



NYRP FOUNDER BETTE MIDLER AND CURTIS “50 CENT” JACKSON COLLABORATE WITH DESIGNER WALTER HOOD TO CREATE *THE CURTIS “50 CENT” JACKSON COMMUNITY GARDEN*

-- Opening in Jamaica, Queens Neighborhood, Monday, November 3, 2008 --

New York, NY (November 3, 2008) – Bette Midler’s New York Restoration Project (NYRP), a non-profit organization dedicated to developing and revitalizing parks, community gardens and public space in New York City, today announces the opening of *The Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson Community Garden* in Jamaica, Queens. As part of the organization’s continued mission to give the people of New York access to extraordinary green space, NYRP commissioned acclaimed landscape architect and designer, Walter Hood to redesign the NYRP community garden which has been generously underwritten by Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson’s G-Unity Foundation. A native of Jamaica, Queens, 50 Cent and his G-Unity Foundation joined forces with NYRP to bring Walter Hood’s designs to life in his old neighborhood as part of his personal mission to give back to the community that has supported him over the years.

“I am thrilled that 50 Cent and the G-Unity Foundation have become such a vital part of the NYRP family,” said Midler. “We are a perfect match! They are dedicated to helping underserved communities just as we are, and there is nothing more important to me than providing open green spaces for families to use for gardening, education, relaxing, and having fun. I salute 50 Cent for using his celebrity to bring a healthier lifestyle to his childhood community, and I thank him from the bottom of my heart.”

Midler and Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson were joined by New York City Council Deputy Majority Leader Leroy Comrie (D-Queens) who provided NYRP with an \$80,000 grant toward garden programming and infrastructure. New York State Assemblywoman Vivian Cook and representatives from the offices of Queens Borough President Helen Marshall and New York State Senator Shirley Huntley also attended the garden opening.

“I want to applaud New York Restoration Project for its exemplary efforts in re-imagining the Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson Community Garden,” stated New York City Council Deputy Majority Leader Comrie. “Under the leadership of Ms. Midler, the revival of public garden space in our City has been an ongoing success. In addition, I want to applaud the involvement of Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson and his G-Unity Foundation for supporting this garden’s restoration, as well as their many other philanthropic endeavors that I’ve personally seen take place in the Southeast Queens community. It is this collaboration of public and private dollars, that has time and time again, proven to be a successful roadmap to revitalizing urban communities. I am delighted to have played a small role in this endeavor by leveraging public dollars toward this worthy project that will benefit the constituents of my community.”

The newly renovated garden will give members of the community access to much needed green space. According to Queens Community Board 12, the area currently has only 5% of the recommended amount of outdoor/open space to serve the neighborhoods 52,000 children. Community garden members will be able to host numerous activities in the space with the help of NYRP’s garden coordinator, including: movie nights, garden workshops, family days and more.

“It is an honor and a privilege for me to partner with Bette Midler and New York Restoration Project to bring this garden to Jamaica, Queens, my childhood neighborhood,” said G Unity Foundation

Founder, Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson. “Every child should have access to open, green space where they can learn, play and be active in their community.”

Incorporating a children’s learning garden, community vegetable plots, a patio area and sustainable technology for maintaining the space into the landscape, Hood’s designs offer something for everyone in the neighborhood to enjoy. A rainwater harvesting system with six 10 ft tall funnels to collect and store rainwater offers regular irrigation to the garden and will also double as the patio providing a shaded section for rest and relaxation. The design inspiration comes from sampling in music, specifically rap – collecting small pieces of music and adding them back together to create something new. The garden samples forms from the four sections of the Garden of Love in Villandry, France, and places them within a context that is accessible to a new audience.

“Public spaces should be the places where culture literally articulates its view about how it wants to live. And that means artists who are involved in making these places are responsible for elevating those communities, those environments, to a place of artistic beauty that connects people to the world around them.” said Walter Hood.

The G-Unity Foundation is well known in the community for creating the G-Unity Scholarship Fund at Queensborough Community College and issuing thousands of dollars in grant money to various non-profit organizations. Originally founded to support the academic enrichment of students in low-income or underserved communities, 50 Cent continues to expand the G-Unity Foundation’s reach with partnerships like this one with Midler’s NYRP to create the Curtis ‘50 Cent’ Jackson Community Garden.

“The generosity of partners like The G Unity Foundation is invaluable to us in making programs for our community and green spaces come to life,” said Drew Becher, Executive Director of the New York Restoration Project. “We are grateful to them for helping us touch so many lives in New York.”

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About New York Restoration Project (NYRP):

Founded by Bette Midler, New York Restoration Project (NYRP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to reclaiming and restoring New York City parks, community gardens and open space. In partnership with the City of New York, NYRP is also leading MillionTreesNYC – an initiative to plant one million new trees throughout New York City’s five boroughs by 2017.

Since the organization’s founding by Bette Midler in 1995, NYRP has achieved dramatic results by investing in the greening and beautification of underserved communities throughout New York City. In 1999, Midler and NYRP saved 114 community gardens from commercial development and established the New York Garden Trust to ensure NYRP’s precious plots of land remain public gardens in perpetuity. NYRP is also responsible for transforming an illegal dumping ground along the Harlem River into the five-acre Swindler Cove Park and building the adjacent Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse – the first floating boathouse on the river in over 100 years. At Swindler Cover Park and in NYRP’s community gardens, New Yorkers are being introduced everyday to the importance of having and respecting nature and green space in urban neighborhoods. For more information on NYRP, visit www.nyrp.org.

About G-Unity Foundation:

Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson established the G-Unity Foundation to support the academic enrichment of students in low-income or underserved communities. Since its inception, the foundation has created the G-Unity Scholarship Fund at Queensborough Community College in New York and issued thousands of dollars in grant money to various nonprofit organizations. For more information on G-Unity Foundation, visit www.gunityfoundation.org.

Media Contacts:

NYRP: Emily Lawi, OrganicWorks Marketing, (212) 253-0474 or emily@organicworksmarketing.com

Bette Midler / NYRP: Roberta Greene, Phoenix Communications, (646) 918-6008 or rgreene@robertagreene.com

50 Cent / G-Unity Foundation: Keesha Johnson, Dan Klores Communications (212) 981-5212 or keesha_johnson@dkcnews.com