

# Willing Hearts, Helpful Hands Newsletter



Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care & Rehabilitation

## Day of Civic Duty

October 22 - By partnering with Home Depot, 25 Willing Hearts Helpful Hands, AmeriCorps volunteers helped provide basic maintenance and repairs to the homes of 20 elderly families living in Nassau and Queens.

"It was quite an experience, I have never done this before but I wouldn't trade it for anything. The warm welcome we received and smiles on their face made my heart melt. I wish we could do so much more," says Bibi Baksh.

Willing Hearts Helpful Hands is a free respite care program of Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care & Rehabilitation, one of 14 organizations nationwide to receive a grant through the Weinberg Initiative.

Parker Jewish Institute has been selected for an AmeriCorps grant to provide free respite care to individuals who are taking care of a frail elderly family member. Volunteers must be able to commit 450 hours for one year (9-10 hours per week); complete an orientation and ongoing training; and participate in a day of civic duty.

Each AmeriCorps volunteer is eligible to receive a \$1,500 stipend and a \$1,450 education voucher that can be used to repay student loans or to attend any college or university.

"I was very grateful that I had the time to do whatever was needed to make their day a better one. Words can not explain what I felt that



Tyrone Higgins & Vincent Fulton

day. The recipients were warm and caring. It was a very good and fulfilling day. I can't wait to do more," says volunteer Vincent Fulton.

Our "Day of Civic Duty" was such a successful event. This truly was a team effort and involved both those working behind the scenes as well as those of you volunteering this past Saturday according to Alice Higgins Volunteer Coordinator.

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### For More Information:

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## Annual Volunteer Celebration

On September 22 Willing Hearts, Helpful Hands Program hosted its Annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration.

The volunteers we have enrolled have exceeded our expectations in so many ways – their generosity, their

understanding of others, and their willingness to go above and beyond for families in need.

I hear over and over from family caregivers that our volunteers are wonderful and caring according to Lorraine Breuer.



Kusum and Ashok Gandhi

I would like to share with you some of the feedback I have gotten from the caregivers you have been working with:

"My volunteer is a gift."

"....now "I know that I don't have to get frustrated because my knight in shining armor is coming ..."

"One day a volunteer showed up right when I was losing patience with my mom.

For all these unmeasurable gifts and more, thank you.

## The Caregiver Initiative

An \$8 million, 3 year initiative funded by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation was launched in September 2009 to support development of community partnerships and innovative approaches to support family and informal caregivers. The 14 projects included in the Caregiver Initiative are not-for-profit organizations or governmental agencies or entities. Diversity is a guiding principle of this program. Many of the projects focus on inclusion of underserved or underrepresented racial groups. They represent both urban and rural areas and serve a geographic area with at least fifteen percent (15%) of its residents age 55 or older. The majority of the older adults and their caregivers being served by the projects have a household income less than the median income in the applicable community.

The Caregiver Initiative provides support to innovative and/or evidence-based community initiatives or projects that help family and informal caregivers assist low and moderate income, community-dwelling older adults in maintaining their independence and quality of life. Innovation refers to new or expanded approaches to supporting family and informal caregivers and, if appropriate, the integration of new technologies. Innovation may differ from community to community.

Projects are providing direct support services that impact the lives of family and informal caregivers (including long-distance caregivers) as part of community partnerships who, in turn, are providing a comprehensive array of programs and services to older adults. These partnerships provide multi-faceted community referral and information networks.

Each project is required to develop and implement a strategic plan to be sustainable after Foundation funding is completed. Evaluation is very important to the Caregiver Initiative. The Foundation is particularly interested in hard evidence that indicates that the approaches of these projects take actually relieve stress on families and other informal caregivers and add to the effectiveness of the caring network. Each of the projects is conducting their own internal evaluation. However, each internal evaluation is coordinated with an overall (external) evaluation of the 14 projects funded by the Foundation.

For more detailed information about each of the Caregiver Initiative projects including contact information, visit: <http://hjweinbergfoundation.org/program-areas/older-adults/caregiver-initiative/>

## Care for Family Caregivers: Findings from a Multi-State Initiative

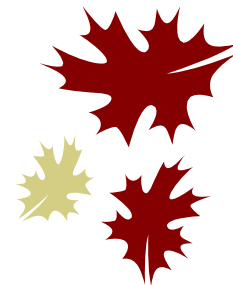
On November 21, Parker's Martha Wolf will present on the Impact of a Volunteer Intervention in Reducing Caregiver Burden at The Gerontological Society of America's 64th Annual Scientific Meeting, taking place in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Willing Hearts, Helpful Hands program is dedicated to easing the many burdens associated with being a caregiver of an older adult. Willing Hearts, Helpful Hands, is an innovative

community program designed to meet the needs of overburdened caregivers by connecting them with a circle of trained volunteers who provide an array of respite services.

Evaluation of the program revealed: (1) a reduction in caregiving burden at the 6 month follow up; (2) a decrease in depressive symptoms. Findings show that brief respite by a trained volunteer corps can help caregivers cope with the burden of caregiving.

For further information, contact [research@parkerinstitute.org](mailto:research@parkerinstitute.org).



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