



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE HONORED FOR \$20 MILLION IN GRANTS TO REFURBISH NEIGHBORHOOD FOOTBALL FIELDS

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell accepts LISC award at Harlem River Park ceremony

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Gordon Walek

Clare Graff

LISC

NFL

(312) 697-6183

212-450-2435

(312) 560-9134 cell

clare.graff@nfl.net

gwalek@lisc.org

NEW YORK, NY (December 13, 2007) – Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) today honored the National Football League for the \$20 million it has granted over the last decade to revitalize more than 150 playing fields in underserved neighborhoods nationwide. The ceremony, involving youth football players, community residents and neighborhood organizations, occurred at the Harlem River Park ball fields. The park has a new synthetic turf field provided by the NFL Grassroots Program, a partnership between the NFL Youth Football Fund and LISC, the nation’s leading community development support organization.

The \$20 million in grants from the NFL during the past decade have leveraged an additional \$58 million in funding from other private and public sources to rehabilitate old fields or build new ones. The Grassroots Program has provided financial and technical assistance to a variety of nonprofit neighborhood-based organizations and middle and high schools in approximately 40 cities across the country. Through this partnership, LISC ensures that the capital improvements to renovate older fields and establish new ones have a stream of maintenance funds and the community support needed to sustain long-term use. The program not only provides recreational opportunities for children in underserved neighborhoods, it also acts as a catalyst for the redevelopment of those communities. In 2007, the Youth Football Fund increased its annual contribution to the Grassroots Program to \$5 million.

“Fields are an integral part of creating viable and healthy communities, said NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, who is also a member of LISC's national board of directors, "The development and refurbishment of these football fields gives youngsters across the country a safe place to play the game and brings families and neighborhoods together.”

“Community revitalization is measured by more than construction cranes and concrete and we applaud the NFL for recognizing the impact that football fields have on local communities,” said LISC President and CEO Michael Rubinger. “Public spaces such as this football field in Harlem are critical to the health of every community and the future of its children. The NFL Grassroots

Program is a model for how private and public resources can be applied to a necessary aspect of neighborhood development.”

The new football field at Harlem River Park, which was unveiled earlier this year, was funded in part by a \$200,000 grant from the Grassroots Program. New York City’s Department of Parks & Recreation designed, built and maintains the field. It is one of five fields in New York City being refurbished by NFL grants. The others are in Forest Park (Queens), Prospect Park (Brooklyn), the Bronx, and one scheduled for construction at Roosevelt High School in Brooklyn.

“As more people choose to raise their families in the city, the Parks Department is answering the increasing demand for playing fields in every community,” said New York City Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “We are committed to providing safe, state-of-the-art sports facilities where our children can exercise and avoid the real threats of diabetes and other illnesses associated with obesity. We thank the NFL and LISC for their support – it is organizations like them that enable us to build fields like the ones in Harlem River Park, Forest Park and Prospect Park, where New Yorkers young and old can play and stay fit.”

About The NFL Youth Football Fund

Established in 1998 by the NFL and the NFL Players Association, the NFL Youth Football Fund seeks to use football as a catalyst to promote positive youth development, support youth and high school football needs nationwide and also ensure the health of grassroots football in future generations. Through the YFF’s youth football initiatives and support programs, youngsters are provided with opportunities to learn the game of football, get physically fit and stay involved in productive after-school activities with adult mentors.

About LISC

LISC combines corporate, government and philanthropic resources to help community-based organizations revitalize underserved neighborhoods. Since 1980, LISC has raised more than \$7.8 billion to build or rehabilitate more than 215,000 affordable homes and develop 30 million square feet of retail, community and educational space nationwide. For more information, visit www.lisc.org.

###