



QUEENS CENTERS FOR PROGRESS

Services for People with Developmental Disabilities



Established 1950

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**QUEENS CENTERS FOR PROGRESS
"THE GIVING GARDEN" TO OPEN AT BELLEROSE, QUEENS
FACILITY**

Jamaica, New York, June 11, 2018— A quarter-acre plot at Queens Centers for Progress (QCP) Bellerose Campus has been transformed into a beautiful produce garden that will be tended by individuals with developmental disabilities who live at QCP residences and attend its programs.

There will be an official ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the Giving Garden on June 14th at 10:30 AM. Representatives from the various corporate-sponsor teams that have contributed to the build-out will be on hand, as well as local officials.

QCP staff member, Angela Pionegro, came up with a modest idea for the garden: a few raised beds for residents at the facility, who could raise and harvest their own vegetables.

But then, word got out!

According to Rich Gess of Home Depot (retired), "The project really developed through a partnership in the greatest sense of the word through QCP, the NYRP, and our Home Depot partners."

Fiskars Corporation, The Home Depot Foundation, and Scotts Company have pitched in to fund the project. The new plans call for eleven raised beds, with three of the beds being wheelchair accessible; a picnic area; and accessible paths that will be lined with flowers and ornamentals. All construction materials and plantings have been donated by The Scotts Company, Pavestone, Quikrete Company, Bonnie Plants, Stinchcomb and Hopewell Nurseries, Sheds USA and Rubbermaid.

Construction began on May 7 and was completed on May 10. Forty-five volunteers from Home Depot's "Team Depot" assisted in the building of the Giving Garden.

The garden will operate during the traditional growing season, starting in May and ending in October. The garden will also operate on a limited basis during winter months, and will be available to QCP residents and staff year-round.

All QCP program participants, residents, and staff will be welcome to contribute their talents to the upkeep and cultivation of the garden. Planned food crops include garlic (a winter planting), peppers, tomatoes, string beans, hot peppers, collard greens, eggplant, and cucumbers.

Surplus produce will go to local food banks, which led to the name "The Giving Garden."

Jason Sheets of the New York Restoration Project spoke about the some of the benefits the Giving Garden will provide: "The plan is to benefit the day residents and full-time residents of QCP. They had a couple of raised-bed gardens in the complex, which was very popular, so they wanted to use this wide-open space to create more room for vegetable gardens, for folks to come in and use the beds as horticultural therapy."

The garden will serve a multitude of functions. As Ms. Pionegro says, "We have some "farmers" here already, and are looking forward to teaching others to plant, tend, and donate the veggies. We are also teaching a sustainable, healthy life style. The Individuals we support will grow vegetables for their own use, and donate to those who cannot afford to buy them. It's all about the give back."

There are also plans in the work to make the garden available to the general public, possibly through farmer's markets, garden-to-table dinners and through assistance maintaining the garden and grounds. As Ms. Pionegro says, "Something this beautiful is meant to be shared."

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ABOUT QUEENS CENTERS FOR PROGRESS

Queens Centers for Progress exists in order to provide services to children and adults in Queens County who have Cerebral Palsy and other developmental disabilities. The purpose of these services is to maximize the range and quality of independent life choices available to the individuals and their families.

ABOUT THE NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

New York Restoration Project (NYRP) is a non-profit organization driven by the conviction that all New Yorkers deserve beautiful, high-quality public space within ready walking distance of their homes. Since our founding in 1995 by Bette Midler, NYRP has planted trees, renovated gardens, restored parks, and transformed open space for communities throughout New York City's five boroughs.

**Location of the Bellerose Campus:
249-16 Grand Central Parkway
Bellerose, NY 11436**

Parking available