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Res. No. 969-A

Resolution designating October annually as Black Boy Joy Month in the City of New York to celebrate the resilience, intelligence, creativity, and potential of young Black males

By Council Members Riley, Banks, Restler, Ayala, Brannan, Stevens, Brooks-Powers, Joseph, Gutiérrez, Louis and De La Rosa

Whereas, According to "Black Joy: Resistance, Resilience and Reclamation," written by Elaine Nichols and published by the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Black Joy is a positive choice and an affirmation, "a way of resting the body, mind, and spirit in response to the traumatic, devastating and life-altering racialized experiences that Black people continue to encounter"; and

Whereas, According to *The New York Times*, Danielle Young coined the phrase "Black Boy Joy" in 2016 after she watched Chance the Rapper "exude happiness at MTV's Video Music Awards…[a] welcome contrast to how young Black men are often portrayed in the media"; and

Whereas, Focusing on a positive narrative, *Black Boy Joy: 17 Stories Celebrating Black Boyhood*, edited by Kwame Mbalia and published in 2021, offers a wide variety of stories in prose, poetry, and graphics by acclaimed Black authors, including Dean Atta and Jason Reynolds, for middle-grade students about Black boys experiencing happiness and fulfillment in their daily lives; and

Whereas, Mbalia noted that he wanted his anthology to spotlight "the revelry, the excitement, and the sheer fun of growing up as boys in and out of the hood"; and

Whereas, Educator Craig Aarons-Martin's CCM Education Group supported a Black Boy Joy Summit in October 2024 in Roxbury, Massachusetts, to inspire Black and Brown males from 12 to 18 years of age in the Greater Boston area to "embrace their joy, genius, and potential" through workshops, mentorships, and

positive role models; and

Whereas, The 2024 Summit's goals were to "empower young Black and Brown men," "create a supportive community network," "enhance cultural and self-identity," "facilitate open dialogue on critical issues," "promote mental and physical wellness," "inspire creative and intellectual pursuits," and "cultivate community engagement and leadership"; and

Whereas, A second Black Boy Joy Summit took place in October 2025 in Roxbury to continue the work started in 2024, offering workshop tracks for participants in arts and media, STEM, entrepreneurship, health and wellness, relationships and community, and leadership and advocacy; and

Whereas, In recent years, Black Boy Joy conferences and parades have also been held across the United States from the Community College of Baltimore County to Mississippi State University to Orangeburg, South Carolina, to Oakland, California; and

Whereas, Black Boy Joy has been celebrated in New York City (NYC) by TikTok star and content creator Khadim Thiam and his crew of young Black male friends, who have become famous on TikTok for posting videos of their participation in activities that they are curious about and where they feel they are not expected to be, such as taking a Pilates or trampoline class, trying matcha, or going to a nail salon or beauty products store; and

Whereas, That crew, which became known as One Strong Brotherhood (OSB), was made up of these 10 founding members, all students from The City University of New York's Hunter College: Khadim Thiam, Ousman Dagnogo, Musa Feseru, Solomon Kumi, James Ametefe, Shamar Wiley, Kingfad Ossang, Isaiah Comas, Ishmael Manon, and Aboubacar Kebe; and

Whereas, In a May 2025 interview on ABC News, Khadim Thiam explained their viral online success, with over 290,000 followers, by noting that "a lot of people say that our videos bring joy to them because they see themselves in [the videos]-celebrating life, trying new things, being in the moment, having fun, and not conforming to the societal norms that people like us" would be expected to adhere to; and

Whereas, The digital hashtag #BlackBoyJoy is used nationwide to communicate joyful stories and images; and

Whereas, According to New York State Education Department data for the 2023-2024 school year, there were just over 218,000 Black or African-American students in NYC public schools, with about 51 percent of total enrollment designated as male; and

Whereas, According to "Transforming Schools and Improving Outcomes for Boys of Color," by Adriana Villavicencio and published by *Phi Delta Kappan* in March 2023, "[r]esearch has long shown how schools and classrooms can alienate boys of color, limiting their opportunities to thrive academically"; and

Whereas, It is fitting to call attention to the many positive stories and accomplishments of young Black males in NYC, both in school and outside of school in local communities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York designates October annually as Black Boy Joy Month in the City of New York to celebrate the resilience, intelligence, creativity, and potential of young Black males.

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RHP

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