

## PRESS RELEASE

### Urban Farmers Celebrate a Food Oasis in the South Bronx Harvest Luncheon Brings It All Together



(New York, NY). Services for the UnderServed (SUS) has created a food oasis in the South Bronx where a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs are grown and honey is cultivated.

On September 23, 2016, SUS celebrated the harvest from its seven community farms located throughout the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens with a luncheon hosted at the Third Avenue farm, 3361 Third Avenue, in the Morrisania neighborhood of the Bronx. This year's Harvest Luncheon featured fresh, organic produce on a mouthwatering menu of seasonal dishes that were prepared and served by individuals with developmental disabilities who are recent graduates of the Basic Culinary Arts training program at Kingsborough Community College, Brooklyn.

At the Luncheon, attendees toured the community farm space, visited the market table and learned about training opportunities in horticulture, landscaping and food services—all critical steps on the journey SUS urban farmers take to securing competitive employment. Guests also enjoyed a guided tour of this supportive housing development, and its rooftop garden. This iconic building has been dubbed by locals as the “Lego” building as its façade of red, gray and blue squares is reminiscent of colorful building blocks.

The urban agriculture movement in NYC has been growing for years, with rooftop and community gardens springing up everywhere. Many are in low-income neighborhoods, often called food deserts, where produce is scarce and obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure are off the charts. SUS recognizes this trend and is operating its Urban Farms as a way to bring healthy food to these neighborhoods.

From beekeeping to rice cultivation, SUS Urban Farms have the potential to transform lives—and SUS is harnessing that potential for the people it serves -- individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, people with behavioral health disorders and other life challenges. SUS Urban Farms provide tools to improve wellness outcomes and help those who participate to achieve their personal and professional goals. Through its network of community farms and rooftop gardens SUS touches over 300 lives each year, providing therapeutic horticulture, nutritional programming, and employment opportunities through field experiences and workshops. SUS is also in farmers markets, where its produce and products are available for sale to the public.

*"As part of SUS' Urban Farms, residents of SUS had the opportunity to experience the true meaning of enjoying the fruits of their labor as they showcased the organic produce they planted, tended and harvested,"* said Donna Colonna, CEO of SUS.

No other single endeavor has done so much for so many; lifting self-esteem, lowering blood pressure, teaching healthy eating habits, developing job skills and changing food deserts to fertile farms. With savory and sweet offerings on the Luncheon menu, reflecting the season's bounty, the Harvest Luncheon truly brought it all together.

Click [here](#) for photos from the event.

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***Services for the UnderServed (SUS)*** is a New York-based nonprofit organization that provides housing and support services to 25,000 individuals and their families living in New York City and Long Island. SUS believes every New Yorker has the right to lead a life of purpose. For more than 35 years, SUS has been transforming this belief into reality by working as an advocate for people with life circumstances marked by intellectual/developmental disability, behavioral health challenges, poverty, histories of incarceration and/or trauma. For more information about SUS' programs and services, please visit [www.sus.org](http://www.sus.org).