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New Yorkers for Parks' 9th Annual Daffodil Breakfast Honors Community Volunteers

April 22, 2010—NEW YORK, NY— At the annual Daffodil Breakfast, New Yorkers for Parks celebrated those who have beautified their neighborhoods and parks through the Daffodil Project. Awards are presented to individuals and community-based organizations from all five boroughs that have organized volunteer plantings of daffodils in their parks and open spaces. The event was emceed by Charles Osgood, Anchor, CBS Sunday Morning.

In addition, City Council Member Helen Diane Foster, former Chair of the Parks Committee, was recognized with a citywide award for her support.

“The daffodil marks the arrival of spring and, especially after last winter, we greet them with particular joy,” said Lee Stuart, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks. “These awards recognize the exceptional commitment of our honorees to beautify their communities and lift our hearts.”

The Daffodil Project, led by New Yorkers for Parks in cooperation with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, is the largest volunteer planting effort in New York City's history. Since the Project's inception as a living 9/11 memorial in 2001, more than 20,000 volunteers and Parks Department employees have planted nearly four million daffodil bulbs in all five boroughs. In recognition of this effort, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg named the daffodil the Official Flower of New York City in 2007.

This year's Daffodil Award Winners are:

The Bronx: Bronx Community Charter School

Bronx Community Charter School serves kindergarten through second grade students from District 10 in the North Central Bronx. The school was founded on the principle that children learn best when they are active participants in their own education. Students study the neighborhood and local environment and learn how to empower themselves by identifying problems and creating solutions to improve their community. Last year, the school participated in the Street Trees Academy and this past fall, the school became involved in the Daffodil Project in an effort to further their street beautification work. Instilling the values of stewardship, community connection, and proactive citizenship, Bronx Community Charter School is grooming the next generation of urban environmental guardians.

Brooklyn: Ena K. McPherson

A lifelong gardener and open space advocate, Ena K. McPherson is extremely active in the open space initiatives in her Bedford Stuyvesant community. Ena heads the Parks and Gardens detail of the Parks, Arts and Culture Committee of Brooklyn Community Board 3. Last year, along with her neighbors, Ena spearheaded the revitalization of a dormant community garden. Ena and her neighbors planted new garden beds and Daffodil Project bulbs in all of the tree pits on the block. Ena enjoys participating in the Daffodil Project because “the use of flowers makes a permanent statement of beauty and empowerment in the community. I have people in my neighborhood tell me they have changed their daily route just so they can pass by the garden and admire the blooms.”

Manhattan: Lower East Side Ecology Center

The Lower East Side Ecology Center's mission is to work toward a more sustainable New York City by providing community-based recycling and composting programs; developing local stewardship of green space; and increasing community awareness, involvement, and youth development through environmental education programs. Much of the Center's work is in East River Park, a 55-acre park on the east side of Manhattan. The Daffodil Project provided the Center with the perfect opportunity to involve the surrounding community in the park's improvement process. They are pleased that the Daffodil Project has aided them in their mission to make the park an inviting, locally cared for green space.

Queens: Long Island City Community Gardens, Inc.

Long Island City Community Gardens, Inc. advocates for local open space initiatives and promotes neighborhood beautification efforts in the Hunters Point neighborhood of Queens. The organization serves the entire neighborhood, from Queens Plaza to the East River, Newtown Creek to Socrates Sculpture Park. Garden members, many of whom are also members of Friends of Gantry Neighborhood Parks, have spent endless hours transforming a previously vacant lot into a serene public space complete with individual garden plots and a composting program. The group has participated in the Daffodil Project for the past eight years, planting in memory of the victims of September 11, which include member Mark Christie's cousin, Alva Jeffries-Sanchez. Christie says, "Participating in the Daffodil Project has been an enlightening experience. This is the only memorial that I know of in this part of Queens and it continues to give to our growing community."

Staten Island: Staten Island Garden Club

For 95 years, the Staten Island Garden Club has worked to keep the North Shore of Staten Island green and beautiful. The Club's mission is to foster and inspire interest in gardens and promote their creation; provide informative programming pertaining to gardening, flower propagation and artistic design; and to encourage the appreciation of flowers, horticulture and design. The Club maintains an impressive roster of active projects, including hosting speakers, workshops, and work days. For the past two years, the Club has planted Daffodil Project bulbs at the Alice Austen House, a national historic landmark, as part of their ongoing care and maintenance of the property. Members feel closely affiliated with the property, as Alice Austen was one of the Club's founders. "There have been countless times when we have been digging or just watering when strangers would come over and express their appreciation for what we are doing. It sure makes us feel good!" says member Celide Hogan.

Citywide Award: Council Member Helen Diane Foster

For nearly ten years, Council Member Helen Diane Foster has represented the 16th District in the Bronx, comprising the Highbridge, Morrisania, West Bronx and Melrose neighborhoods. Born and raised in Bronx County, Council Member Foster was the first African-American woman elected to a city office from the Bronx. Council Member Foster is the immediate past chair of the New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation. During her six-year tenure as Chairperson, she was a tireless advocate for parks, playgrounds and open spaces in all five boroughs. Under her leadership, critical legislation was passed, including requirements for the transparency of funding for parks. Numerous large-scale projects are better thanks to her strong voice in support of parks.

The Daffodil Project is made possible in part by the generosity of Dutch bulb supplier, Hans van Waardenburg of B&K Flowerbulbs. He has pledged to donate 500,000 daffodil bulbs to the project each year as long as there are volunteers willing to plant them.

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