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YOUTHBUILD PHILADELPHIA GRADUATION CEREMONY 2006

Former High School Dropouts Celebrate Diplomas and Successes

Philadelphia, Pa., June 2006 – On June 27 from 6 to 8 p.m. (doors open at 5:30 p.m.), YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School will hold its 2006 Graduation Ceremony at Saint Joseph's Preparatory School (Church of the Gesu) at 1733 West Girard Ave. in North Philadelphia. More than 1,000 people will congregate to see the students of YouthBuild receive their diplomas and celebrate their accomplishments.

YouthBuild students overcome the worst obstacles faced by Americans to create better futures for themselves and their families. Statistics show that more than 85% are low- or very low-income, 23% have been victimized by crime, 68% were expelled or suspended from previous schools, 23% have been through juvenile court, and nearly 10% have been referred to drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs. Each year, approximately one-third of the students support dependent children. Despite these statistics, the students have persevered.

YouthBuild students celebrate a number of incredible accomplishments this year including:

- building the frame of a home for a family displaced by Hurricane Katrina on Martin Luther King Day;
- stabilizing seven lots in South Philadelphia on National Youth Service Day;
- providing hundreds of hours of care for long-term care residents;
- refurbishing or installing hundreds of computers and equipment for local organizations; and,
- building four houses for low-income families!

The ceremony will include several student speeches, an awards presentation, and a keynote address by Rasheedah Phillips, a single mother by age 14 and a Temple University law student by age 22. The ceremony will also include a special, student-

read letter of congratulations from Judge Marjorie O. Rendell, First Lady of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The graduation ceremony is a ticket-only event. For press inquiries, contact Amy Kapp at (215) 627-8671x39, (703) 946-0041 or akapp@youthbuildphilly.org.

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YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School is a not-for-profit organization that provides out-of-school youth in Philadelphia the broadest range of tools, supports and opportunities available to become self-sufficient, responsible and productive citizens. YouthBuild Philadelphia offers an innovative 10-month program, which blends a rigorous academic curriculum with valuable community service experience and on-the-job training in construction, technology or nursing.

Students at YouthBuild Philadelphia can earn their high school diplomas and make successful transitions to full-time jobs, post-secondary educations, or further service with AmeriCorps. For more information, visit www.youthbuildphilly.org.