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Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, June 22, 2009

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STUDENTS COMPLETE CITY COUNCIL PAGE PROGRAM

Initiative provided leadership and public service opportunities for students

BALTIMORE—Today, City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake thanked the 2008-09 City Council Page Program participants as they completed the program and delivered a final project presentation to Councilmembers at City Hall.

The Page Program provided three Baltimore City Public high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to become active participants in local government through a paid internship with the City Council. The 2008-09 pages began working at the October 27th City Council meeting and continued through the end of this school year.

The students, Danesha Thomas and Charnice Blackledge from Western Senior High School and Darwin Milburn from Northwestern High School, provided administrative and research support for the Council President's Office. During their time at City Hall, the pages learned real-life skills while mastering aspects of the legislative process. The Pages also worked with Council Committees for one day a week and assisted the Chief Clerk during Council meetings.

"I would like to thank Danesha, Charnice and Darwin for all their work. We were so delighted and honored to have these impressive young people join us to learn and be a part of City government," Rawlings-Blake said "This was as much of an enriching experience for the members of the City Council as it was for these bright young students.

The Council President's office partnered with Community Law in Action, Inc. (CLIA) to prepare students for their work with the City Council. CLIA is an independent nonprofit youth advocacy organization that works closely with the University Of Maryland School of Law. CLIA provided the pages with training sessions on the City's legislative process throughout the school year.

"It's not enough to place young people in the City Council Chamber to observe hearings," says Terry Hickey, CLIA's executive director. "The Page Program provides realistic training, a chance to engage elected officials and the ability to examine the issues important to them. This unique exposure to the legislative process brings civics to life and cultivates a lifelong interest in advocacy."

Ms. Thomas and Mr. Milburn, who began the Page program as juniors, will complete their final year of high school at Western and Northwestern, respectively. Ms. Blackledge, who began the Page program as a senior, will be attending Trinity Washington University this fall.

"On behalf of the entire City Council we wish our Council Pages the best as they continue with their academic careers," Rawlings-Blake said.

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