



NEW YORK URBAN LEAGUE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Staten Island, NY – November 17, 2009 – A young man graduating high school can be proud of many things, his athletic accomplishments, his popularity among friends or his success in the classroom. Brandon Keeks, a 2009 graduate and recipient of New York Urban League's Emerging Leaders Scholarship, swells with pride when remembering his role as chairman of the Beat of Life Concert. The event raised over \$16,000 for premature babies. Brandon was one of six honorees at the 44th Annual Mills G. Skinner Awards Luncheon held at the Staaten on Staten Island. Along with Brandon Keeks, the New York Urban League Staten Island Branch honored Miriam Perez-Lai, Sharon Henry, Donna Cutugno, Alicia Harrison, and Chelsea Cooper for their contributions to the community.

All the honorees at the 44th Annual Mills G. Skinner Award know the importance of serving the needs of our young people. Miriam Perez, a counselor at the College of Staten Island, is responsible for monitoring the caseload of approximately two hundred students. Going beyond the call of duty, Miriam also serves as mentor, motivator and advocate for these students as they navigate the road to collegiate success. Sharon Henry grew up on Coney Island and upon the insistence of her parents was often involved in community service and education projects. Now, as the principal of Ralph McKee Career and Technical high School she is engaging in collaborative and direct learning techniques to engage students in rigorous learning activities that will lead to post secondary academic and career success. These two women, along with Donna Cutugno, Alicia Harrison, Chelsea Cooper and Brandon Keeks have demonstrated their commitment to their community. They, along with the New York Urban League know that despite these great works, our work is not yet done. Until every child has the chance to attend college and see their dreams become a reality, the work of the Urban League is vital now more than ever.

In 1964 the New York Urban League opened its doors on Staten Island. Since that time, the Branch has grown and developed into a program which teaches youth how to become agents for change in their home and community. Located in the historic North Shore community, the New York Urban League serves all residents of Staten Island, with a special focus on those underserved and underrepresented. As the office looks to celebrate its 45th year on Staten Island, the New York Urban League knows our work is not done yet. Each year over 200 high school students participate in leadership workshops on such topics as effective conflict resolution, global citizenship, and educational and career

options. We continue to look to these young leaders to be the catalyst of change for their community. “Students such as Brandon Keeks and Chelsea Cooper, two Staten Island students honored with New York Urban League Scholarships are our future and with the continued work of the New York Urban League Staten Island Branch we know that future will be bright” said Arva Rice, President and CEO of the New York Urban League.

About The New York Urban League: (www.nyul.org) The New York Urban League (NYUL) has a rich history and long legacy of service to New Yorkers. The NYUL was founded in 1919 by an inter-racial group of concerned New Yorkers in response to the difficulties faced by African Americans migrating from the agricultural and rural south, to the industrial, urban centers of the north. Today, the mission of the New York Urban League (NYUL) is to enable African Americans and other underserved communities to secure a first class education, economic self-reliance and equal respect of their civil rights through programs, services and advocacy. Some of their signature programs include the Frederick Douglass Awards Dinner, the Whitney M. Young Classic and the Champions of Diversity Breakfast. The New York Urban League, Inc. is one of the local affiliates of the National Urban League, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, multi-ethnic, social service organization celebrating its 90th anniversary this year.

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