and wellness programs, including that which helps improve cognitive acuity;
- Tele-Health kiosks to help members monitor their own health;
- Virtual senior center programming enabling homebound seniors to participate in senior center classes and activities through two-way video; and
- Wellness coaching.

SNAP (Queens)

- Vegetarian meals;
- Specialty programming for the Indian immigrant community;
- Volunteer-run morning “Coffee Club”
- Guest chef program—prominent members of community preparing favorite meals;
- Expanded mental health services and linkages with larger community developing a network of care; and
- “Breakfast for Your Brain” and other cognitive wellness programs

JCC of Staten Island

- Unique health promotion program utilizing JCC’s fully equipped and staffed fitness center—including Olympic-size swimming pool.

SAGE (Citywide)

- First of its kind center providing congregate and social services to NYC’s LGBT seniors;

- Healthy meals program includes nutritional counseling, green market initiatives, food pantry, and frozen take-home weekend meals; and
- Mental health programming designed specifically for the LGBT population.

Visions (special populations/Citywide)

- Services designed to provide a vast number of workshops for seniors who are blind or visually impaired, including adaptive technology, Braille and various education programs;
- Health and wellness programming focused specifically on issues related to seniors who are blind or visually impaired, including diabetes, mental health, etc.; and
- Off-site meal voucher program.

The framework for Innovative Senior Centers was largely created through an extensive consultative process with community groups such as the Council on Senior Centers and Services, service providers, City agencies, philanthropic organizations, researchers, and older adults convened by the New York Academy of Medicine and funded by the New York Community Trust.

Age-friendly NYC is a blueprint for promoting active aging focused on four areas: community and civic participation; housing; public spaces and transportation; and health and social services. In 2010, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized New York City as the first member of its Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities. The Age-Friendly NYC initiative is part of an international effort to ensure the great cities of the world not only support their residents as they age, but also tap the tremendous resources older people can offer.

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Contact:	Stu Loeser/Evelyn Erskine	(212) 788-2958
	Chris Miller/Jeanette Reed	(212) 442-1111

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