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Press Statement of Christy Parque, Executive Director
May 8, 2008, 1pm

Press Conference: Shifting Street Men's Intake to Brooklyn

Good afternoon, my name is Christy Parque and I am the Executive Director of Homeless Services United (HSU), a membership organization consisting of over 60 shelter and homeless services providers. My membership represents about 16,000 shelter beds in New York City and numerous other programs designed to assist homeless or at risk New Yorkers.

I am here today to oppose moving the 30th Street Men's Intake to Brooklyn and to ask the mayor to fulfill his commitment he made in 2004 to de-centralize the single men's intake center and create three centers in New York City. The intake centers serve as one of the first steps a homeless person can take towards receiving services and becoming stably housed.

New York City's comprehensive system to address homelessness and provide shelter to all its citizens is a shining example of what makes New York City an innovator in addressing poverty in a metropolitan setting.

The current multiple system entry points for homeless people, with easily accessible intake centers and drop in centers and outreach have proven to be effective.

While we have made progress and the single adult shelter population has decreased, it would be premature to back away from a proven method that helps homeless people especially given the state of the economy and the looming recession.

The planned policy changes to close two drop-in centers--the William Booth Drop In Center and The Neighborhood Center for Homeless People and move the 30th Street Men's Shelter to Brooklyn is bad policy and will result in increased street homelessness.

These types of short sighted and cost saving measures tarnish the progress we have made thus far and dampens the spirit of Mayor's Bloomberg's far reaching and innovative 2004 Action Plan to end homelessness

We must ensure New York City's legacy of setting the standard for smart, effective and compassionate homeless policy that cares for all its citizens, not just the affluent, powerful and stably housed.

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