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CONTACT: J.R. Magsaysay, Development Manager, 718.230.4186 x304

Cool Culture Connect Audio Tours – A National First!

(New York, NY, December 22, 2008) – Cool Culture is pleased to introduce its *Cool Culture Connect* Audio Tours which will be featured in both our Family Time newsletter and e-zine and embedded on our website. Having full access to culture's art, history, science and activities means being well informed about what's available. *Cool Culture Connect* is designed to provide access by offering families an insider's view into the world of our cultural partners.

"An audio tour featuring cultural critiques created by parents for the benefit of other parents from the same underserved communities is a nation's first that emphasizes the unique and collaborative creative process that is the historical foundation of the Cool Culture program," says Cool Culture Executive Director, Candice Anderson.

Here's how it works – each quarterly issue of the Family Time newsletter and every monthly e-Family Time e-zine will include an audio tour that spotlights coming events. Some exhibits will be introduced by Cool Culture parents, children and Cultural Liaisons (specially trained educators) that have made visits to our partner cultural institutions. Other programs and activities will be introduced by museum curators, children's educators, and teaching artists who will invite families to check out a special exhibit or ongoing program at their museum, botanic garden or wildlife center!

"*Cool Culture Connect* is accessible by any phone by dialing 718.408.2393 and is available to anyone wanting family friendly information about the NYC culture scene," explains Anderson.

Founded in 1999, Cool Culture helps families in low-income households to access and enjoy NYC's cultural life in order to provide educational experiences for their children and to strengthen parents' capacity to serve as their child's first educator.

In order to overcome the financial, informational, and perceptual obstacles that prevent them from taking advantage of the educational resources provided by NYC's cultural institutions, Cool Culture's **Family Pass** program entitles families with children in targeted schools to unlimited free visitation to 80 of NYC's finest cultural institutions.

Cool Culture accomplishes this goal by linking NYC's cultural institutions with early childhood educational programs – child care, Head Start, Universal Pre-Kindergarten, Even Start and LYFE – that provide subsidized education and care to children and families in low-income households.

Cool Culture's programs currently serve 50,000 families enrolled in 450 early childhood education programs throughout the five boroughs, annually; and it has developed partnerships with 80 of the City's best-known cultural institutions, including the Asian American Arts Centre, the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Central Park Zoo, the Children's Museum of Manhattan, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Morris-Jumel Mansion, El Museo del Barrio, the Museum of Modern Art, the Noguchi Museum, and the Studio Museum in Harlem.

Research shows that family involvement in learning is a predictor of a child's academic achievement. The subsequent achievement gap between middle-class children and those living in poverty begins before children enter preschool. Cool Culture, in partnership with its innovating educators and cultural institutions, helps parents to fill this gap.

In 2006, Cool Culture was inducted into the Channel Thirteen / WNET and WLIW21 Community Hall of Fame. In 2008, Cool Culture is the recipient of the Union Square Arts Award.

For more information about Cool Culture and its Cool Culture Connect Audio Tour, please contact J.R. Magsaysay at 718.230.4186 x304 or visit www.coolculture.org.

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