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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING Wins Inaugural National Summer Learning Association Climate Change Award

September 21, 2020 - New York, NY - City Parks Foundation's **CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING** program was named as the winner of the **Inaugural Climate Change Learning Award** for National Summer Learning Association's (NSLA) 2020 Summer Learning Awards season. City Parks Foundation is one of four exemplary summer programs recognized for improving outcomes for children and youth and honored as models for the nation.

Out of nearly 350 applicants, the winning CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING program met the rigorous criteria for this national recognition that includes helping students cement skills learned during the school year, effective family engagement strategies, and inclusive and innovative programming to serve the diverse needs of children and their families.

The Climate Change Award aims to recognize outstanding programs with a focus on building knowledge and awareness among young people about the effect of climate change, the importance of environmental stewardship, and what they can do to have an impact on their community. CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING will receive a \$10,000 donation for the inaugural Climate Change Award and will be recognized in a virtual awards celebration held in November 2020.

CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING provides a five-week summer program that allows for unique explorations in parks — from urban forests and rivers to coastal marshes and beaches — for young women living in underserved neighborhoods in NYC. CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING is also offered as a once-a-week after school program in multiple park sites around the city, focusing on STEM learning,

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environmental science, and justice issues and fostering an understanding of the impact of climate change on the city's waterways and urban forests.

CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING also offers a safe space for young women to share their social and academic challenges, celebrate their successes, build social support systems, and discuss topics like mental health, bullying, healthy relationships and lifestyles, gender bias, and more — all while changing the perception that STEM studies or careers are inaccessible to them because of their socioeconomic background or gender identity.

In 2020, ING Americas announced a three-year partnership to support the CityParks Green Girls program. ING has been long-time supporter of many of City Parks Foundation's free sports instruction for kids, while hundreds of ING employees have contributed thousands of volunteer hours to beautify neighborhood parks across the city.

In 2021, City Parks Foundation will make the Green Girls Empowered by ING curriculum available to teachers and out-of-school time providers around the country, free of charge. The curriculum will be offered free for download but will require teachers to participate in an online learning session with CityParks Learn educators beforehand and to report on their program outcomes to inform and help shape future curriculum updates. The curriculum will include suggested lesson plans, tips on establishing partnerships, and advocacy tools to help instructors run a successful program.

"We are so proud to win this inaugural Climate Change award for our CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING program. We are committed to providing girls opportunities to explore our city's natural ecosystems through hands-on activities. Our goal is to help these adolescent girls develop confidence and feel a sense of responsibility to create positive change in their natural environment," said **Heather Lubov, Executive Director of City Parks Foundation**. "This recognition is coming at the perfect time, right when we are working to expand our program to teachers and out-of-school time providers nationwide by creating a curriculum and program model that we will share, free of charge, in early 2021."

"This year's winners are exemplary models of equitable, high-quality summer learning programs that help close the opportunity gap that can manifest at birth," said **Aaron Philip Dworkin, chief executive officer of NSLA**. "We aim to support



and encourage more programs like these, which engage our children, spark their curiosity and provide valuable social-emotional skills to succeed in academics and in life.”

For more information about the CityParks Green Girls Empowered by ING program and the 2021 digital nationwide program, please visit cityparksfoundation.org/green-girls.

About City Parks Foundation

At City Parks Foundation, we are dedicated to invigorating and transforming parks into dynamic, vibrant centers of urban life through sports, arts, community building and education programs for all New Yorkers. Our programs -- located in more than 400 parks, recreation centers and public schools across New York City --reach 300,000 people each year. Our ethos is simple: thriving parks mean thriving communities.

About CityParks Learn

CityParks Learn plays a central role in activating City Parks Foundation’s mission to create vibrant and healthy urban communities through dynamic outdoor programming for all New Yorkers. Our standards-aligned environmental education programs help students experience the fun of science, while learning about their relationship to the natural world and the ways in which they can protect our environment. We provide environmental science programs for 5,000 elementary, middle, and high school students throughout New York City, through school-day, afterschool, and summer programming. Also offered are credit-bearing training and paid internships for teenagers as well as teacher training to conduct science lessons using parks as outdoor classrooms.

About the National Summer Learning Association

The National Summer Learning Association is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement and opportunity gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA has experts and a network of partners who can identify high-quality local programs to meet the needs of any learner, provide information on summer program practice and policies, offer tips for families and share the national context of summer’s essential role in education. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org.