THE COST OF LIVING:
A Heartfelt Documentary Exposing Economic Hardships and Resilience in Queens, New York

Flushing, NY – Wednesday, September 27, 2023 – Undo Poverty: Flushing, a collaborative working to build community trust and combat poverty, in association with F.Y. Eye, a nonprofit social impact media organization dedicated to amplifying community voices, are pleased to present THE COST OF LIVING, a new documentary film by Helena and Daniel Nalladurai (Sixty First Productions), highlighting the realities of poverty in Queens, New York.

THE COST OF LIVING is a rare and intimate glimpse into the lives of three extraordinary individuals and families who call the greater Flushing, Queens area their home as they navigate the turbulent waters of economic hardship and are confronted with the ever-increasing cost of living in their once-affordable neighborhood.

This premiere will take place at Flushing Town Hall on September 27th from 6:00pm to 8:30pm. Doors open at 5:30pm. Tabling of local resources, snacks, refreshments and mooncake will be available before and after the event. After the showing of the documentary, a panel composed of the production team, collaborative representatives, and research consultant will dive deeper into systemic issues highlighted throughout the documentary. Community members, nonprofits, funders, elected officials, small businesses and press are invited to learn more about the lived experiences of community members living in poverty. The documentary and event aims to raise more awareness on poverty and encourage attendees to work together and collectively address the issues highlighted in the film.

Historically, the outer boroughs of New York City have long been sanctuaries for hardworking communities. However, the working-class fabric that defines Flushing, Queens, is currently facing a perilous threat due to the rapid influx of exclusive luxury housing catering solely to the global elite. THE COST OF LIVING showcases how this trend is leaving the local working-class community vulnerable and marginalized, putting them on the precipice of financial vulnerability.

THE COST OF LIVING is a testament to the human spirit and serves as a poignant reflection of life in the midst of an escalating cost of living. By sharing their stories, Undo Poverty: Flushing and F.Y. Eye hope to evoke empathy, compassion, and understanding, transcending boundaries to foster a greater sense of community.

The film is the culmination of a larger narrative change campaign in Flushing, Queens orchestrated by nonprofit media organization F.Y. Eye. The campaign included data-driven messaging, out-of-home advertisements, and a collaboration with F.Y. Eye’s Impact Artist Network, specifically Sixty First Productions – a documentary film group.
“By developing this intimate documentary with striking portrayals of three individuals and families in Flushing, Queens we learn how so many in poverty struggle to live day-to-day in the landscape of our great city,” explained Christina Daigneault, Executive Director of F.Y. Eye. “It is our hope that this film connects with the hearts and minds of people everywhere and helps build a wave of unprecedented community support to combat poverty and transform our city for good.”

“This documentary destigmatizes living in poverty. Rather than seeing low-income people as victims and powerless, it portrays the stories of three Flushing, Queens families and how their fortitude and resilience help them preserve, even in the face hardships, barriers, and the ever-increasing cost necessary to just survive in modern day New York City. ‘Cost of Living’ will change how you see the poverty crisis in New York City, give viewers a greater appreciation for the power of familial love and the importance of community, and serve as a powerful reminder of the need for long-term solutions in the poverty fight.” said Stephanie Park, Program Officer for Mobility LABs at Robin Hood, New York City's largest anti-poverty philanthropy.

“This documentary sheds light on the economic hardships faced by our Queens community. It serves as a catalyst for essential dialogues on poverty, housing affordability, and the pressing need for community support and transformation,” said Wayne Ho, President and CEO of the Chinese-American Planning Council. “We are excited to team up with Minkwon Center for Community Action, Asian Americans for Equality, RIVER FUND, The Child Center of NY, Queens Public Library, and Robin Hood to identify community-centered solutions to combat poverty and lay the groundwork for a more equitable future for our neighbors. We are grateful to F.Y. Eye, Sixty First Productions, and Flushing Town Hall for collaborating with us on the documentary.”

