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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION
COMMISSIONER ROBERT DOAR ANNOUNCE NEW YORK CITY
COLLECTED RECORD-BREAKING \$731 MILLION IN CHILD SUPPORT IN 2011**

New York City's Child Support Program Helps Quarter of a Million Children, Lifting Families Out of Poverty and Increasing Parental Engagement

Child Support Payments Increased 53 Percent During Bloomberg Administration

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Linda I. Gibbs and Human Resources Administration Commissioner Robert Doar today announced that New York City's Office of Child Support Enforcement collected a record-breaking \$731 million dollars in 2011 with over 91 percent of these collections going directly to custodial parents. This money, collected on behalf of 175,000 families, averages to \$4,000 per family and is helping to support nearly a quarter-million New York City children. This year's sum is an increase of 4.45 percent over the \$700 million collected in calendar year 2010 and a cumulative increase of 53 percent since Mayor Bloomberg entered office in 2002. Strong collection efforts, coupled with programs which remove barriers that might keep fathers from paying their child support, has led to the success of New York City's program as one of the most effective in the nation. The Mayor made his announcement at the offices of the nonprofit workforce development organization STRIVE in East Harlem and was joined by the City-wide Fatherhood Services Coordinator Alan Farrell, STRIVE's Founder Rob Carmona and Chief Executive Officer Philip Weinberg, and Assembly Member Robert J. Rodriguez. Also joining him were Jazzwal Stuart and Haide Garcia, noncustodial dad and custodial mom, of four year-old Elias Stuart; Raisa Valerio, a single mom and custodial parent of two year-old Tyler Valerio; and Sheldon Satchell, non custodial dad, of 9 year-old Sheldon Satchell, Jr. and 14 year- old Shelly Satchell.

"Our City's success in increasing child support collections is helping lift single parents out of poverty while also more actively engaging fathers in their kids' lives," said Mayor Bloomberg. "This year alone, by working together, we've helped a quarter million children get the support they need and deserve."

"This is just one of many accomplishments by the Human Resources Administration to improve the economic well-being of families in New York City," said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. "A strong belief in the ability of New York City fathers to step up to the challenges and joys of parenting has motivated an aggressive and tremendously successful campaign. Thanks to all the hard work of Commissioner Doar and his staff."

(more)

“Child Support is a key anti-poverty program that helps hundreds of thousands of low-income New Yorkers each year,” said HRA Commissioner Robert Doar. “Providing emotional and financial support is the fundamental duty of anyone who fathers a child. A father’s support can lift a child out of poverty, giving that child a stable environment to grow up in and a better life now and in the future.”

“The Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative is committed to removing barriers to fathers’ supporting, nurturing and connecting with their children,” said City-wide Fatherhood Services Coordinator Farrell. “HRA’s efforts to help dads find employment and take care of their families and themselves are key to this work and helps ensure that fathers are a component in the strengthening of our families, community and city.”

“Helping fathers gain employment and take financial responsibility for their children is a key ingredient in breaking the cycle of poverty and is core to our mission at STRIVE,” said Philip Weinberg, Chief Executive Officer of STRIVE. “We applaud Mayor Bloomberg’s leadership in helping secure a financially stable future for more parents and their children.”

“At first, paying child support was stressful for me,” said Mr. Stuart. “When a lump sum was deducted from my paycheck, I panicked that I was not going to have anything left to cover other needs. However, I received so much support from the program that I quickly realized that I needed to make an extra effort and gain and retain full time employment to support my son Elias. He means the world to me and today I can proudly say that I paid off all my arrears in record time. Haide and Elias are no longer on welfare. She and I are on very friendly terms and I see Elias most days than not and support him in all his activities.”

“I became familiar with the formal child support system right after my son Tyler was born,” said Ms. Valerio. “I broke up with Tyler’s father when I was pregnant and, at first, everything seemed like a nightmare because it became a struggle to make him understand his responsibilities as a father. When he received an order of child support, he became even angrier but the child support program made him get closer to Tyler and his monthly payments are no longer a mental and financial burden for him. I also work full time to support my son and he sees his dad every other week thanks to the program’s mediation services.”

“At the beginning, it was very hard to accept child support and I became angry,” said Mr. Satchell. “But the Child Support Program introduced me to STRIVE and they helped me become a better father and to fully understand that this is my responsibility and that everything else comes second. My payments help my children to buy basic things, they would simply struggle without my help and I enjoy being involved with all of their activities.”

HRA’s Office of Child Support Enforcement is committed to ensuring New York City’s children receive support from both parents and, as part of Mayor Bloomberg’s Young Men’s Initiative, has increased its outreach efforts to connect low-income fathers and young black and Latino men to employment and the formal child support program. The Young Men’s Initiative is a \$127 million enterprise aimed at tackling the broad disparities slowing the advancement of black and Latino young men. It’s estimated that nearly three quarters of noncustodial parents under 30 years of age are black or Latino. Studies show that children in families living at or below the federal poverty level perform better on all social indicators when a father is actively involved in their lives and connected to the child support program.

