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****Press Release****

***Jersey City Housing Authority Unveils New Resident-Focused,
Community Investments at Marion Gardens Housing Complex***

***Community Center and Head Start Early Childhood Center Amongst New Facilities and
Programs Opening to Residents***

JERSEY CITY – Mayor **Steven M. Fulop** and the **Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA)** are unveiling a number of resident-focused community investments at the Marion Gardens Complex on **Wednesday, September 18th at 3 p.m.** The new programs and facilities include a refurbished Marion Gardens basketball court, a brand new community center, and a Head Start Early Childhood Center with priority enrollment for Marion Gardens residents. The Betty Morris Community Center will be home to a comprehensive afterschool program offered in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County.

“These new facilities were built with the residents’ needs at the forefront, and is the latest step in the City’s ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility to high-quality childcare and afterschool services, while modernizing affordable housing sites,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Through its collaborations with community-based organizations, JCHA is working hard to create an innovative collaborative services model that will serve to empower residents and ultimately strengthen the Jersey City community.”

The new community center includes a resident computer lab, kitchen, and a large meeting space that will accommodate resident programming, as well as private events. The afterschool program will provide academic programming and hands-on learning opportunities that complement and reinforce the skills and knowledge learned during school hours for residents in second to eighth grades.

“We cherish the opportunity to provide a comprehensive cutting-edge program model that will give JCHA’s youth residents the knowledge and skills they need to become positive and productive adults in today’s competitive society,” said **Gary Greenberg, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County**. “By investing in our youth, we strengthen our communities.”

The new Head Start is delivered by Greater Bergen Community Action and will serve children up to five years old. Head Start provides early childhood education by highly qualified staff through direct hands-on experiences with language, communication, math, creative arts, science, and technology. In preparation for the new program, JCHA conducted a complete renovation of the prior Marion Gardens community center and incorporated additional space to create state-of-the-art classrooms facilities and staff offices. Greater Bergen Community Action serves over 2,000 children and families across Hudson, Passaic and Bergen counties, almost 600 right here in Jersey City.

“We are delighted to be opening another brand new Head Start facility,” said **Dr. Allan De Giulio, director of Greater Bergen Community Action**. “We have thoroughly enjoyed our partnership with the Jersey City Housing Authority

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and we're looking forward to other opportunities to work with the creative team heading the JCHA, so that we can continue to upgrade the facilities in which Head Start children and families are served."

Marion's new after school program is part of the JCHA's comprehensive after-school initiative at each JCHA family site, including Booker T. Washington, Curries Woods, Holland Gardens, and Hudson Gardens. The Boys and Girls Club will deliver after school at Booker T Washington, Curries Woods and Marion Gardens while Jersey Arts Exchange will offer afterschool at Holland Gardens and Hudson Gardens.

"The Jersey City Housing Authority is incredibly excited to unveil the new Early Head Start facility, the Betty Morris Community Center, and our revitalized basketball court to Marion Gardens residents," said **Executive Director Vivian Brady-Phillips**. "These projects reaffirm the JCHA's commitment to modern and functional facilities as well as evidence-based programming for residents. The JCHA is thrilled to partner with Great Bergen Community Action, Jersey Arts Exchange, the Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County and others on these collaborative efforts and look forward to expanding community partnerships in the future for the benefit of residents."

In addition to the new facilities, the Marion Gardens basketball court has been resurfaced, repainted, and enclosed with new fencing.

About JCHA:

JCHA is the state's second largest public housing authority, serving over 18,000 residents and responsible for the administration of approximately 7,100 housing units, including approximately 2,500 public housing units and over 4,600 Housing Choice Vouchers. The JCHA has been lauded as a champion of energy efficiency and green building practices, policies promoting Section 3 hiring, and an impeccable track record of revitalizing distressed public housing. In 2018, JCHA formed a new Department of Resident Empowerment and Community Engagement (RECE), which seeks to expand partnerships with community organizations to provide an array of services and programming to residents and establish strong referral relationships.

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