

Welcome Spring with Volunteers of America-Greater New York



As we welcome warmer weather in these next months and celebrate Earth Day in April, there are several opportunities for volunteers to participate in beautification projects such as painting and landscaping at Volunteers of America-Greater New York's (VOA-GNY) residences and shelters that provide housing for those in need.

Respect for individuals and families in our care is always our top priority, and capital improvement projects help residents feel a connection to the community and a sense of pride in where they live. Our buildings are always in need of "facelifts" for which we do not have the funding.

Sample needs right now include:

Bronx: Our supportive housing residence, which serves formerly homeless families, is looking to install a playground in their backyard for the children to enjoy after school and during the summer months.

Manhattan: Our supportive housing residence for individuals living with HIV/AIDS has a rooftop garden, and spring is an ideal time for planting fresh flowers and plants.

Brooklyn: Our East Brooklyn residence, which serves 174 individuals including veterans, individuals with a history of behavioral health issues, and formerly homeless adults, has a large backyard that is often used to celebrate holidays. The space needs to be raked and painted, and several of the hedges require trimming.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Valentines For Veterans Success!



Thank you to our partners who collected Valentines for Veterans last month! We were able to provide more than 400 veterans in our care with written valentines, along with candy and warm clothing for most.

Here is a quote from **Miguel**, a veteran at one of our Bronx residences who received a gift:

"My heart feels valentined! Tell them I said thank you - everyone who made the cards."



April Volunteer Opportunities

April is Autism Awareness Month. Among the many social service programs that VOA-GNY offers are our preschools for children with developmental delays in Staten Island and the South Bronx. Treat these children to a special school day filled with games, crafts, and goodie bags for all.

Poetry Month is also celebrated in April. Many of our supportive housing residences and veterans' residences incorporate poetry workshops and art therapy into their recreation activities. Donations of art supplies or notebooks for writing are always needed and appreciated.

Get Involved



Create Your Own Fundraising Team For Operation Backpack® 2018!

To help ensure that every child who needs one receives a completely full backpack before school starts, we are fundraising **now** to purchase the best quality supplies in time for August. Leveraging our economies of scale, we have negotiated the best prices with various supply vendors.

Thank you to **Bank of New York Mellon** for "adopting" the pencil boxes this week- donating the funds so that we can purchase what is needed for PreK-K and 1st-4th Grade backpacks!

Creating your own fundraising team at **DonateOperationBackpackNYC.org** is an easy and fun way for you to support the campaign and ensure that we can again provide new backpacks full of supplies to 18,000 children living in the city's homeless and domestic violence shelters.

Get Started

Partner Spotlight: HarperCollins Publishers

For eight years, HarperCollins Publishers has helped provide students in need with quality supplies by donating 2,500 dictionaries and 2,500 thesauri to Operation Backpack®. Last year when we added dictionaries to the 5th-8th grade supply lists, HarperCollins answered our call and increased their donation of dictionaries. In 2016, they surprised us with a financial donation of \$25,000 to Operation Backpack® through their parent company, NewsCorp.



HarperCollins always sends tremendous teams to our "Sort Week" in August to help receive and quality control the donations, helping to ensure that all backpacks are completely filled and that no child will have to go without.

But their generosity extends beyond Operation Backpack®, too. Every year, HarperCollins donates three picture books to each of the nearly 300 students attending our Bronx Early Learning Center to help prepare them for success in kindergarten.

Thank you HarperCollins Publishers!

Learn More About How VOA Helps: The Facts on Teen Dating Violence

According to the National Research Center on Dating Violence, there are approximately 1.5 million high school students nationwide who experience physical abuse by a dating partner each year. While the manifestation of abuse is similar across all age groups, experiencing abuse during adolescence can shape a person's perceptions and have lasting traumatic impacts.



VOA-GNY's domestic violence programs are committed to helping survivors by providing adequate resources and safety plans.

VOA-GNY operates three domestic violence shelters and nine scattered-site safe dwellings that have interventions in place to help survivors of abuse regain safety and independence. We provide resources to those who want to seek counseling, and safety plans for those in our shelters and safe dwellings. We help them plan ways to move safely around the city and know what they can do should they run into their abuser or their abuser's family and friends. VOA-GNY also provides education on teen dating and abuse in schools throughout our community, as well as to local organizations like Boys Town.

Learn more about the signs, who is at risk, and what you can do [here](#).

To learn more, contact:

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