

## Parker Jewish Institute to Establish New Eldergrow Garden Program

### Innovative Horticultural Therapy Enhances Quality of Life for Patients and Residents

Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation plans to establish a new Eldergrow Garden Program designed to provide a horticultural therapy experience to enhance quality of life for patients and residents and bring the benefits of nature indoors during their stay at Parker.

The program, launched last month is the first in New York state. During the launch, residents will design and plant their own indoor therapy garden with a variety of colorful and fragrant plants. As the old proverb goes, "April Showers Bring May Flowers!"

Parker Jewish Institute, Long Island's leading provider of Short Term Rehabilitation and Long-Term Care, is partnering with Eldergrow™ to bring its mobile garden and indoor horticultural therapy to the older adult community here. "We're excited to engage this horticultural therapy program, which promotes the stimulation of body, mind and spirit," said Michael N. Rosenblut, Parker's President and CEO. "Patients and residents will take pride in growing a variety of plants and herbs with their own hands, and they'll enjoy the results of their labor through culinary harvest and garden art classes."

The award-winning Seattle-based company offers older adults in senior residences and skilled nursing facilities a therapeutic connection to nature through innovative subscription-based gardening products and programming. According to the company, studies show horticultural therapy can reduce depression, enhance mood and sleep, improve coordination and self-esteem and can lower the risk factors for dementia by 36 percent.

Parker's administration saw a need to connect older adults with the healing properties of nature. "Through discussion with our new partner, we learned about the benefits of therapeutic horticulture," said Kathleen Keegan, Parker's Director of Therapeutic Recreation. "Our indoor garden will provide opportunities for sensory stimulation and creative expression, while giving our residents a renewed sense of purpose as they care for their garden."

The mobile garden program brings nature inside 12 months a year. Eldergrow's educators will teach evidence-based, therapeutic horticulture classes to enhance the quality of life for Parker's community of older adults. Patients and residents will engage in meaningful ways with the mobile garden: physically, socially, cognitively, creatively and spiritually. Their team of trained educators build relationships with patients through ongoing enrichment classes on horticulture, culinary and garden art.

Eldergrow™ partners with older adult communities and skilled nursing facilities throughout the United States. For additional information, please call (203) 444-3857 or visit <http://www.eldergrow.org>.