As a result of the City's efforts, more fathers are paying child support and they are paying more in support. During the past year, the Office of Child Support Enforcement were directed by the Family Court to enforce some 284,000 orders of child support and they successfully secured child support payments in about 62 percent, or 175,000, of those cases, up from 53 percent back in 2004. Additionally, between 2007 and 2011, the number of child support orders increased by 55 percent, the average child support income for cases with a payment increased by eight percent to \$5,873, and the average collections per order went up by 24 percent to \$2,592. Seven percent more fathers also paid their child support during this period. In addition to record collections, the average number of families receiving a payment each month increased in 2011 to 124,523.

In New York City, child support income represents over 30 percent of the income for poor families in which mothers are head of the household and who receive child support payments. Child support collections added to earnings from employment and income from work supports including food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Medicaid help New Yorkers move out of poverty and toward self sufficiency, helping families attain financial stability and independence and decreasing their need for government support.

The Office of Child Support Enforcement currently manages 406,085 cases. These cases are divided into categories based on whether families have ever received cash welfare or not. Current cash welfare cases comprise 17 percent of the total caseload, former cash welfare comprises 47 percent and the remaining 36 percent consists of cases that have never received cash assistance. Annually, former cash welfare families who received a child support collection get an average of \$4,744. Over 135,000 families with a child support order are no longer receiving cash welfare. All families receiving cash welfare are required to comply with child support. All other families apply for services by visiting a child support worker located in the family court. Nearly 150,000 of the families receiving child support services do so voluntarily.

The New York City Law Department's Interstate Child Support Unit appears on behalf of custodial parents who are seeking to establish paternity and to obtain child support from New York City residents. Last year the unit handled more than five thousand new cases filed on behalf of families living throughout the United States and in several countries. In addition, a custodial parent who lives in New York City may seek the unit's assistance in filing for child support from parents who live outside the state and the country. Last year, petitions for child support were filed against non-custodial parents living in 28 states and several countries including Australia, Canada, Germany, Israel, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The child support program also has a strong partnership with the Sheriff's Office, with the Sheriff performing an important role in the Office of Child Support Enforcement's effort to establish and enforce orders. Each year the Sheriff serves summons to more than 20,000 noncustodial parents who fail to show up to court.

In addition to strong outreach and partnerships with community-based organizations, such as STRIVE, the DOE Fund and CEO, the Office of Child Support Enforcement programs that began or had expanded in 2011 and have contributed to the program's success include:

- **Referring fathers to work programs.** 5,600 fathers were referred last year resulting in 25 percent of them beginning to pay their child support or got a job.

- **Offering programs to help reduce past debt owed to the government.** More than \$8.5 million in child support debt has been reduced over the last two years increasing the number of fathers paying support by 40 percent.
- **Connecting parents to community mediation programs and community based organizations.** For free or at low cost, parents can get help resolving disputes such as visitation and get assistance on co-parenting issues that can serve as a barrier to paying child support and could have negative consequences on children.
- **Implementing a problem solving court pilot program.** To help fathers who fall behind in their payments.
- **Assisting incarcerated fathers on site with information and guidance on their child support case.** Weekly visits to Riker’s and Queens Boro Correctional facilities have led to over 2,100 individuals attending child support orientations and over 500 receiving guidance on their individual case.

About the Young Men’s Initiative

The Young Men’s Initiative, the nation’s most comprehensive effort to tackle the broad disparities slowing the advancement of black and Latino young men, was announced in August. Through broad policy changes and agency reforms, a public-private partnership will invest in programs that will connect young men to educational, employment, and mentoring opportunities across more than a dozen city agencies. The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), established in 2006 by Mayor Bloomberg to implement innovative ways to reduce poverty in New York City, is responsible for overseeing the implementation and evaluating many of the programs within the Young Men’s Initiative. Support for the initiative is being provided by Open Society Foundations and Bloomberg Philanthropies through grants to the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City and The Fund for Public Schools.

About STRIVE

Based in East Harlem, STRIVE has been transforming the lives of at-risk individuals for over 25 years, by providing comprehensive training, support and employment services that can lead to stable careers and jobs. With an average participant age of 31 years old, 37 percent of their participants are between ages 18-24, 46 percent have criminal records, nearly 50 percent receive some form of public assistance, and nearly 30 percent do not have a high school diploma or GED. STRIVE’s Fatherhood Programs foster closer connections between non-custodial parents and their children, while facilitating employment. The organization’s CORE work readiness training program addresses the practical side of becoming a responsible parent, including parenting techniques, conflict resolution, active listening, anger management, financial literacy, and management of child-support.

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