
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Beverly Cheuvront
(718) 287-2600 x. 20265
bevc@camba.org

CHILDREN'S MARCH:
BROOKLYN GRADE-SCHOOLERS TAKE TO STREETS TO PROTEST END TO THEIR AFTER-SCHOOL

"If I were not at CAMBA (after-school), I would be all by myself and how would I do my homework and how would I stay safe. I would be so scared. Please, don't take my after-school away."
—Beloute, Grade 1

May 9, 2012, Flatbush, Brooklyn — In a postcard to Mayor Bloomberg, first-grader Beloute echoed the fears that thousands of children throughout New York City are voicing at the prospect of losing their after-school programs to the city's FY 2013 budget ax.

Today, about 80 elementary school children who will lose after-school programs next year took to the streets of Brooklyn to protest the proposed budget.

Armed with signs and chants, children marched along a block-square route from P.S. 139 in Brooklyn's Flatbush neighborhood, one of the schools slated to lose its entire after-school program.

These children will be among the nearly 25,000 New York City children who will lose their after-school, school-break and summer programs under the proposed cuts to New York City's Out-of-School-Time (OST) funding and other after-school programs. [CAMBA](#), a Brooklyn-based multiservice nonprofit, operates the P.S. 139 after-school program.

Our responsibility to educate and care for children shouldn't end at 3 pm," said **Joanne M. Oplustil**, Executive Director of CAMBA, which operates OST programs at 10 schools in Brooklyn. "CAMBA's after-school programs provide a safe and enriching environment for 2,000 children a year, allowing their families to work and their out-of-school-time hours to build on their school-day learning.

"I stand with CAMBA and the hard working parents of this community in opposition to the Mayor's proposed budget cuts that would eliminate after-school programs for hundreds of students. It is nothing short of an outrage that the Mayor seeks to balance the City's budget on the backs of our children and working families — and punishing them for book-keeping purposes is a disgrace," said Assemblywoman **Rhoda Jacobs**.

"These cuts would have a devastating effect on those than can least afford it. Now is the time to invest in our children not go back on our commitment to our future," Jacobs added. "In the strongest terms, I urge the Mayor to rescind this proposal and support our children and their families."

"I am proud to stand with CAMBA in opposition to the proposed cuts to the Out-of-School Time (OST) programs at schools throughout the district and across the city. These programs are a vital resource for youth who need a safe place to play and stay active after school. As a community, we should come together to protect all after school programs and stop this proposed cut from becoming a reality," said Council Member **Mathieu Eugene**.

The May 9 demonstration was part of [Campaign for Children's](#) citywide **Lights OFF After-School** effort to raise awareness of the devastating impact of the planned cuts to youth programs.

In Brooklyn, home to more than a half-million children, almost half of the current 153 Out-of-School-Time programs are facing the budget ax – leaving only 77 programs to serve the borough's students.

Here are some additional comments for children who are slated to lose CAMBA-operated after-school programs:

"If I was not in CAMBA, I will be home by myself. And I will not get any food until late because my mom goes to school after work." —Izabel, First Grade

"If I was not in after-school I would stay home by myself and my mom would get in trouble but she has to go to work and can't pick me up." —Tyler

"If there was no after school I would be walking home by myself and to blocks away from my house there is always unsafe people." —Julie, Fourth Grade

"You should not shut down CAMBA (afterschool) because our parents work hard and late. They don't know where we should go." —Alysha, Grade 2

About CAMBA

CAMBA is a nonprofit agency that provides services that connect people with opportunities to enhance their quality of life. Started in 1977, CAMBA offers integrated services and programs in: Economic Development, Education & Youth Development, Family Support Services, HIV/AIDS Services, Housing Services & Development and Legal Services. CAMBA serves more than 45,000 individuals and families, including 8,000 youth, each year. Learn more about CAMBA's life-changing services at www.camba.org.

###