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***** Press Release *****

Mayor Fulop Announces over 150 Recipients of City-raised Relief Funding to Help Hardest Hit Community-based Organizations through COVID-19 Community Relief Distribution Fund

1st Round of Direct Recovery Assistance Allocated to Nonprofits to Revive Critical Arts and Enrich Programming for Jersey City's Youth

JERSEY CITY - **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** announces over 150 grant recipients from the first round of funding administered from the \$2 million in private donations raised through the Mayor's COVID-19 Community Relief Distribution Fund to directly support community-based organizations, the revitalization of the arts community, as well as critical summer recreation and enrichment programming for Jersey City's youth.

Following a thorough selection process, the 154 community-based organizations and institutions citywide have been selected to receive grants upwards of \$65,000 being distributed through the **Jersey City Economic Development Corporation (JCEDC)**, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The awardees include 119 artists and arts organization as chosen by the Jersey City Arts Council, 12 summer youth nonprofit organizations, 11 art program organizations, and 12 community-based organizations identified to receive the grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$65,000.

"We have been working proactively throughout this pandemic to prepare for the aftermath and to be able to provide as much assistance as possible to our severely impacted community," said **Mayor Fulop**. "True heroes have emerged in recent months, from our first responders and frontline workers to those who have generously donated to the Relief Fund and the community organizations who are committed to reopening; and we need to continue working together to ensure a recovery that will revitalize and rebuild our foundation for a sustainable future."

The Relief Distribution grant awardees have been selected by the Jersey City COVID-19 Relief Committee, which includes members of the City Council, Mayoral Administration, and the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation (JCEDC) Board members. The Mayor-appointed oversight committee was tasked with the selection process to identify community-based nonprofit organizations directly impacted by the pandemic to address losses in revenue and COVID-19 related costs.

The largest grants will be provided to several nonprofits, including \$65,000 to the **Jersey City Parks Coalition** to help maintain all city parks and open spaces. Both the **Hudson County Boys & Girls Club** and **New City**

Kids will receive \$50,000 each to address the importance of youth engagement during summer months and will be required to use the money to develop youth recreation as well as enrichment and employment programs, with a focus on outdoor activities that address public health social distancing guidance.

“I always wanted to open an arts center for the kids of this community where I was born and raised, but a month after my grand opening the pandemic hit and it went downhill fast. I’ve been through so much. This money couldn’t have come at a better time, and I’m just so grateful that someone thought of me, to help me in turn help families also dealing with their own issues amid this crisis,” said **grant recipient and Creative Kidz Founder and CEO, Naquasha Hawkins**.

The Arts Relief funding component is being administered in collaboration with the Jersey City Arts Council to help artists and arts organizations address losses in revenue and income as well as pandemic-related costs. The Committee is allocating \$100,000 to the **Jersey City Arts Council** from the Mayor's Fund to manage applications and award grants to the artist community, a community already severely underfunded by the state and among the most financially strained amid the pandemic. The Arts Council will be awarding grants to 119 individual artists or arts organizations in the amounts of \$500, \$1,000 or \$3,000 to be used to create and implement visual and performing arts programming, with a priority on arts education for children as well as arts programming that will help revitalize commercial areas reopening. On Friday, the full list of grant awardees will be posted on the Art Council’s website: JerseyCityArtsCouncil.org.

“The Arts Council is grateful that the Mayor and EDC recognize the importance of supporting the arts community through this crisis,” said **Heather Warfel-Sandler, Co-Chair of the Jersey City Arts Council**. “This kind of support is new and unprecedented and we are hopeful that this is the first of many steps toward continued support for the arts which brings so much depth and diversity to our city.”

All first round grant recipients will be listed on the JCEDC’s website www.JCEDC.org at 2 p.m. on Thursday, July 16, 2020.

“This is a prime example of our compassionate community stepping up in these unprecedented times to help one another, and I’m so grateful to the donors whose generosity will help the community at large as we work together to move our city forward and use this pivotal moment in time as an opportunity to come back stronger than ever,” concluded Mayor Fulop.

Next month, the second round of relief funding will be dedicated to the Jersey City Hardship Relief Grant, which has been established to work through community-based nonprofits to provide direct funding and support to residents most in need in the wake of the pandemic. Funding for the critical services will primarily address food insecurity and rental assistance for families struggling to make ends meet. The Hardship Relief Grant will also assist residents with landlord-tenant and other legal services, benefits counseling, immigrant rights and other related services.

“Remaining funds will be awarded to nonprofit organizations to provide direct financial aid and supports to low-income families, including rent relief,” said **Vivian Brady-Philips, Vice Chair of the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation**. “The JCEDC is working with city departments and agencies to design this program, which will provide aid to residents regardless of immigration status.”

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Wallace-Scalcione at KWallace@jcnj.org. ////