

**-MEDIA ADVISORY-**

**For Immediate Release:**

April 30, 2014

Contacts:Jeff Simmons, jeff@anatgerstein.com, (917) 673-0024

**Urban Upbound Leads “Jane’s Walk” Tour of Queensbridge, the nation’s Largest Public Housing Development, on Saturday**

***-Event is part of Municipal Art Society 7th Annual “Jane’s Walk” activities across NYC, Tribute to Urban Activist Jane Jacobs-***

**(Long Island City, Queens) –** This Saturday, Urban Upbound’s Bishop Mitchell Taylor will shepherd New Yorker’s through a free tour of Queensbridge, North America’s largest public housing development, as part of the 7th annual Jane’s Walk NYC activities taking place across the city this weekend.

On May 3rd and 4th, thousands of New Yorkers will walk the city’s streets in honor of urban activist and beloved author, Jane Jacobs. Jane’s Walk NYC, hosted by The Municipal Art Society (MAS), is an annual weekend-long series of 150+ free “walking conversations” throughout the five boroughs, led by local residents, urban enthusiasts and others who care deeply about their neighborhoods.

When: Saturday, May 3, 2014. Tour starts at Noon

Where: Starting Point: F train - 21st Street, Queensbridge Station

(Meet at the street corner of 21st Street and 41st Avenue at the top of the subway escalator.)

**Details about “The New Queensbridge: Exploring the largest public housing development in North America”**

Does gentrification eliminate poverty? What's life like growing up in Queensbridge? Walk a short distance from the gentrified, "downtown" vibe of Vernon Boulevard and the gleaming high-rises boasting panoramic views of Manhattan and you'll find yourself near Queensbridge Houses, a stark contrast to the Vernon Boulevard nightlife. Opened in 1939 and housing over 8,000 people in 3,142 apartments, Queensbridge Houses is the largest public housing development in North America.

Learn about the early history of this expansive housing development, get an up close and personal view of the buildings that gave birth to rap icons such as Nas, Marley Mal, Mobb Deep, Roxanne Shante; along with NBA player Metta World Peace (formerly, Ron Artest) and examine the many positive changes Queensbridge has undergone since it's crime/drug problems in the 1980's. The average resident lives on $21,000 a year, only 15% will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree, and 30% are unbanked.

Learn about community revitalization efforts and the residential megaproject happening in nearby Hallets Point and how this impacts the low-income and public housing population. Join us as we take a look at the historic Queensbridge Park, directly underneath the 59th Street (Ed Koch Queensboro) Bridge.

The walk will highlight local organizations designed to assist residents: Urban Upbound, founded by Bishop Mitchell Taylor; Jacob Riis Neighborhood House; The Floating Hospital; and, Urban Upbound’s Federal Credit Union, the first low-income designated bank to take root in Queens in more than 30 years.

**About Urban Upbound -** Urban Upbound (formerly ERDA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding prosperity in public housing neighborhoods so residents and their families have opportunities for economic mobility and self-sufficiency.  Urban Upbound achieves these objectives through five integrated, comprehensive and long-term programs that serve more than 4,500 individuals per year and are anchored by the Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union; Employment services, Financial Empowerment services (including one-on-one financial education and counseling, comprehensive public benefits access and tenant advocacy), College Access and Youth Development and the Urban Upbound Merchants Association. For more information, visit <http://urbanupbound.org>.

**About Bishop Mitchell Taylor** - Bishop Mitchell G. Taylor is Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer at Urban Upbound. Bishop Mitchell Taylor has lived in and around Queensbridge Houses for the past forty-three years. In 1991, he was installed as Senior Pastor of the Center of Hope International (COHI), a non-denominational church adjacent to the Queensbridge Houses. In 2004, convinced that a single church would not be able to mitigate the mammoth issues facing public housing residents, Bishop Taylor founded Urban Upbound, formerly known as the East River Development Alliance (ERDA). Bishop Taylor has been profiled by The New York Times, CNN, National Public Radio, and other leading media outlets for his leadership around public housing, and has received prestigious awards including the New York City Public Library’s Brooke Astor Award, NYC Neighborhood Achievement Leadership Award, and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York Martin Luther King Award. He is the author of Unbroken Promises, published by Whitaker House (2003). He currently serves as a Commissioner on the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board.

**About Jane’s Walks -** Started in Toronto in 2007, a year after Jacobs’ death, the walks commemorate the life and legacy of a woman whose observations about the dynamism of city life continue to inform urban policy and practice.  Since its inception, Jane’s Walk has grown into a global movement, with walks in over 100 cities worldwide.

This year’s Jane’s Walk NYC includes an array of free walks, which you can discover at [www.mas.org/janeswalknyc](http://www.mas.org/janeswalknyc). All of the MAS-sponsored walks combine the simple act of exploring neighborhoods with personal observations, local history, and civic engagement, reflecting Jacobs’ urging that a city’s health is dependent on having many “eyes on the street.” Jane’s Walk NYC is supported by: Airbnb, Cemusa, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, The Knight Foundation, TimeOut New York and WNYC.

###