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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Atlantic City's "Raising Kings and Queens Program" Celebrates its First Graduates

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP, NJ (February 6, 2025) – The City of Atlantic City celebrated the graduates of the first cohort of *Raising Kings and Queens*, a transformative program made possible through Reentry of Atlantic City, with a special graduation luncheon yesterday at Gourmet Cuisine in Galloway Township.

Throughout the 10-week program, participants ages 14-18 engaged in mentorship opportunities, etiquette training, and hands-on projects designed to prepare them for future success. Graduates spoke about how much they valued the experience, especially the trips and etiquette courses, where they learned essential skills not previously taught to them.

"Programs like this are a huge part of the Small administration's commitment to enriching the lives of Atlantic City's youth," said City of Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small, Sr. "We're giving these kids the tools and guidance they need at a young age so they can become contributing members of our community as they get older. Our Reentry Services division, as well as our One Neighborhood Evolution Anti-Violence team, do an excellent job working with our youth, and we made a commitment during my 2025 State of the City to hold more programs like this throughout the year."

"As someone from this city, I understand the challenges our youth face in staying on the right path," said Kamau Johnson, Director of Reentry. "Change starts with the younger generation, and I created this program as a stepping stone to put action behind my words. My hope is to inspire kids to understand: 'You are a King, and you are a Queen!' Carry yourself with respect, and the world is yours to explore with the right foundation and mindset."

During the luncheon, Principal Robert Strickland highlighted how programs like *Raising Kings and Queens* have the potential to expand into schools, furthering their impact on young people's futures.

About Atlantic City Reentry Services

Atlantic City Reentry Services is dedicated to providing support, resources, and opportunities to individuals navigating challenges that put them at risk of incarceration. While traditionally focused on helping those returning from incarceration, the organization also works proactively with high-risk youth to provide mentorship, life skills, and positive pathways for success. Programs like *Raising Kings and Queens* aim to empower young people before they enter the justice system, equipping them with the tools they need to thrive.

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