

July 21, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AMERICAN EXPRESS PARTNERS WITH ANGELICA PATIENT ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM TO BUILD A GARDEN AT
COLER-GOLDWATER SPECIALTY HOSPITAL AND NURSING FACILITY**

A group of volunteers from American Express will spend several workdays creating a garden for the patients and residents on the Goldwater Campus on Roosevelt Island. This project is a collaboration between American Express, Angelica Patient Assistance Program (Angelica) and Coler-Goldwater Specialty Hospital and Nursing Facility (Coler-Goldwater). The press is welcome to visit the Hospital on July 24, 2008 to see this work in action.

A Garden Grows on Roosevelt Island

Approximately 60 volunteers from American Express will work alongside the staff and patients on the Goldwater Campus to create a meditation garden for the grounds of Goldwater Hospital. The transformation of over 3,000 square feet of patio will enhance the lives of adult dementia patients by providing the opportunity for outdoor recreation and a variety of otherwise unavailable sensory experiences. Additionally, the completed garden will benefit small group programs and individuals who may use the area for therapeutic activities or the simple enjoyment of an outdoor space.

The project came about when Greg Balet of American Express contacted Christi Fallon, President of Angelica, about possible volunteer opportunities at the Hospital. Angelica has been working at Coler-Goldwater for the past two and a half years to improve the quality of life of the patients, and when the offer of volunteers was made, Ms. Fallon contacted Ronald Becker, the Director of Therapeutic Recreation at Coler-Goldwater, to identify an appropriate project.

Once the American Express volunteers came forward and Angelica had made the connection with the hospital, Angelica offered to provide all of the funding for the project. "I had wanted to turn this unused space into a garden for some time, but the resources had not been available until now. I am thrilled to have the funding and manpower to create an oasis for the residents," said Becker.

The American Express volunteers will have the opportunity to meet and work side by side with Goldwater Campus patients and residents. The horticultural therapist of Coler-Goldwater will be there for guidance, and Angelica volunteers will also be on hand to assist with the project.

Claude Ritman, the Executive Director of Coler-Goldwater, said "We are grateful to American Express and Angelica for making this garden a reality. The finished garden will be enjoyed by the patients and residents for years to come."

Angelica Patient Assistance Program
22 West 66th Street, Suite 8
New York, New York 10023
212-501-8394
www.angelicaprogram.org

About Angelica Patient Assistance Program (Angelica)

Angelica was established in 2005 by volunteers who started visiting patients at Coler-Goldwater Hospital through a volunteer program of the New York Junior League. Their experiences with the patients led Angelica members to form a new, independent charity exclusively devoted to enhancing the lives of economically disadvantaged patients in need of long-term medical care. In the first several years of its existence, Angelica has focused on special events for the residents and funding for programs that provide therapeutic benefits for the patients/residents.

Angelica was recognized by the New York State Therapeutic Recreation Association (NYSTRA) as their *Organization of the Year* for 2008. Angelica won the award due to the positive patient outcomes that have resulted from its programs and special events at Coler-Goldwater. Programs ranging from The Duet Bicycle and Healthy Starts Cooking Programs to Horticultural Therapy and the Coler Art Studio have led to improvement in cognition, social skills, mood, sense of self, physical functioning and opportunities for creative expression. Also in the spring of 2008, Angelica received the *Goldwater Auxiliary Volunteer Award* for consistently supporting programming efforts as well as building strong community relationships through volunteering.

For more information, please visit our website at www.angelicaprogram.org or call Trisha Duval at 212-501-8394.

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Angelica's mission is to enhance the lives of economically disadvantaged patients in need of long-term medical care and to support long-term medical care facilities. It is presently focused on improving the lives of residents at Coler-Goldwater Specialty Hospital and Nursing Facility on Roosevelt Island in New York City.

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