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Testimony of University Settlement Before the New York City Council

FY 2021 Joint Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Health
and Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction

Council Member Mark Levine, Chair of the Committee on Health
Council Member Farah N. Louis, Chair of the Committee on
Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction

March 15, 2021

Presented by Barbara DiGangi, Director of Families Thriving at
University Settlement

Thank you for convening this hearing. I'm Barbara DiGangi, Director of Families Thriving at University Settlement. I am writing to ask the city to strengthen the funding, development and support of school-based mental health partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and the Department of Education (DOE).

For 135 years, University Settlement has partnered with New Yorkers to build community strength and promoted resilience through challenging times in history. We've collaborated with our neighbors to pioneer highly effective programs that fight poverty and systemic inequality across Manhattan and Brooklyn. University Settlement infuses a commitment to civic engagement, equity and communal action into each of our programs which include early childhood education, mental health and wellness, youth development, healthy aging, and the arts.

Families Thriving is a home and community-based, wraparound family support program offering therapy, skill-building, school-based services and Triple P, an evidence-based model for positive parenting, to youth and their families. In delivering our multi-level approach, we've partnered closely with schools in District 1 to provide accessible mental health support, consultations, family workshops, crisis prevention and management, professional development training for school staff, and Connection Circles, a community-care model we developed to help folks gather and feel less alone. We work with families where they are, and partner with their schools to stimulate an impactful approach to enhancing family engagement, positive parenting and successful outcomes. Families Thriving employs a strengths-based approach that is sensitive to the impact of systemic racism and the effects of intergenerational trauma. By leveraging relationships within the communities, we work with families who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

Whether it's addressing the economy, systemic racism, children's education, or health, one critical piece to our city's recovery cannot be overstated: accessible mental health support. In response to the impact of Covid-19, we join in the

LEAD. ACT. IMPACT. 領導。行動。影響。 LIDERA. ACTÚA. IMPACTA. अनुवादे करारवादे अरर DIRIGEZ. AGISSEZ. IMPACTEZ. Դժվար չէ օգնելու յանձնարար ԼԻԴԻՐՄՆԻ. ԴԵՆՑՏԻՎՆԻ. ԲԼԻՂՈՒ. 领导。行动。影响。

