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PICTURE THE HOMELESS AND HUNTER COLLEGE LAUNCH HISTORIC CITY-WIDE COUNT OF VACANT PROPERTIES

Unprecedented survey will reveal the extent of vacant property in NYC

Contact: Adrian Paling, or Kendall Jackman, Housing Campaign Leader, **Picture the Homeless** (NYC), office: 646 314 6423, cell: (917) 744-5325, email: sam@picturethehomeless.org, *Homeless activists & other speakers will be available for interview on-site.*

Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.—In the neighborhood with one of the highest densities of vacant property, Picture the Homeless (PTH), and Hunter College’s Center for Community Planning and Development (HCCCPD), kick off the first-ever count of vacant buildings and lots throughout the five boroughs. The survey is the first of its kind and is unprecedented in scope. Launched from the historic John Wesley United Methodist Church in the heart of Bedford-Stuyvesant, the initiative will unite labor leaders, faith communities, academics, and homeless people.

“My family settled in this community in 1915 and helped found this church,” said Kendall Jackman, a leader of the Picture the Homeless housing campaign. “I am a child of this community and of this church. I am proud that my church is taking a leading role in this endeavor. I remember this community as a bustling place, but today it has become a virtual wasteland in spots, a fractured community. It is our hope with this count that it will be the beginning of rebuilding this and other communities with truly affordable housing for all.”

“Brooklyn neighborhoods are plagued by vacant property and displacement,” said City Council Member Letitia James. “And we’re losing more and more of our people to the homeless shelter system. The city needs to do more. The data we gather with this count will help us create real solutions that benefit working-class New Yorkers.”

Tom Angotti, Ph.D., the Director of HCCCPD, reiterates the significance of this historic survey: “Our partnership with PTH will help combine grassroots intelligence and university-based knowledge to create the conditions for improving and changing city housing policy so that it can serve those in greatest need.”

The survey is the latest development in Picture the Homeless’s multi-year campaign to document the extent of vacant property in NYC. PTH argues that vacancy inflates the cost of housing in the city and is a root cause of homelessness. Preliminary findings, available on Vacant NYC (www.vacantnyc.crowdmap.com), maps over 11,000 vacant buildings and lots, city wide: most of which were provided by city agency data.

Press Rendezvous: Meet at John Wesley United Methodist, 260 Quincy Street (at Nostrand), 10AM Saturday, June 26th
For interviews with PTH members and Hunter College faculty, call Sam Miller. In addition, PTH will be tweeting updates from the press conference. Follow <http://twitter.com/pthny> and hashtag #NYCvacancysurvey