



# City of Philadelphia

## MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### MAYOR NUTTER CELEBRATES SUCCESS OF 'PHILADELPHIA YOUTH IN SERVICE' PILOT INITIATIVE

*Philadelphia, August 22, 2013* – Mayor Michael A. Nutter congratulated more than 100 youth, their advocates, and a host of community service partners on the successful pilot year of *Philadelphia Youth in Service* (PYS). PYS is a new initiative focused on connecting adjudicated youth to meaningful community service through the City's network of non-profit and community partners. This initiative was brought to fruition through a strategic partnership between the Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service, the Department of Human Services-Juvenile Justice Services, and the Philadelphia Youth Advocate Program.

"Programs like Philadelphia Youth in Service, which provides a connection for juvenile justice-involved youth to volunteer service sites across the City, are vital to the City of Philadelphia's larger missions of public safety and civic engagement," said Mayor Nutter. "The message we are conveying through PYS is one of second-chances and redemption. As I've said many times, everyone deserves the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. PYS provides that opportunity for youth who want to leave their negative decisions in the past and work to make a better life for themselves in the future."

The mission of PYS is to provide juvenile justice-involved youth the opportunity to complete their community service requirement and pay back restitution so they can move quickly through the system and on to a positive, productive future. Between January and August 2013, more than 100 young people performed 1,400 hours of community service at 11 partner sites. Together they tended gardens, cleared lots, packed meals, helped with library events, distributed Summer Meals information and supported veterans.

"Providing youth with meaningful community service opportunities gives them the opportunity to enhance communities they previously harmed," said Timene L. Farlow, Deputy Commission for the Department of Human Services-Juvenile Justice Services (DHS-JJS). "At the very same time, they get the chance to develop valuable skills and positive networks that will benefit them as they move beyond the juvenile justice system."



The following community service partners were acknowledged for their enthusiastic participation in the pilot year of PYS: Anti Drug and Alcohol Crusaders, Bartram's Garden, Global Citizen, Friends of Mount Moriah, Little Africa Plus, MANNA, the

Mural Arts Program; Philadelphia Free Library, the PhillyRising Collaborative, Philly Urban Creators, and the City's Fun Safe Philly Summer Campaign.

“You can literally see the transformation young people experience when they volunteer in the library. I have watched them grow and learn as individuals and as members of a team each week they spent here,” said Kenneth Manns, Director, Volunteer Services Program, Philadelphia Free Library.

“Not only do I get to give back to my community, but I also get to expand my knowledge of books,” said 15 year old Lopaka Harris, a PYS youth who completed his community service hours at the Philadelphia Free Library and has been subsequently discharged from the juvenile justice system. “I love to read and volunteering in the library makes it easier to check-out books and return them on time.”

Philadelphia Youth in Service follows the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model (BARJ), which focuses on all parties taking part in repairing harm and rebuilding relationships in the community. As such, PYS is designed to provide adjudicated youth a chance to fulfill required community service hours by completing meaningful projects in communities where they currently live and spend time, and where they may have previously caused damage. The young people directly enhance local communities in need of support while they build for themselves a set of skills and networks that will benefit them as they move forward.

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