



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 11, 2013**

Media Contacts:

Erich Timmerman (Chase): (212) 622-4080
Laura Hansen (The Hort): (212) 757-0915 x 102
Michele Schuster (ACE): (212) 274-0550 x 23

Chase Awards \$800,000 Grant to Support ACE Programs for the Homeless and the Horticultural Society of New York via the Neighborhood Plaza Partnership

Funds Will Support Workforce Development and Vocational Rehabilitation for
Formerly Incarcerated New Yorkers

NEW YORK, NY – The Association of Community Employment Programs for the Homeless (ACE), announced today that it, in partnership with the Horticultural Society of New York (“The Hort”), has been awarded a two-year \$800,000 grant from Chase to launch the Neighborhood Plaza Partnership (NPP), a new initiative that provides resources to create and maintain green, thriving public spaces throughout underserved New York City neighborhoods. Spearheaded by The Hort, NPP’s efforts to supply affordable maintenance and horticultural care to neighborhood plazas across the city’s five boroughs are executed in conjunction with the Department of Transportation (DOT) Plaza Program, through which underused streets are re-purposed into flourishing and vibrant pedestrian plazas.

Through this vital partnership, The Hort and ACE work jointly to furnish formerly incarcerated New Yorkers with remedial horticultural education and vocational training, as well as place them in transitional employment at public plazas participating in the DOT program. The Chase grant will fund vocational rehabilitation services and transitional employment opportunities for 100 ex-offenders and ACE program participants, who provide daily maintenance and beautification services to participating plazas.

“We know that capital turns around communities. An investment like the one we are making today spurs development in and around neighborhoods, strengthens the economy and improves the lives of the people who frequent these plazas day to day,” said Vincent La Padula, Managing Director with J.P. Morgan’s private bank.

“Our partnership with The Hort will ensure that ex-offenders have opportunities to gain work experience, build employability-skills and re-integrate back into society after their release from incarceration,” said James Martin, Executive Director of ACE. “We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to The Hort for the opportunity to collaborate on this important initiative, and to Chase for recognizing the merits of our program, as well as providing funds for its implementation.”

“This \$800,000 grant will allow The Hort and ACE to work together to keep the plazas in low-income neighborhoods clean, green, and beautiful, just like the plazas in higher-end mid-town Manhattan,” said Sara Hobel, Executive Director of The Hort.

“With Chase as our partner, we can significantly expand a unique model of combining workforce development with organizational capacity building on behalf of public space,” said Laura Hansen, Director of Neighborhood Plaza Partnership. “It’s a triple bottom line: good transitional jobs; great public spaces; and stronger local non-profits. Chase is committed to improving workforce development *and* neighborhoods, and we are honored to help them carry out that mission.”

Launching in Corona Plaza, Queens, NPP will expand its scope over the next two years, to ultimately serve 20 of the 59 plazas participating in the DOT program; creating jobs, building capacity, and strengthening the social fabric of the city’s neighborhoods, ranging from TriBeCa to East New York. Establishing pathways to self-sufficiency for ex-offenders who pose a high risk for recidivism and potential re-incarceration, these efforts will be integral to continually furthering ACE’s mission to empower marginalized New Yorkers, by providing the resources, training and support they need to attain self-sufficiency, while contributing to the development and vitalization of their own city.

~

About Chase:

Chase is the U.S. consumer and commercial banking business of JPMorgan Chase & Co. (NYSE: JPM), a leading global financial services firm with assets of \$2.5 trillion and operations in more than 60 countries. Chase serves more than 50 million consumers and four million small businesses through more than 5,500 bank branches, 17,500 ATMs, credit cards, mortgage offices, and online and mobile banking as well as through relationships with auto dealerships. More information about Chase is available at www.chase.com and @Chase. JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., Member FDIC. Equal Opportunity Lender.

About the DOT Plaza Program:

DOT has 59 plaza spaces installed or in various stages of development, already producing 26 new acres of public space. Through the Plaza Program, the agency works with partners to build and maintain new destinations that fit the unique needs and character of each community and serve local businesses. Economic data from businesses around the first plaza on Pearl Street in DUMBO showed a 172% increase in sales after installation, compared to 18% growth borough-wide. The Plaza Program is part of the City’s effort to ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of quality open space, a key component of Mayor Bloomberg’s PlaNYC, a blueprint for a greener, more sustainable New York.

About The Horticultural Society of New York (The Hort) and the Neighborhood Plaza Partnership:

The Hort is a multi-faceted non-profit that works to provide equitable access to the benefits of plants and green spaces to all New Yorkers. A leader in horticultural therapy, vocational training, and transitional employment, The Hort provides services to New York City's most challenged populations: those incarcerated on Rikers Island, ex-offenders, and the chronically unemployed. Neighborhood Plaza Partnership (NPP) is a new program of The Horticultural Society of New York (The Hort). With ACE, NPP is pioneering a new mode of public space management in low-income neighborhoods combining workforce development with organizational capacity building, to nurture and sustain a robust network of neighborhood plazas across the five boroughs.

About ACE Programs for the Homeless:

The Association of Community Employment Programs for the Homeless (ACE) works with homeless men and women throughout New York City, providing job training, work experience and a lifetime support network to help our program participants achieve their goals and establish economic independence. Since our inception in 1992, we have empowered and enabled self-sufficiency for nearly 2,000 homeless New Yorkers; by helping them find full-time employment, secure permanent housing and reunite with their families. Our services, which include workforce development, adult basic education, employability-skills training and job-readiness coaching, impact more than 400 homeless men and women each year. For more information, please visit www.acenewyork.org, www.facebook.com/aceprograms and www.twitter.com/acenewyork.