

2017-J5807

Senate Resolution No. 5807

BY: Senator MONTGOMERY

COMMEMORATING the 10th Anniversary of DREAMS
YouthBuild sponsored by Settlement Housing Fund on
June 22, 2018

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those organizations and individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of DREAMS YouthBuild sponsored by Settlement Housing Fund to be celebrated at their Annual Commencement Celebration on Friday, June 22, 2018, at Antioch Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York; and

WHEREAS, Launched in 2007, DREAMS YouthBuild is Settlement Housing Fund's Brooklyn-based alternative school and vocational training program which helps unemployed, out-of-school young men and women, ages 17-24, obtain high school equivalency diplomas and job skills, secure employment and go on to college or vocational school; and

WHEREAS, Over 175,000 people between the ages of 16-24 living in New

York City are unemployed and out of school, and close to 40% of these young adults live in Brooklyn; many read below the 6th grade level; and

WHEREAS, The young people who utilize DREAMS YouthBuild come primarily from Crown Heights and the neighboring communities of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Ocean Hill/Brownsville, Bushwick and East New York, where nearly 40% of the area residents live below the poverty level, compared to 20% citywide; and

WHEREAS, As a YouthBuild USA affiliate, the program offers paid construction training to students who gain valuable skills and certification from the National Center for Construction Education and Research while helping to rehabilitate affordable housing in their community; affiliations with construction partners like the New York City District Council of Carpenters and private developers, enable its students to be placed in construction jobs; and

WHEREAS, An IT job training track has been added in collaboration with its SUNY ATTAIN Lab partner and YouthBuild USA; a dedicated staff provides a supportive environment with wrap around social services, college and career counseling, job readiness and placement, mentoring, leadership opportunities and community service projects; most of its students participate in AmeriCorps; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, 192 students have earned their GED/HSE, 109 YouthBuild participants obtained certification from the National Center for Construction Education and Research and all earned Occupational Safety & Health Administration authorization, 200 students obtained jobs, 54 graduates enrolled in college or other post-secondary education, and 147 low-income apartments have been rehabilitated and returned to the market; and

WHEREAS, DREAMS YouthBuild is part of the New York City Department of Education's Pathways to Education program and receives funding from the United States Department of Labor and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development; additional support is provided by the YouthBuild AmeriCorps program and private funders; and

WHEREAS, DREAMS YouthBuild relies on partnerships with other organizations, public officials, volunteers and employers to carry out its mission; since the program began in 2007, DREAMS YouthBuild has successfully engaged over 370 opportunity youth from Crown Heights and surrounding neighborhoods in becoming Dedicated, Responsible, Educated, Accountable, Motivated and Self-Sufficient; and

WHEREAS, The success of DREAMS YouthBuild is in direct correlation to the efforts of its Director Ditashiah Kohn, and her staff, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the institution and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to excellence certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of DREAMS YouthBuild sponsored by Settlement Housing Fund on June 22, 2018; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Alexa Sewell, President, Settlement Housing Fund and to

Ditashiah Kohn, Director, DREAMS YouthBuild.