



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2012

No. 115

www.nyc.gov

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING COMMISSIONER
BARRIOS-PAOLI ANNOUNCE CITY'S FIRST EIGHT 'INNOVATIVE SENIOR
CENTERS' NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

Innovative Seniors Centers Represent New Models in Senior Center Services Nationwide

Two Additional Brooklyn-based Innovative Senior Centers to Open Later This Year

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Department for the Aging Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli today announced that the City's first eight Innovative Senior Centers are now open for the City's senior population. Innovative Senior Centers offer a new model of centers for older New Yorkers by providing enhanced programming, including robust wellness programs, additional access to health care services, arts and cultural programs, as well as new technological and volunteer opportunities. The innovative senior centers also go beyond the offerings of the traditional senior center to include flexible and expanded hours on evenings and weekends, and café-style flexible meal times. These centers include the opening of the nation's first ever senior centers with programming specifically for the LGBT and visually impaired communities. Later this year, two additional Innovative Senior Centers are expected to open in Brooklyn. Mayor Bloomberg made the announcement at one of the City's eight new innovative senior centers – the Selfhelp Ben Rosenthal Prince Street Senior Center in Flushing, Queens. This center will open alternate Saturdays, and for the first time offers vegetarian meals on those days for Flushing's underserved Hindu community. The Ben Rosenthal Center, which serves over 400 seniors a day, is also adding an Arthritis Management program, expanding its technology infrastructure to help homebound seniors and creating new recreational and social activities to further bolster its Saturday programming. The Mayor and Commissioner were joined by Stuart Kaplan, CEO of Selfhelp Community Services

“We have charged our new senior center models with not simply expanding their programs and services, but with re-imagining centers for the 21st century senior,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “Our Administration will take on this challenge as we have always done, by focusing on innovation, demanding accountability, measuring results and consistently improving to meet the needs of our City's older New Yorkers and make ours truly a ‘City for all Ages.’”

(more)

“These innovative senior centers showcase the administration’s commitment to an age-friendly New York City,” said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs. “These spaces not only provide services but also engage older New Yorkers' creativity and resourcefulness in a way that builds support systems, revitalizes individuals and strengthens our community.”

“We are proud to partner with Selfhelp as they are a pioneer in using technology to improve the well-being of its members and enable them to live independently and securely in the privacy and comfort of their own homes,” said Aging Commissioner Barrios-Paoli. “One of their first technology ventures was the Virtual Senior Center enabling homebound seniors to participate in senior center classes and activities through two-way video. They have expanded that program and added Tele-Health kiosks, which are used to help members monitor their own health.”

Creating an enhanced senior center model to better serve the New York’s more active and diverse senior population is a key part of creating a more age-friendly city. While still providing meals and opportunities to socialize with their peers, Innovative Senior Centers are held accountable for producing vibrant programs, high participation rates and better health outcomes for older New Yorkers. Created in partnership with the Council of Senior Centers and Services, Innovative Senior Centers aim to reach a larger population of older New Yorkers and will work with individual center members to obtain baseline health information upon enrollment and will measure critical health outcomes over time.

Examples of specialized programming by the Innovative Senior Centers:

Bronxworks (Bronx)

- Community gardening through the City’s Green Thumb program;
- Nutrition programs to help seniors who may have nutrition-related health issues; and
- Expansion of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (both English and Spanish versions); and
- Geriatric mental health programming.

Lenox Hill (Manhattan)

- Vegetarian and locally sourced organic meals;
- Access to a swimming pool for activities like a “Watercize” class and an underwater photography class, and a garden club that is creating a rooftop garden;
- Pro-bono legal clinics; and
- Depression and alcohol screenings.

YM-YWHA (Manhattan)

- Dinner cafe with self-service options;
- Programs such as classes on Skype communication and bird watching; and
- NY Public Library "Satellite branch" to sign seniors up for library cards and run a monthly book club.

Selfhelp Ben Rosenthal Senior Center (Queens)

- Using technology in health and wellness programs, including that which helps improve cognitive acuity;

