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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Crazy for Compost: One Million Pounds Collected

Successful Joint Initiative by GrowNYC and DSNY Meets Growing Demand for Food Scrap Collection in NYC

January 6, 2013, NEW YORK, NY – Today New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Ron Gonen, DSNY Deputy Commissioner of Sanitation, Recycling and Sustainability and GrowNYC Executive Director Marcel Van Ooyen, announced the collection of one million pounds of food scraps which have been diverted from disposal and redirected for composting via a free program at 21 Greenmarkets in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Staten Island operated by GrowNYC.

The initiative began as a resoundingly successful pilot program in March 2011 featuring seven collection sites funded by Speaker Quinn and the New York City Council. Demand quickly grew as shoppers at GrowNYC's farmers markets learned of and participated in the program.

As public interest in food scrap collection sites grew so did the program. New Yorkers can now drop off fruit and vegetable scraps for composting while shopping for healthy, local produce. GrowNYC staffs 'Sustainability Centers' where the public can simply deposit the week's food waste, such as apple cores and coffee grounds, into collection tubs. The scraps are then transported by GrowNYC or the Department of Sanitation to one of several local sites in the five boroughs where material is transformed into a fertile soil amendment for use in urban farm and gardening programs.

Food comprises about 17% of NYC's waste stream. When this material is sent to a landfill it contributes to NYC's disposal costs and creates greenhouse gas emissions. When composted, food scraps and other organic waste is transformed into a useful product that adds nutrients and improves the quality of soil for street trees, gardens and more.

GrowNYC's commitment to composting is not a new one. The organization, has hosted a collection site since 1994 at its Union Square Greenmarket, organized by the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

The current program expands this and other existing, ongoing collections conducted by Build it Green Compost and the Ft. Greene Compost Project.

"Hitting the million pound mark is an important milestone for our city and for our environment," said Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. "This forward-thinking initiative has successfully



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improved how we handle food post-consumption. Everything from apple cores to those leftovers sitting in the fridge has to go somewhere -- and it doesn't have to be the trash. The City Council is proud to be part of this project with GrowNYC and the Department of Sanitation, and I thank them for all of their great work."

"Organic material is the largest part of our waste stream. Rather than paying to send it to costly landfills, we can process it locally into compost or renewable energy. What GrowNYC is accomplishing with their organics drop off sites is an important example and foundation for the possibility of organics collection in NYC," said Sanitation Commissioner John J. Doherty.

"We're thrilled that Speaker Quinn and the New York City Council helped launch the compost program last year and that DSNY stepped in this year to bring the successful pilot to the next level. We're demonstrating that the City of New York is not lagging far behind California and other places where compost has taken root. New Yorkers across the City are eager to participate and reduce waste while creating a valuable resource that will benefit local gardens and farms," said GrowNYC Executive Director Marcel Van Ooyen.

For more information, visit <http://www.grownyc.org/compost> or call 212.788.7964.

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GrowNYC improves New York City's quality of life through environmental programs that transform communities block by block and empower all New Yorkers to secure a clean and healthy environment for future generations. Programs: Greenmarket, Office of Recycling Outreach and Education, Open Space Greening, Environmental Education and Grow to Learn NYC: Citywide School Gardens Initiative. Learn more at www.grownyc.org

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