

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2015

Contact: Jo Haines, 212-300-8062, jhaines@powerplaynyc.org

**New York City Council supports STARS Citywide Girls Initiative
A partnership of six NYC nonprofits**

Bold effort will deepen and expand services in sports, education, the arts and leadership development for more than 1,000 girls citywide

(NEW YORK, February 3, 2015) - The STARS Citywide Girls Initiative, funded at \$1 million by the New York City Council, will offer the City of New York a unique opportunity to support the healthy development of thousands of girls and young women of color in the coming year.

The STARS Citywide Girls Initiative is a collaboration of six leading NYC nonprofits that will help girls and young women of color overcome barriers to success, grow emotionally, academically and physically stronger, and develop as leaders in their communities. The six partners—Girls Write Now, Groundswell, Lower Eastside Girls Club, PowerPlay NYC, Row New York, and Sadie Nash Leadership Project—all leaders in after-school and summer programming, will create 1,000 or more new program slots for girls in all five boroughs by June 2015.

With support and funding from the NY City Council, the STARS Citywide Girls Initiative will develop the life and leadership skills of NYC girls through after-school and summer sports, academic enrichment, STEM, college preparation and the arts.

The launch of STARS will provide vital services to communities in all five boroughs to ensure that girls have access to a broad array of opportunities in team sports, college prep, financial literacy and technology--experiences that can prepare them for successful adulthood.

“We are proud to join these five outstanding nonprofits to launch this groundbreaking Initiative and we are honored by the Council’s support and leadership,” said Jo Haines, Executive Director of PowerPlay NYC. “Our goals are to build girls’ resiliency, coping skills and confidence through activities uniquely designed for girls and by girls. Through the City Council’s generous support of the STARS initiative, by this time next year more than one thousand additional girls in NYC will have played a team sport they’d never tried before, learned how to create and use a budget, edited a literary journal, built their leadership skills and much more.”

About the involved organizations:

PowerPlay NYC: PowerPlay advances the lives of girls from underserved communities and helps them gain self confidence and life skills for successful adulthood. The organization creates opportunities for girls by partnering with schools and CBOs in all five boroughs of New York City to conduct after-school and summer programs that emphasize sports, education and wellness. PowerPlay's programs develop girls as leaders, advance girls' health and create safe spaces where girls play hard, have fun and form relationships with caring female mentors. 90% of girls in our after-school programs increase their physical activity and become more attached to school; over 90% of young women in our high school programs attend college.

www.powerplaynyc.org

Row New York: Founded in 2002, Row New York empowers teens from NYC's under-resourced communities to build strength, gain confidence, and pursue excellence through the competitive sport of rowing, paired with intensive academic and college readiness support. 80% of Row New York's students participate at no cost, and the organization provides additional wraparound supports for students in need. In addition to medaling at the New York State Championships for the past six years in a row, 98% of Row New York's graduates have gone on to college, and 93% have graduated or remain on track to graduate – compared to just 50% nationally. In 2014, Row New York was named a winner of the New York Community Trust Nonprofit Excellence Awards. www.rownewyork.org

Lower Eastside Girls Club: Since 1996, The Lower Eastside Girls Club (LESGC) has been providing innovative, community-based holistic programs and services for girls and young women. The mission of LESGC is to break the cycle of local poverty by training the next generation of ethical, entrepreneurial and environmental leaders. The LESGC provides a place where girls and young women 8-23 can grow, learn, have fun, and develop confidence in themselves and their ability to make a difference in the world. 82% of Girls Club members report that LESGC helps prepare them for the future and 96% of Girls Club members report that they feel safe at the Girls Club. www.girlsclub.org

Girls Write Now: Founded seventeen years ago, Girls Write Now is New York's first and only writing and mentoring organization for girls, and one of the nation's top after school programs as distinguished twice by the White House and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. In 2014 alone, Girls Write Now was recognized by the Nonprofit Excellence Awards as one of New York City's top ten nonprofits and by NBC Universal's 21st Century Solutions with a grand prize \$100,000 social innovation grant. The organization's girls—90% high need and 90% girls of color—have performed at Lincoln Center and the United Nations, published original work in Newsweek, ELLE India, and Girls Write Now's award-winning anthology, and earned hundreds of Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, while 100% of the seniors have gone on to college. *Newsweek named Girls Write Now one of the nation's top after-school programs making a difference!* www.girlswritenow.org

Groundswell: Groundswell, New York City's leading organization dedicated to community public art, brings together youth, artists, and community-based organizations to use art as a tool for social change for a more just and equitable world. Groundswell projects beautify

neighborhoods, engage youth in societal and personal transformation, and give expression to ideas and perspectives that are underrepresented in the public dialogue. Our afterschool, summer, and in-school artmaking programs annually engage over 800 underserved, marginalized, and economically disadvantaged young people and provide them with the inspiration, tools, and agency to take ownership of their futures through targeted skill-building, leadership opportunities, and college-access support. Since 1996, thousands of Groundswell youth (primarily aged 14-21) have created nearly 500 works of collaborative public art in partnership with more than 350 community groups, government agencies, and public schools. In 2014, Groundswell was awarded the highly competitive Our Town award from the National Endowment for the Arts to support our public artmaking initiative *Transform/Restore: Brownsville*, a multi-year mural project in one of New York City's most challenged neighborhoods. www.groundswellmural.org

Sadie Nash Leadership Project: Sadie Nash Leadership Project (SNLP) provides innovative educational leadership programs to low-income young women (ages 11-22) from all five boroughs of New York City as well as Newark, NJ. SNLP works to strengthen, empower, and equip young women to be agents for change in their communities. Programs include SNLP's flagship Summer Institute, community based internships, after-school programming, advanced-level fellowships, college prep, and school-based partnerships. SNLP's first summer in 2002 served 16 young women, and they now serve over 700 annually. In 2013 SNLP was awarded the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award at the White House from First Lady Michelle Obama, recognizing SNLP as one of the top 12 youth programs in the country. As one young woman said of her experience: "*We give each other the energy to change the world.*" www.sadienash.org

###