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Immediate Release

***HARLEM RBI'S DREAM CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY
NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF REGENTS:
DREAM CHARTER SCHOOL OPENING IN SEPTEMBER 2008***

(New York–January 15, 2008)—After receiving its official New York State Charter, the DREAM Charter School (DCS) will open in September 2008 with 50 Kindergarteners and 50 First Graders. DCS will serve children and families from East Harlem, the community where its institutional partner, Harlem RBI, has worked for 16 years. The school will grow one grade (50 students) each year until it reaches capacity with grades K-8 and a total of 450 students.

“Receiving authorization for the DREAM Charter School is a great milestone for Harlem RBI and the East Harlem community,” said Richard Berlin, Executive Director of Harlem RBI. “This step really is a dream come true.”

DREAM Charter School's mission is to educate East Harlem children through a comprehensive K-8 program that builds a community of passionate lifelong learners. DREAM Charter School (DCS) students will achieve mastery of all New York State Learning Standards and will be accepted into high performing high schools. DREAM Charter School will promote physical, social, emotional and moral growth in a nurturing environment with high expectations, inspiring every student to recognize their potential and realize their dreams.

“We are absolutely thrilled to have received this charter and are looking forward to the positive impact that we hope to have on the community,” said Joshua Klaris, DCS’ principal.

Mr. Klaris’ professional experience and track record as a school administrator and nonprofit program director give him the requisite capacity to take responsibility for DCS’ start-up process and the skills necessary to manage this critical phase. He has extensive experience as a principal (PS 183M), assistant principal (PS 158M/ PS 65X) and teacher (PS 124M) in New York City public elementary schools that have served high populations of poverty-level students, special education students and English Language Learners.

The school is founded on the belief that student success is based on the instructional effectiveness of the classroom teachers, and that schools that are experiential, collaborative and inclusive will best engage and inspire children to learn. The DCS leadership team will create and maintain an educational climate in which teachers consistently develop learning environments where all students: (1) achieve success, (2) understand their strengths and weaknesses and (3) develop the self-discipline and confidence required to excel in any environment.

Why Dream Charter School?

Currently, East Harlem has many of the lowest performing schools in New York City. Among elementary and middle school students, only 34% meet State English Language Arts standards and only 35% meet State Math standards. Additionally, the community struggles in many other areas that may inhibit student achievement. Notable facts are:

- 42% of families live below the poverty line and over 30% of families earn less than \$10,000 per year;
- 90% of public school students are eligible for free or reduced school lunch;
- 66% of the total housing stock is either public housing or other publicly-funded subsidized housing;

Less than 13% of adults have a college degree, less than 50% of adults under the age of 25 have a high school diploma and the unemployment rate is 16%, twice that of Manhattan.

About Harlem RBI:

Harlem RBI, a 501(c)3 organization, is a dynamic youth development program located in East Harlem, New York. Harlem RBI prides itself on being a community-based organization that successfully integrates youth development principles with the benefits of sports activity and team participation. A staff of 23 full-time professionals—with the support of a dedicated corps of over 250 part-time staff, volunteers, and interns—implement year-round programs for more than 700 boys and girls, ages 7-18. Membership on a baseball or softball team opens the door to participation in an array of exemplary programs that support youth as they grow from vulnerable children into resilient young adults. For more information visit www.harlemrbi.org.

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