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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **NYCHA GROWS WITH ITS GARDENERS**

Plant a seed and watch it grow. At a grassroots level, that's what the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is offering residents with its' Citywide Garden Program and Competition, which kicks off today at King Towers Community Center in Manhattan from 10 - 2 pm at 2 W. 115<sup>th</sup> St.

The Garden Program, which began in 1962, is the largest urban garden competition in the nation. Last year over 1,800 adults and over 2,400 youths participated in the program, cultivating flowers and vegetables in 572 gardens Citywide. This year's theme is called "NYCHA Grows With Its Gardeners".

"This is a wonderful program for every age category," said NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez. "Not only does it add beauty to every development, but the vegetable gardens allow people to actually enjoy the fruits of their labor on their kitchen table."

There are three garden categories for participants: flowers, vegetables or children's.

Participants receive free seeds in spring and bulbs in the spring and fall. Registered gardeners also receive a newsletter and can participate in educational workshops, trips and tours

NYCHA's Community Operations office offers the workshops for those interested in the program. They can learn about soils and improving soil quality, starting gardens from seeds, garden planning, herbs for healing and how to attract butterflies. Two years ago NYCHA gardeners planted 11 butterfly habitat gardens.

Staff of the Garden Program partners with various not-for-profit and governmental organizations, including the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, NYC Department of Sanitation, the city's four botanical gardens, Magnolia Tree Earth Center, the Horticultural Society of New York.

For more information on the Garden Program and to become a registered gardener, contact a local Development Management Office or call our Community Coordinator at 212-306-3268, 3282 or 3343. Enrollment is open until July 6.