

**NYCHA CHAIRMAN JOHN B. RHEA
ALBANY HOUSES TEEN IMPACT CENTER RIBBON CUTTING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2011 – 10:00 – 11:30 AM
164 TROY AVENUE, BROOKLYN, NY 11213**

Good morning and thank you, Felix, for that gracious introduction and for your partnership in supporting New York City's most precious resource: our youth.

To NYCHA's residents who are with us this morning, to our colleagues, and to our many partners who believe as we do that public housing is vital to New York, and that supporting the families of public housing is central to ensuring New York City's prosperity—thank you. It is a pleasure and an honor to welcome you to Albany Houses as we open this new Center, which will be both an anchor and a safe haven for teens as they build the bonds and the character that will support them for the rest of their lives. I grew up in a family that not only honors and respects the tireless commitment of police officers, but many in my family also served. My Uncle Joe served as a lieutenant of the Detroit Police Department and my first cousin Morris is an active member of the force. Growing alongside Morris as we watched our uncle serve

with distinction, with devotion and with pride inspired an early admiration for the work of exceptional officers, but as importantly, it also developed an awareness of the deep influence and social significance our officers have on the communities they serve.

The Police Athletic League's motto is "The best friend a kid can have." I can tell you from personal experience how true those words are. I got my start in sports with my local P-A-L playing football for the East Side Raiders and from that foundation I went on to play in high school and in college.

Of the many lessons I learned from my mentors on the force, the one that remains most strongly with me isn't about throwing touchdowns or making tackles, but rather that life is best lived when you dedicate yourself to improving the lives of others. That service is how you win on the field and off.

Community-minded service is in the DNA of our best policemen and women. A deeply felt concern for others and an unflagging determination to make their neighborhoods and their cities better

compels them, day in and day out. The P-A-L taps that drive to give back, and connects it with the aspirations of young people. Through this Teen Impact Center, countless lives will be touched, much like mine was, and countless young people will have an experience that will support them throughout their years.

I want to thank our partners who have not only joined us to make this Center a reality, but have also worked tirelessly to support NYCHA's Safety and Security Task Force and our overall effort to improve the quality of life for NYCHA's residents.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York Bridget Brennan, who is fighting everyday to make our communities safer; Kings County District Attorney Charles Hynes, a steadfast public servant now serving his sixth term; and Commanding Officer of the NYPD Housing Bureau, Chief Joanne Jaffe, who has brought creativity, openness and an unmatched resolve in her service to the families of public housing—thank you all very much. Saving our children will take all of us. Our youth are not only our most precious resource, but they are indeed our future and the

future health and prosperity of New York City rests on how well we prepare and support them today.

Thank you.