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**CCC Youth Advocates Release PSA To Raise Awareness
About Teen Mental Health**

*To Commemorate Mental Health Awareness Month, CCC's YouthAction Members
Release Public Service Announcement Aimed at NYC's Teens*

May 1, 2013 – Today, Citizens' Committee for Children's YouthAction Members (YAMs) released a Public Service Announcement to help NYC's teens identify mental health needs and find help. The public service announcement, released as part of Mental Health Awareness Month, provides information to teens and parents on how to identify risk factors and seek treatment for youth's mental health needs. The PSA can be viewed here:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/CCCNewYork>

YouthAction NYC is a program of CCC that introduces high school students to civic engagement and advocacy opportunities. These aspiring young leaders meet once a week after school to analyze social policies, current events, and community issues, so they can develop policy and budgetary recommendations to improve the lives of New York City's children and youth. YAMs execute advocacy campaigns and meet with elected and appointed officials in Albany and at City Hall.

In the fall, YouthAction participants noticed that many of their peers, and sometimes they themselves, suffered from untreated depression, anxiety, or other serious mental health issues. "Help may be needed, but the places to seek this kind of treatment may be difficult for many teens to find," said **YouthAction Member Salimata Cherif**. So, YAMs decided to create a public service announcement to raise awareness about the warning signs of serious mental health issues and tell teens how to seek help at school and in their communities.

"CCC applauds our YouthAction members for raising awareness about teen mental health needs and how to seek treatment. CCC hopes this public service announcement will be shared broadly so family, friends, and New Yorkers know how to get help," said **Jennifer March-Joly, Executive Director of Citizens' Committee for Children**.

During their research, students learned that 1 in 5 children in New York City suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder, but that only about 20% receive the treatment they need. Untreated mental health issues can lead to teen suicide, the third leading cause of death among teenagers. "The gravity of teen mental health issues needs to be addressed by informing teens that they don't have to live in pain," said **Allan Raykhelson, YouthAction Member**.

"It is very important that young people understand that mental health problems are both very serious and treatable. The PSA featuring young people is a welcome support for programs to help so many youths overcome disfunction and distress and remove the stigma attached to seeking out care and support," said **G. Oliver Koppell, Chair of the New York City Council Mental Health Committee.**

"As a long-time advocate for an increase in culturally-appropriate mental health services for New York City's young people, I congratulate CCC and their YouthAction team for launching a Public Service Announcement that focuses on this important issue. In order to address the crisis of mental health issues, we need awareness from young people, teachers, families, friends, advocacy groups, and government. We also need to work together so that these services are seamless, nonjudgmental, and universally available so that people take advantage of them, especially at schools. No one should suffer alone," said **Council Member Gale A. Brewer.**

YouthAction's Public Service Announcement is available online at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/CCCNewYork>

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