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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Tuesday, September 18—Opening day of Free University Week at Madison Square Park,
across the street from \$40,000/person fundraiser for President Obama**

New York, NY (September 12, 2012): To mark the one year anniversary of Occupy Wall Street, a coalition of students, educators, and community groups will host the Free University Week—creating education that is democratic, critical, and accessible to all. This event will be held in Madison Square Park from Tuesday through Friday, September 18 - 21, from 2pm to 7pm, and on Saturday, September 22, from 10am to 2pm. Participants will gather in solidarity with Occupy Wall Street's one year anniversary, as well as with education movements in Chicago, Quebec, Chile, and beyond.

Just across the street from the Free University, on Tuesday evening, the Barack Obama presidential campaign will hold a \$40,000 a plate fundraiser at the 40/40 Club, hosted by Jay-Z and Beyoncé and attended by the president. The cost and exclusivity of the event is a reminder of both the increasing concentration of wealth in U.S. society and the inaccessibility of the political system to ordinary people. "The fact that the 1% can spend \$40,000 on an evening, while millions of people have tens of thousands of dollars in debt hanging over their lives for getting an education, shows that the system is out of balance. We need free education for all, as demonstrated in the Free University, now more than ever," said organizer Carwil Bjork-James.

Of the over 130 scheduled workshops at the Free University Week, highlights include: 'On Disasters and Encampments' with Rebecca Solnit; 'Occupying Language: A Conversation' with Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzellini; 'The NY Comics & Picture-story Symposium' with Ben Katchor; 'Strike Debt' workshop series with Pamela Brown, George Caffentzis, Nick Mirzoeff, and Andrew Ross; 'Student Unionism' workshop series with a member of Quebec's CLASSE student union, an Occupy Wall Street Screenprinters art shop, and an 'Occupy Guitarmy' musicianship certificate program.

The first Free University on May Day, 2012, welcomed over 2,000 participants for dozens of classes and workshops in Madison Square Park. This week-long reprise rides the momentum of Occupy Wall Street's September 17 actions, in addition to other demonstrations against neoliberal assaults on democracy and social justice. These include the ongoing Chicago teachers' strike, the recent victory of the 'Hot and Crusty' workers' occupation in NYC, and the recent victory of the Quebec student movement that defeated a 75% tuition increase and ousted Premier

Jean Charest. The Free University Week constitutes a hub of political education in New York City that will enhance the movement's clarity, confidence, and direction for years to come.

Film crews and photographers are welcome throughout the week. For more information on the schedule of events, visit <http://freeuniversitynyc.org/schedule/>. To schedule a press interview, contact FreeUPress@gmail.com.

DATE: Tuesday, September 18 – Saturday, September 22, 2012

TIME: Tuesday – Friday, 2pm-7pm, Saturday, 10am-2pm.

LOCATION: Madison Square Park, 23rd St and 5th Ave, Manhattan, NY.

URL: freeuniversitynyc.org

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