

SPRING 2024

HEIGHTS AND HILLS • at home •



DEAR FRIENDS OF HEIGHTS AND HILLS,

Volunteers are vital to Heights and Hills' work. Our Volunteer Program matches community volunteers of all ages with homebound older neighbors to provide friendship and support with the goal of reducing isolation and loneliness. Friendly Visitors can play games, go for walks, help with simple tasks around the house or just sit and visit. Our Shopping Squad volunteers grocery shop for five to six homebound older adults per week who are experiencing a food emergency related to a missed delivery from Home Delivered Meals or other challenges. The Shopping Squad is unique because it allows clients to choose the items they receive. By incorporating choice, we support clients while respecting the need for culturally relevant foods which is rarely achieved by mass food programs. Volunteers deliver fall prevention kits, birthday flowers, and art materials to brighten the lives of homebound older adults. They visit clients in their home to help them address technology challenges.

As part of our Aging-101 workshops, younger volunteers make birthday cards and learn about aging. We work with area schools who coordinate student visits to the Park Slope Center for Successful Aging, where students help with serving meals, run karaoke, perform puppet shows, interview older adults to learn about their lives and more. Younger people also deliver holiday meals and participate in our Shopping Squad with their families.

The Independent Sector, an organization that shares knowledge and research to understand the impact of the nonprofit sector, estimates that one hour of volunteering in New York State is equivalent to \$35.71. Last year our volunteers delivered 3,479 hours of service. That is equal to more than \$120,000 in support.

Clearly, volunteers have an enormous impact on our work, and we believe that volunteers gain as much as they give.

Countless studies have shown the enormous benefit to volunteers from their contributions. Giving their time helps people feel more connected to their community and learn new skills. It can also reduce stress, combat depression, give volunteers a sense of purpose, and have fun - all of which leads to improved mental health.



This summer our volunteer program is going to be expanding to new neighborhoods including Brownsville, Canarsie, Coney Island, and Midwood. We are excited to connect with new communities and expand our impact.

Many thanks,

Carrie Zwiebel Bloss, Executive Director

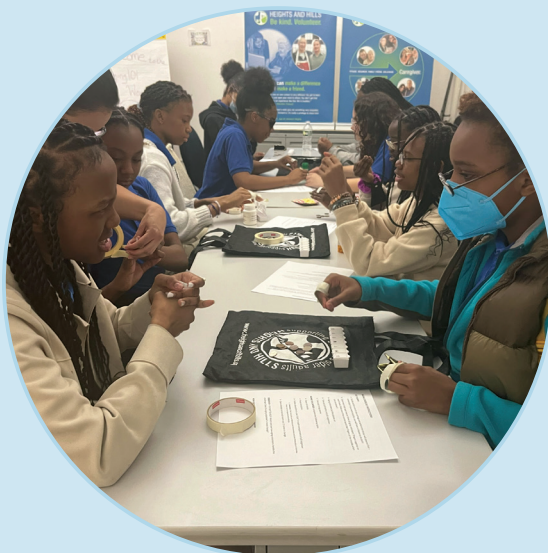
CORPORATE VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE

This year, we partnered with corporations to prepare and deliver supplies to our clients. Volunteers from McKinsey & Company delivered Summer Fun Baskets to our case management clients. Baskets included SPF lip balm, word puzzles, a portable fan, sunscreen, a summer dish towel set, and lavender soap. Another group of McKinsey volunteers delivered Caregiver Appreciation gifts. JP Morgan volunteers created Fall Prevention kits for our clients at the Park Slope Center for Successful Aging and Emergency go-bags containing a crank radio, first aid kit, and emergency preparedness materials for clients to utilize in a natural disaster or other emergency.



INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Seventh graders from MS 839 came to the PSCSA to interview older adults and learn about the key events, ideas, and people which influenced them.



AGING 101

Our Aging 101 workshop is an intergenerational program combatting stereotypes surrounding aging. Students participate in a workshop where we talk about what it means to get old, what kind of help some older people may need, who can provide that help, and what the students can do to support the older people living in their neighborhoods. They participate in discussions and activities where they discover what it feels like to age. At the end of the workshop, the students create cards for clients with upcoming birthdays.

CLIENT STORIES

Volunteers who wish to support older adults in Brooklyn find an array of opportunities when they knock on our door. They may choose from Friendly Visiting, Shopping Squad, Special Projects (delivering flowers, helping with discrete in-home tasks, providing tech support), or Appointment Companions. Some volunteers want to do it all and sign up for everything. Following are highlights from two of our volunteer programs:

FRIENDLY VISITING

Friendly Visitor Wendy and our client John were matched in May 2022, and quickly transitioned from a phone relationship to a “hybrid” model of phone calls and face-to-face meetings, and now connect primarily face-to-face. Wendy laughs when she reports that their favorite outing is to a “greasy spoon” for breakfast and said she thinks their meetings both get John out of the house and draw him out socially when he might otherwise be isolated. Now that they live five minutes from each other, a rather new development, it is easy for them to get together. Last year, they discovered that they were both born on September 19th and celebrated their birthdays together. In addition, Wendy is a steadfast advocate for John and contacts us when she identifies an unmet need or when he is facing a medical challenge to ensure he gets support from us. Of his beloved Friendly Visitor, John says, “I don’t know how we were matched, but the match is perfect. Wendy is a true gift to me.”



SHOPPING SQUAD

It happened once, then again, then a third time. Volunteer Andre grocery shopped for our client Jessie, that is. From the first time he came to her door arms laden with groceries, Jessie was taken with him. “He’s so nice, and polite, and helpful. I appreciate him so much,” she says. Andre, reluctant as he is to bask in the praise, continues to shop for Jessie so that he has become her sole volunteer. Now, whenever the Volunteer Program receives a referral for Jessie, we go straight to Andre. We afford him the right of first refusal before we send her referral to the entire Shopping Squad. But guess what? He always says “yes!”



AT THE PARK SLOPE CENTER FOR SUCCESSFUL AGING

We love to see intergenerational bonds being formed! The youngest members of our Brooklyn community visited the PSCSA to put smiles on our members faces through arts and crafts and puppet show performances. Thank you to our friends from the Brooklyn Heights Montessori School and PS 39.



HEIGHTS AND HILLS

supporting brooklyn's older adults

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Brooklyn, NY 11201

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HONORING

JAG PHYSICAL THERAPY

PARTNER IN SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND LONGEVITY OF OLDER ADULTS

MARY ELLEN CRITCHLOW AWARD

SUSAN FOX OF PARK SLOPE PARENTS

FOR HER LONGSTANDING COMMITMENT TO THE BROOKLYN COMMUNITY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

6PM – 8PM

Cocktail Reception & Award Ceremony

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