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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND BETTE MIDLER PLANT 250,000th TREE TO
CELEBRATE TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF MILLIONTREESNYC**

After Only Two Years, Million Trees NYC is 25% Complete

*10-Year Effort to Plant and Care for One Million New Trees Part of PlaNYC, the Long-Term
Vision to Create a Greener, Greater City*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and New York Restoration Project (NYRP) Founder Bette Midler today celebrated the two-year anniversary of MillionTreesNYC by planting Tree Number 250,000, a Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia gradiflora*) at the home of Sharon and Thomas Stoney in St. Albans, Queens. The Mayor and Ms. Midler also announced the new “Put Down Roots” pilot program encouraging New York City homeowners to plant trees in their front and backyards. As part of NYC Service, launched by Mayor Bloomberg to answer President Obama’s national call to service, volunteers will knock on doors and inform private homeowners about the benefits of planting trees on their property, as well as to help them obtain free trees to plant. MillionTreesNYC is a public-private partnership between the City of New York and New York Restoration Project (NYRP). At the event, Mayor Bloomberg and Bette Midler were joined by Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, NYRP Executive Director Drew Becher, Chief Service Officer Diahann Billings-Burford, the Stoney family, and NYC Service volunteers.

“In every area of government, we not only set ambitious goals – we work to meet them ahead of schedule,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “We still have a long way to go to reach the million tree mark, but the amount of progress we’ve made says a lot about how New Yorkers have embraced this project. With the help of NYC Service volunteers and the ‘Put Down Roots’ pilot program, it’s easier than ever for homeowners to learn about how to plant trees and obtain free trees for planting. By planting trees in your own front and backyards, you can help green your neighborhood and create cleaner air and cooler streets, which will improve the health of all New Yorkers.”

“I’m overwhelmed that we are planting our 250,000th tree,” said Bette Midler, Founder, New York Restoration Project. “It just proves once again that New Yorkers are the strongest, toughest and most caring people in the world.”

“Planting and caring for trees is a great way for New Yorkers to use their ‘blank for good,’ and we’re so glad to partner with MillionTreesNYC to take this important initiative to the next level,” said Chief Service Officer Diahann Billings-Burford. “NYC Service is recruiting

volunteers to help Put Down Roots, whether that's knocking on doors to educate homeowners on the benefits of planting a tree or teaching homeowners and community members on how to care for their trees after planting."

"Put Down Roots" Pilot Program Begins in St. Albans on October 10th

To build on the two-year success of MillionTreesNYC, this fall all New York City homeowners are encouraged to plant trees in their front and backyards. On Saturday, October 10, through the "Put Down Roots" pilot program, trained NYC Service volunteers will canvas homeowners within a 16-block radius in St. Albans to raise awareness of the campaign and offer free trees to homeowners to plant. They will also highlight the benefits of trees, encourage them to plant, register and care for trees for the benefit of their community. Residents who are interested in planting a tree in their yards will receive trees on November 7th at a community tree giveaway in Daniel M. O'Connell Playground. NYC Service volunteers will be on site to provide tips on tree planting and to assist in the transportation of the tree to the homeowner's property. This program is a new approach to engage New York City homeowners to contribute to greening entire communities. All New Yorkers will share in the many benefits that come from planting trees in their yards – more beautiful neighborhoods; cleaner air and water; higher property values; energy savings; cooler summer streets; and a healthier, more environmentally sustainable city.

"MillionTreesNYC seeks to expand on its initial success – of mobilizing thousands of New Yorkers to plant and care for 250,000 young trees on streets, in parks, and in natural areas – by encouraging New York City homeowners to plant trees in their front and backyards," said New York City Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. "Trees are assets to communities, and by putting down roots in their yards, homeowners can improve their neighborhoods by cleaning the air, lowering summer air temperatures, improving air quality, and slowing climate change."

NYC Service was launched by Mayor Bloomberg in April and has three core goals: channel the power of volunteers to address the impacts of the current economic downturn, make New York City the easiest city in America in which to serve, and ensure every young person in New York City is taught about civic engagement and has an opportunity to serve. New Yorkers can find opportunities to serve their communities by visiting www.nyc.gov or by calling 311.

Fall 2009 Tree Giveaways

Homeowners participating in the "Put Down Roots" pilot program are encouraged to pick up free trees to plant in their private yards at the Fall 2009 Tree Giveaways, hosted by non-profit and community organizations citywide. Free trees will be available for adoption at select locations throughout the City this fall planting season. At each tree giveaway event, information will be available to teach New Yorkers how to plant and care for the tree. For distribution dates and locations, visit www.nyc.gov or the official MillionTreesNYC website.

Through a mix of public and private plantings for MillionTreesNYC, the City of New York, New York Restoration Project, community partners and citizen volunteers are planting in places such as schoolyards and playgrounds, public housing campuses, health care facilities, business districts, commercial and residential developments, front yards and other private lands.

On MillionTreesNYC Fall Volunteer Planting Day on October 24th, thousands of volunteers will plant 20,000 trees at 15 parks and public spaces across the five boroughs.

MillionTreesNYC Stewardship Corps

Young trees face many natural and man-made threats from the urban environment and require ongoing maintenance to survive. After planting trees, New Yorkers can take care of trees through the MillionTreesNYC Stewardship Corps, which aims to engage thousands of volunteer New Yorkers who want to keep young newly planted trees healthy and growing. In addition to volunteer tree care events, the Stewardship Corps offers participants the opportunity to take a free tree care workshop, receive free tree care tools, and adopt a street tree online. The MillionTreesNYC Stewardship Corps is supported by private donations made to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

MillionTreesNYC is a 10-year initiative to plant and care for one million new trees throughout the City's five boroughs and part of Mayor Bloomberg's *PlaNYC*, a long-term vision to create a greener, greater city. Two-thirds of *PlaNYC*'s 127 initiatives are either completed, on-time, or ahead of schedule. MillionTreesNYC will ultimately expand the City's urban forest by 20 percent, provide New Yorkers important health, economic and environmental benefits, and create a more sustainable urban environment. Since its launch in October 2007, public, private and non-profit organizations have rallied over 6,000 citizen volunteers to plant trees in what has become an unprecedented tree planting campaign and citywide environmental movement. To learn more about MillionTreesNYC, visit www.nyc.gov or call 311.

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