

**Contact:**

Jai Nanda

Executive Director

Ph: 212-244-2131

E-mail: [jnanda@urbandove.org](mailto:jnanda@urbandove.org)*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***the board****mark benerofe**

benerofe properties, corp.

**david d. froelich**

gracedale fabrics, inc.

**michael grandis, esq.**

troutman sanders LLP

**peter hall**

lehman brothers

**meeae jervinsky**

merrill lynch &amp; co.

**john johnson**

cowan financial group

**keith kobyra**

lehman brothers

**kate larkin**

cohn &amp; wolfe

**craig marino**

new york mets

**spencer rothschild**

itzu

**richard j. schnall**

clayton, dubilier &amp; rice

**adam j. schur**

ubs

**daniel valerio**

ernst &amp; young

**executive director****jai nanda****BASKETBALL COURTS COME AND GO, BUT THE KIDS PLAY ON**

**December 1, 2006, Manhattan** – When Basketball City, a private 6 court facility on the West Side of Manhattan closed in September, it looked like the end of the road for over 450 public school student-athletes who played their varsity games there. But when the 2006-2007 basketball season started this year, all of the 18 New York City public high schools who have no gyms of their own and relied on Basketball City took the court and played on.

On **Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:00 PM**, the Net Gain program will have its official kickoff event at Baruch College's Vertical Campus on East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The event will feature a press conference with the Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Borough President Scott Stringer, and PSAL director Donald Douglas. The news conference will be followed by a Girls Varsity game between the High School for Health Professions (a Net Gain school) and Hunter College High School.

Lack of gym space would normally mean the end of a team's season, but thanks to **Urban Dove**, a local non-profit organization, all of those boys and girls won't have to sit and watch this season. Urban Dove's **Net Gain** program provides over 500 hours of court time, free of charge, to 18 New York City public schools that do not have their own gyms. Now in its eighth year, the Net Gain program, in collaboration with the Public School Athletic League (PSAL), Youth, I.N.C., and the New York Knicks, has given thousands of kids the chance to do what many at other schools around the country take for granted – play on their school team.

Urban Dove, a youth service organization that provides enrichment programs to at-risk youth, arranges court space for the schools, allowing them to compete in the PSAL season.

“Playing after-school sports is an essential part of a well-rounded, education and helps create successful students,” said Jai Nanda, founder and executive director of Urban Dove. “To deny hundreds of boys and girls this opportunity just because they go to a school that doesn’t have a gym is unacceptable.”

Although Net Gain’s major function is to coordinate the basketball games, the program impacts the students on a deeper level. The student-athletes participate in a series of local service projects that teach teamwork and give them a sense of community.

Megan Weed, a varsity player at Manhattan Village Academy, describes the impact of Net Gain, “Playing on our varsity team has taught me that sports is about much more than winning. I have learned responsibility, leadership and how to act as a role model.”

Physical education and after-school sports were once considered essential ingredients to a successful educational system, but their importance has declined over the past five years to the point where some consider them irrelevant. But studies have shown that students who play varsity sports graduate at a higher rate than their classmates, are physically healthier, are less susceptible to drugs and alcohol and are less likely to become teenage parents.

“Not having a gym at our school made it impossible for us to field any teams,” explains Jeff Nelson, boys’ basketball coach at Coalition for Social Change. “Net Gain fills a critical need for our students. It provides badly needed structure and allows them to interact with other students in a competitive yet friendly atmosphere.”

“Urban Dove believes that playing after-school sports isn’t just about having fun. It is a critical element of youth development that helps build healthy minds and bodies, and creates better students and citizens,” says Nanda, a former coach and teacher, “and our goal is to ensure that every public high school student has the opportunity to play.”

For more information about how your child can become involved with Urban Dove program, please contact the Urban Dove at (212) 244-2131 or visit [www.urbandove.org](http://www.urbandove.org).

#####