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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG WELCOMES OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PARTICIPANTS TO
SKATE DAY AT THE POND AT BRYANT PARK**

Event Highlights Benefits of Out-of-School Time Program to Working Parents

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav today welcomed hundreds of children from New York City's Out-of-School Time (OST) initiative to The Pond at Bryant Park for the Department of Youth and Community Development's second annual "Skate Day." This free event is one of many OST programs that operate after school, throughout the summer, and during school holidays, including the winter break – offering working parents a reprieve from finding alternative childcare arrangements. Joining Mayor Bloomberg today to kick off the event were Sports Commissioner Ken Podziba, Department of Parks and Recreation Assistant Commissioner Nancy Barthold, and New York Rangers hockey legend Brian Mullen.

"This morning, thousands of New York City parents left for work knowing that their children would be spending the day engaged in safe and educational activities," said Mayor Bloomberg. "After school learning opportunities are an essential component of our efforts to provide every young New Yorker with a sound education. Thanks to OST, this school year, more than 65,000 students and their parents will enjoy the benefits of structured and fun out-of-school time programming."

"OST, the nation's largest municipally funded after school initiative, is at the forefront of a nationwide effort to expand educational boundaries beyond the final school bell," said Commissioner Mullgrav. "Skate Day is further proof of our citywide commitment to providing young people with the social, academic and cultural resources they require to succeed inside and outside of the classroom."

In September 2005, Mayor Bloomberg and the Department of Youth and Community Development launched OST, a three-year, \$200 million initiative that features a mix of academic, recreational and cultural activities for young people after school, during holidays and in the summer. The OST system consists of 550 free programs, in every neighborhood across the City. The programs, which are operated by 195 community-based organizations, will serve at least 65,000 young people during the 2006 school year. 62% of the participants enrolled in OST programs reside in one of 58 high-need zip codes.

(more)

OST is a model of interagency coordination. The Department of Education is hosting 60% of all OST programs in public schools and contributes a wide range of services, including security and healthy snacks. Programs are also located in New York City Housing Authority facilities, Parks and Recreation facilities and Public Libraries. The Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York City Council have teamed with the Department of Youth and Community Development on the Cultural After School Adventures Initiative, which provides crucial support to nonprofit cultural organizations committed to incorporating art into the lives of our young people. In fiscal year 2006, grants were awarded to 101 organizations.

The Pond at Bryant Park provided rink time and skate rentals for today's event. Ark Restaurant Corp provided refreshments. The Pond at Bryant Park, a free-to-the-public skating rink, is presented by Citi and produced by ID&A, in association with Bryant Park Restoration Corporation and the New York Department of Parks & Recreation.

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