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PRESS RELEASE

1,500 Kids in Harlem Receive Free Winter Coats

For immediate release-

December 11, 2006 - New York, N.Y. – Over 1,500 poor children from Harlem received free winter coats today through a partnership of Harlem Children’s Zone and Operation Warm.

The program, dubbed “Warm Up to Reading,” had children and families qualify for the free winter coats by reading three books. The children receiving the coats were all participants in Harlem Children’s Zone programs.

“Children in poor communities such as Harlem face a variety of problems, any of which can be an obstacle to achievement,” said HCZ President and CEO Geoffrey Canada. “We are thrilled that we can give these kids coats so they can be warm and more likely to go to school on a freezing day and stay healthy throughout the winter.”

Mr. Canada noted that with the pledge to read three books for each coat, “Over four thousand books have been read here in Harlem,” adding: “We are going to have the smartest children in the country here in Harlem.”

U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel encouraged the children at the event to strive for success, saying, “There is no dream you can’t reach. Never let anyone say can’t do it.”

Richard Sanford, Chairman of Operation Warm said, “We want to make sure that that every child who needs a coat has a coat.”

“Not only are we providing warmth to children who are in need, but we are instilling a new sense of self-esteem in children,” said Christy Duncan, Associate Director of Development with Operation Warm. “A warm coat is the most requested item by social service agencies and schools, second only to food. We are happy to be able to provide Harlem’s children with such a needed item.”

The children picked up their coats at HCZ’s headquarters building at 35 East 125th Street (corner of Madison Avenue).

Harlem Children’s Zone, Inc., is a community-based not-for-profit agency that offers educational, social service and community building services in Central Harlem. Harlem Children’s Zone, Inc., was founded in 1970 as Rheedlen, the city’s first not-for-

profit aimed exclusively at truancy prevention. Recognizing that children in poor communities such as Harlem face an array of problems, the agency's scope of work grew over the years.

In 1990, Geoffrey Canada, a nationally recognized advocate for children and education reform, became the agency's CEO and President. Under Canada's leadership, the agency has grown from serving 1,500 children with a budget of \$2.5 million per year to serving over 9,500 children with a budget of \$46 million.

The agency began the Harlem Children's Zone Project in 2000 with a 24 block area (from 116th to 123rd streets, from Fifth to Eighth avenues), then expanded to 60 blocks (going east to Madison Avenue and north to 132nd Street) in 2004. With the "Phase 3" expansion northward, which will begin in 2007, the Zone Project will encompass 97 blocks.

Operation Warm is a national nonprofit that gives brand-new winter coats to children in order to both keep them warm and help build their self-esteem. The group raises funds nationally, but works with local donors to ensure that their funds are used locally. The major donor for the Harlem coat drive was The Tommy Hilfiger Foundation.