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MAYOR BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES COUNTRY'S LARGEST CONTINUOUS FREE PUBLIC WIFI NETWORK

WiFi Network Covering 95 City Blocks in Harlem

Providing nearly 80,000 Residents with Connectivity On-the-Go

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today announced the launch of a new outdoor public WiFi network in Harlem accessible to all users at no cost. The Harlem WiFi network will extend 95 city blocks, from 110th to 138th Streets between Frederick Douglass Boulevard and Madison Avenue making it the largest continuous free outdoor public wireless network in the nation. The network, which will be rolled out in three phases in coordination with the city's Technology Development Corporation and the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, will increase digital access for approximately 80,000 Harlem residents, including 13,000 public housing residents, as well as businesses and visitors in the area. The free public network will serve the community for an initial five-year term and is funded through a generous donation from the Fuhrman Family Foundation to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. The first phase, extending from 110th to 120th Streets between Madison Avenue and Frederick Douglass Boulevard, is underway and the remaining phases will be complete by May 2014. The Mayor was joined at the announcement by Chief Information and Innovation Officer Rahul Merchant, Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman, Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City President Megan Sheekey, Chief Digital Officer Rachel Haot, New York City Housing Authority Chairman John Rhea and Harlem Children's Zone President and Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Canada.

"Our new Harlem wireless network brings critical connectivity to residents and visitors, giving them 24/7 access to everything from education materials for kids, to information about Harlem's rich history and attractions, to everyday needs like paying bills, checking library hours – or even just keeping tabs on the Knicks and Nets," said Mayor Bloomberg. "In 2013 being successful requires being connected; thanks to the Fuhrman Family Foundation and the Mayor's Fund, we are wiring nearly 100 blocks in Harlem and giving 80,000 New Yorkers another tool for success."

"This unprecedented free network is possible thanks to private generosity and public know-how," said Deputy Mayor Holloway. "With the management skills of the Technology

Development Corporation and the IT infrastructure expertise of our Department of Information, Telecommunications and Technology, New Yorkers will have access to the largest free network in the nation in record time.”

“Increasing wireless connectivity helps to strengthen neighborhoods for those who live, work, and visit and is a key component of the Bloomberg Administration’s efforts to ensure digital inclusion,” said Chief Information and Innovation Officer Rahul Merchant. “The Harlem WiFi network extends wireless access to thousands of New Yorkers, enabling convenient free connectivity on-the-go. Thank you to our partners in this project for their commitment to expanding our City’s digitally connected communities.”

“Combining the passion of private supporters with the expertise of City agencies and local community members has allowed us to provide pioneering public services like this initiative,” said Megan Sheekey, President of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City. “We are very grateful to the Fuhrman Family Foundation and the Harlem WiFi network partners for their commitment to this collaborative model and dedication to making New York a truly 21st-Century city.”

“Internet access is critical to New York City’s digital future, and today’s announcement will spur technology education, innovation and economic opportunity,” said Rachel Haot, New York City’s Chief Digital Officer. “This historic public WiFi partnership in Harlem is the largest in the City’s history and will strengthen the community as it connects more New Yorkers than ever before.”

“I have been hoping for years that we could somehow make this happen for our children and families, so I am personally delighted this day has arrived,” said Geoffrey Canada, President and CEO of the Harlem Children’s Zone. “Today, being connected to the world and being competitive in the global marketplace means access to the Internet, which is essential to evening the digital playing field for our kids.”

“We are honored to work with the Mayor’s Fund, Harlem Children’s Zone and our other local partners to facilitate the Harlem Free Wifi project,” said Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman. “We are proud New Yorkers and believers in the communities and the people that make this city extraordinary. We hope that increased access to the Internet and its extensive resources will serve to advance educational opportunities and support community development across a broad area of the city.”

“As more than 13,000 public housing residents will benefit from having access to free WiFi, this will be a big boost in helping our residents bridge the digital divide,” said NYCHA Chairman John Rhea. “We greatly appreciate the efforts of the Mayor’s Fund for NY, along with Sky Packets and the Furman Foundation in providing this service; as well as the very able collaboration of the Harlem Children’s Zone is helping to spread the word of the free WiFi availability.”

“It is an honor to work with the City of New York to provide this free digital resource to the visitors and residents of Harlem,” said Henry Quintin, CEO of Sky-Packets. “In today’s

society Internet access has become more of a necessity than a luxury. Over the years Harlem has seen a transformation in its neighborhood and this is just another life enhancing amenity that will help reduce the digital divide in an area where access may not be easy to obtain.”

The New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications and the Technology Development Corporation are overseeing the WiFi network’s implementation working closely with technology provider, Sky-Packets. The project will be implemented in three phases:

- I. **Phase One:** 110th to 120th Street, between Madison Avenue & Frederick Douglass Blvd. *Scheduled for completion in December 2013.*
- II. **Phase Two:** 121st to 126th Street, between Madison Avenue & Frederick Douglass Blvd. *Scheduled for completion in February 2014.*
- III. **Phase Three:** 127th to 138th Street, between Madison Avenue & Frederick Douglass Blvd. *Scheduled for completion in May 2014.*

The Harlem WiFi network will provide a fast Internet connection from portable devices completely free of charge. The network will be available 24/7 in outdoors locations within the zone, with unlimited access. Enabling connectivity is a key component of increasing technology inclusion citywide. From public WiFi in over 50 parks and access to computers and the web through NYCHA’s Digital Van, to computer courses at senior centers and libraries and subsidized broadband for thousands of low-income residents, today more New Yorkers are connected than ever before. Many of these programs are possible through the NYC Connected Communities initiative. Formerly funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act’s Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, NYC Connected Communities recently received city funding to continue its technology programs, enabling more New Yorkers to continue to access critical digital resources.

In addition to the phased WiFi implementation, Harlem Children’s Zone will be increasing awareness and network use among Harlem residents, businesses, and visitors. As part of this education and outreach process, Harlem Children’s Zone’s high school students are engaged in a contest to develop a name and logo for the network later this month. The printing of the promotional materials that are selected has been donated by Showtime Networks and Peachtree Enterprises.

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