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**NEW YORK CITY'S SISTER CITY PROGRAM SHOWCASES STUDENT WORK
FROM AROUND THE WORLD AT "MY DREAM PARK" GALLERY SHOW**

Project Recently Awarded "2006 Sister Cities International Youth and Education Innovation Award."

New York City students from After School programs in seven City Computer Resource Centers have been communicating via the Internet with their peers in several international cities about creating the ideal park. Today, the Sister City Program celebrates their achievements by showcasing the New York students' final projects and throwing a party for them at the Arsenal Gallery in Central Park. Students from the seven Computer Resource Centers will meet in person for the first time today and see each other's "dream parks," the theme of their web-based exchanges with students in **Beijing, Budapest, Jerusalem, Madrid and Rome.**

These activities were developed by the Sister City Program of the City of New York, Inc. (SCP) through its Internet-based Educational Exchange Program (IEEP) in partnership with the Parks Department's Computer Resource Centers. *Sister Cities International* recently recognized the work conducted by New York with the "2006 Sister Cities International Youth and Education Innovation Award." The award will be presented at the 50th anniversary conference of *Sister Cities International* in Washington, DC in July.

"This is an example of how this Administration is using technology to bridge cultural divides," said Sister City Program Treasurer and United Nations, Consular Corps and Protocol Commissioner, Marjorie Tiven. "Students in New York posted messages on an online forum with other students around the world about each other's urban parks. They learned about different cultures and lifestyles while becoming friends. It worked so well, we hope to expand the number of participating cities."

The 120 New York City students, who participated in this curriculum with their counterparts for eight months, viewed two-dimensional versions of the "dream parks" electronically from students in the international cities. New York students sent their projects electronically as well, but also created the three-dimensional models on display today. "My Dream Park" will be on view for one night only – June 6, 2006, until 7:00 p.m. and thereafter on the Sister City Program's website at www.nyc.gov/sistercities or www.nyc.gov/parks.

"It's great that youth from the Parks Department Computer Resource Centers across the city who have met online can meet each other in person in Central Park," stated Parks

Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “They’ve learned about many things our parks can offer and are showing us some favorite features developed from parks around the world.”

IIEP is a cornerstone of the Sister City Program of the City of New York, Inc. The goal of IIEP is to foster global understanding and communication among the youth of New York City and the youth of New York’s ten sister cities through regular, supervised web-based exchanges.

The Sister City Program’s mission is to support initiatives of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg that seek creative solutions to municipal challenges through business, security, and cultural exchanges between the City of New York and selected cities throughout the world. The Program, an apolitical, non-profit, charitable and educational 501 (c)(3) organization, is a member of the Sister Cities International Program. New York’s program has been active since 1960. New York’s Sister Cities are: Beijing, Budapest, Cairo, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, London, Madrid, Rome, Santo Domingo and Tokyo.

Through the Parks Department Computer Resource Centers, trained staff members encourage children’s natural affinity for technology and make learning and self-expression exciting. Through educational games, homework help, newsletter clubs, Internet scavenger hunts, and digital media projects, our After School students gain a higher comfort level with technology while developing transferable academic, professional and social skills they need in life. Projects were contributed by students ages 8 through 12, from St. Johns Recreation Center, Brownsville Recreation Center and Metropolitan Pool in Brooklyn, Pelham Fritz Recreation Center and Hansborough Recreation Center in Manhattan, Sorrentino Recreation Center in Queens and Hunts Point Recreation Center in the Bronx.

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