

**Family Day of Service**  
**April 16, 2011**

Dear Families,

Despite the cold winds, spring is here and with it our annual Family Day of Service. We are writing to let you know our plans for this day and to encourage you to put aside some time to join with us in helping others in our community.

This year we have chosen to partner with the Brooklyn Community Services organization (BCS). BCS's mission is to "provide a diverse range of programs to strengthen families, help children reach their full potential and foster self-sufficiency in adults." One of the 17 programs that BCS administers is a Transitional Living Community (TLC) in East New York. TLC serves 40 women ages 18-60 who are homeless and have persistent mental illnesses. This can range from severe depression to schizophrenia. The goal of TLC is to help these women regain stability, life skills needed for independence, and to help them find sustainable housing.

A unique part of the TLC program is a fenced in, thriving, organic, pesticide-free, therapeutic garden where the women can work planting flowers, vegetables and herbs, and where they can relax and enjoy a quiet, green space. In the spring there is much to be done and the TLC horticulturalist really depends on help from volunteers cleaning the garden, painting the gazebo, planting bulbs, pruning, weeding etc.

That's where we come in! The BFS Parent Association has arranged to donate supplies and materials for a day of work to get the garden in shape for the summer. Projects on that day will be appropriate for children and adults. We will work 10 -2 PM with a break for lunch at the picnic tables in the garden. During the lunch break Allison Raaum, the Director of Volunteers from BCS ,will give interested adults a tour of the facilities and will talk with everyone about BCS and specifically about TLC, what it does and who it serves.

It is possible that during the day some of the ladies from the shelter will join us to garden, relax, and to share our snacks and lunch. We want to allay any concerns you might have about your family interacting with the ladies and urge you to discuss the topic of homelessness and mental illness with your children before hand.

For the past three years many schools, church groups, and corporate groups have spent time volunteering in the garden. Some of the women from the program feel confident enough to participate when groups are present, and the interactions have been positive and beneficial for all involved. The facility and the women are safe. There has never been an unpleasant or uncomfortable incident for the volunteers.

TLC is an easy subway ride from BFS and, if you are driving, there is ample parking. There will be bathroom facilities available at the garden. We are excited to extend the boundaries of our 'community' to include a wider Brooklyn view. We sincerely hope you will make plans to join us for all or part of the day.

In friendship,

Allegra White Tania Ferran Loreto  
*PAT Community Service Coordinators*

Joan Rappaport  
*BFS Director of Community Service*

As part of Family Day of Service, we are collecting the following items for the women in the shelter. (Travel size is ideal). Please bring in your contributions to the boxes in the school lobby.  
shampoo, conditioner, moisturizing lotion, hygiene products, NEW socks,  
NEW towels, NEW slippers, sweaters, toiletries, non-burning fragrances,  
non-religious inspirational items, hats, gloves, scarves, powdered cocoa, and instant soups.

No items made of glass or with an alcohol content.