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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 17, 2019

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*\*Press Release\**

***Jersey City’s Newly Restructured Recreation Department Shines Focus on Youth Development Beyond Athletics***

*City to Host First Community Meeting Tonight to Incorporate Feedback from Parents in Expanding Youth Programming Citywide*

**JERSEY CITY - Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **Jersey City Council** announce the restructuring and redirection of Jersey City’s Department of Recreation to become the Department of Youth Development, incorporating youth enrichment beyond athletic programs. The new department will take a more united approach with the community to identify and directly address the overall goal of ensuring the City’s youth (ages 7-24) has access to mentors, skills training and after school activities that promote healthy and positive development into adulthood.

“With the restructuring of the Department of Youth Development, we want to provide even more resources for our children to positively grow in our community, and are doing this by better coordinating initiatives such as youth summer jobs, youth court, mentoring and much more,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “We are placing emphasis on ensuring our community has the correct resources in place for all youth in Jersey City. Additionally, we’ll be hiring dedicated experts and continuing to work with parents to understand how we can best serve and expand youth programming for residents with Special Needs.”

Tonight, the City will host its first **community feedback meeting from 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at MS 7** (222 Laidlaw Avenue). At the meeting, Mayor Fulop will speak with families to gather community input on the adaptive recreational and enrichment needs specifically being designed to enhance programming for participants with Special Needs.

The Youth Development Department will be divided into the Division of Recreation and Division of Enrichment, with an added focus on civic engagement and expanded programming for youth development. Additionally, new personnel and resources will be established within the department to focus on children with Special Needs. Coordinating and promoting recreation activities will continue to remain a component of the Department.

“The restructuring is to ensure the City is offering the best services and support that it can to our young citizens, treating them as future professionals and capitalizing on the contributions they make to the community now and will make in the future,” said **Lucinda McLaughlin, Director of Jersey City Youth Counsel**. “We want to hear directly from parents and families as to what would be most helpful as we incorporate this feedback into new programming and resources.”

Under the [ordinance](#), the Division of Recreation will oversee the Office of Facilities Management and Coordination and the Office of Sports. The Division of Enrichment will be home to the Office of Community & Professional Development and the Office of Adaptive Programming.

**All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at [kscalcione@icnj.org](mailto:kscalcione@icnj.org) or 201-376-0699.**