“THE COST OF LIVING is a vivid illustration of the reality of poverty and housing instability in the Flushing community,” said Thomas Yu, executive director of Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE). “If we are going to confront the perils facing our community - and we must confront them - all of us are going to need to acknowledge the impacts of gentrification and begin to embrace solutions to preserve Flushing as a vibrant neighborhood for immigrants and working families.”

“The Child Center of NY, intimately familiar with the profound economic struggles of families in Flushing, is proud to contribute to the documentary ‘Undo Poverty: Flushing.’” said Traci Donnelly, CEO of The Child Center of NY. “This film not only exposes the realities of poverty but more importantly, it illuminates the resilience, resourcefulness, and great potential found within these communities. The narrative underscores that poverty isn’t an inevitable or unchangeable condition, but a societal issue we’re all responsible to tackle. It also highlights the innovative, ground-breaking efforts being made to uplift lives and change the story. The strength and determination of those in poverty inspire our unwavering commitment. We won’t cease our efforts until no child is born into, nor any adult condemned to poverty.”

“Thank you! to the brave participants in The Cost of Living who were willing to share and be vulnerable so others may learn and benefit,” said Nicholas Ferreira, Senior Vice President of Youth Development at The Child Center of NY. “The Child Center looks forward to continuing this work with them, our communities, and elected officials so we can implement common sense solutions to help all people thrive.”

“This documentary depicts the extremely challenging circumstances so many New Yorkers are facing right now, whether they have recently arrived from other places or have lived here for years,” said Dennis M. Walcott, president and CEO of Queens Public Library. “We offer a range of high-quality services,
programs and resources that are designed to reduce poverty and help put people in need on a path towards success. We look forward to our continued work with the Undo Poverty: Flushing collaborative."

"With each passing day, it becomes increasingly evident that poverty in Queens has a far-reaching and profound impact on individuals, families, and the community as a whole," said Swami Durga Das, Founder and CEO of RIVER FUND. "One of the most visible effects is the struggle for basic needs, including access to nutritious food, healthcare, and affordable housing. Many Queens residents find themselves in precarious living situations, facing the constant threat of eviction due to rising rents and limited affordable housing options. This environment often then translates into limited educational opportunities, which can perpetuate cycles of disadvantage. The Children in these low-income families may have reduced access to quality education, after-school programs, and enrichment activities, affecting their long-term prospects. The achievement gap becomes more pronounced, making it challenging for these children to break free from the cycle of poverty. We are thrilled to see this documentary amplifying the voices of our community members, and we hope it ignites a passion to address the challenges our fellow neighbors are facing."

"The MinKwon Center is excited about the premiere of our documentary with Robin Hood, F.Y. Eye., and Sixty First Productions," said John Park, Executive Director of the MinKwon Center for Community Action. "Many of the Undo Poverty: Flushing partners began working and meeting together to analyze and better understand the structures and barriers of poverty in Flushing by not only investigating the issues and potential solutions at a local level, but through a process designed and led by locals. What we saw is the need for more community conversations around poverty and we hope the documentary highlighting three unique families and the choices they make in life with the options and resources available to them, will spark the much needed conversations."

About F.Y. Eye:

F.Y. Eye is a 501(c)(3) public charity that has been amplifying community voices since 2005. Their mission is to build public awareness about critical New York resources, programs, and messages by creating and distributing community and artist-driven public service announcements and communications campaigns by local nonprofits. www.fyeye.org

About Undo Poverty: Flushing:

Undo Poverty Flushing (formerly known as the Flushing Mobility Collaborative) works to help move all Flushing community members out of rapidly growing poverty toward sustainable economic advancement. They are made up of six local organizations that manage the overall work of the collaborative and build community trust to combat poverty. Their mission is to help move all Flushing community members out of rapidly growing poverty toward sustainable economic advancement. The organizations are Chinese-American Planning Council, Queens Public Library, Minkwon Center for Community Action, The Child Center of NY, RIVER FUND, and Asian Americans for Equality. undopovertyflushing.org

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