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**THE SANITATION FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE 4th ANNUAL ‘NYC TRASH ACADEMY:
TALKING DIRTY ABOUT SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS’**

A groundbreaking, no-cost educational series empowering New Yorkers to combat climate change through improved waste management

The Sanitation Foundation, the official nonprofit partner of the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY), is announcing the 4th Annual “NYC Trash Academy,” designed for busy New Yorkers who are interested in learning how to create a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable city. NYC Trash Academy, formerly known as Zero Waste Academy, is a free educational series developed and taught by experts from the NYC Department of Sanitation and the private sector to increase awareness and understanding of waste management's environmental, social, and economic impacts. Upon completion of the program, participants will be equipped with the knowledge and resources to create meaningful change in their lives, their communities and the city at large.

The curriculum will explore topics such as:

- The past, current and future landscape of trash in NYC
- The origins of American “throwaway culture” and an introduction to circular economies
- The role that waste and litter plays in the health of our water system
- New initiatives to keep trash off of sidewalks
- A focused look at food waste, the most significant diversion opportunity in our waste stream

NYC Trash Academy runs from February 8 through March 21 and consists of 8 virtual lecture modules which can be watched by participants at their own pace or as a group at scheduled evening watch parties (Tues/Thurs). In addition to the core educational sessions, NYC Trash Academy also includes virtual field trips to Sims Municipal Recycling (previously SMR) (Friday, February 23) and Cooper Recycling (Friday, March 8), allowing participants a view of sophisticated material recovery facilities at work. This year we have added three hybrid evening study hall sessions (Thursday, February 22, March 7 and 21) where participants can come together (virtually and in person) to discuss the modules and network as a cohort. NYC Trash Academy will kick off with an optional in-person meet and greet on February 8 and culminate with an in-person graduation and networking event at our final study hall on March 21, to further build community and momentum towards personal and collective action.

“The Sanitation Foundation’s mission is to advance the City’s efforts to reduce waste sent to landfill and engage New Yorkers in the work to create a cleaner, more sustainable city.” said **Pam Harris, President of the Sanitation Foundation**. “Our goal with the NYC Trash Academy is to turn New Yorkers into waste experts who are equipped with the knowledge and power to bring about change in their communities.”

At the end of the 2023 program, 69% of alumni said they planned to make changes in their lifestyle and 57% said they planned to volunteer for a new organization. Alumni from past Academy cohorts have shared that the experience profoundly impacted them personally and professionally. Some have even gotten jobs in the waste sector as a result.

“I signed up for the Academy just because I wanted to learn how to recycle better, said **Deb Lohse, a 2021 Academy alum now working with the Sanitation Foundation**. “I unexpectedly found myself completely fascinated with the interconnected web of human behavior, consumption, waste management, and the workforce committed to keeping our city clean and safe every day. The Academy left me feeling more connected to and responsible for this incredible city we live in, and I always say ‘Thank You’ to sanitation workers for their indispensable service.”

“The Academy has completely changed my life,” said **2023 alumni Danielle D**. “I actually went to get TRUE certified immediately after taking the course. It has really helped me look at trash so much differently in New York because there are so many different types of waste bins and just understanding the infrastructure that we have and how we can possibly apply change to that.”

This year’s Academy is made possible by generous support from Con Edison and Verizon Wireless.

Con Edison is deeply committed to a clean energy future that is reliable, equitable and environmentally just for all New Yorkers,” said Jen Hensley, senior vice president, Corporate Affairs, for Con Edison. “The NYC Trash Academy is another way we are working to expand our collaboration with customers and community partners, all of whom have a critical role to play in delivering a sustainable low-carbon future.”

“Verizon is proud to continue our partnership with the Sanitation Foundation. This dedicated organization runs the NYC Trash Academy, a program that promotes sustainability and critical climate change initiatives,” said **April Horton, who is responsible for Verizon grants in New York**. “Our collective work is offering cutting-edge and innovative sustainability tools to

consumers and businesses in New York. Together we are committed to making New York City a greener and better place to work, live and play."

Participation is free, but space is limited, so apply early. Applications are open from December 14 through February 2. For more information and to apply, visit sanitationfoundation.org/NYC-Trash-Academy.

About the Sanitation Foundation

The Sanitation Foundation is the official non-profit partner of the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY). We support the work of DSNY to clean up the city and reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills. Our work is designed to create ways for individuals, corporate partners, institutions, and community groups to participate in creating a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable NYC. For more information, visit sanitationfoundation.org.

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