



Volunteer Week Press Release

For media inquiries:

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“I’m here ‘til I sell the last berry!”

**PASSIONATE YUM MARKET VOLUNTEER PROVIDES
HEALTHY FRUIT & VEGETABLE OPTIONS TO
ELDERS AND THE COMMUNITY**

National Volunteer Appreciation Week: April 12- 18

NEW YORK, NY, April 2, 2015 – “I know what every one of my customers is looking for,” modestly boasts **Bobbie Gamble**, a 67-year old volunteer at **Isabella** for the last five years. Bobbie has single-handedly taken the Washington Heights nursing home and rehabilitation center’s **YUM Program** and added a novel twist...a roving cart. The program now reaches residents, staff and family members who may not otherwise have ready access to healthy fruits and vegetables.

The YUM program (now in its fifth year, thanks to initial grants from Atlantic Philanthropies and New York Community Trust and ongoing funding from Isabella) supplements the community’s efforts to combat diseases through healthy eating options at affordable prices.

The Wednesday appearance of Bobbie’s Yum Cart, which is winding up its first year, reaches a broader array of people than anticipated. “When I realized that people weren’t coming down to make a purchase at our stationary YUM location, I changed the model. Now I bring the produce to them and sell out our wares every time!”

YUM Program Director Carol Ban adds, “We marvel at Bobbie’s creativity and passion, and she is a vital component to making this program thrive. Everyone adores her infectious positive spirit – in fact, her enthusiasm has attracted more customers to both the Market and Cart.”

Staff and residents listen for the ringing of her little bell as she moves quickly about the Isabella campus, covering lots of territory. “Fresh fruits and vegetables...I’ve got zucchini and blueberries,” sing-songs this spirited volunteer who begins selling at 11am and won’t leave until she’s sold the last item on the cart. She often stays late to catch the second shift of staff that arrives at 3 pm.

“I really believe in what I’m doing. I’ve always been an advocate of healthy eating, and I know our staff and employees benefit from my work; otherwise they’d be reaching for chips and candy bars if I didn’t offer them the option to buy grapes, mangos and bananas” explains the high energy senior. Her clientele benefit from Bobbie’s attentiveness to their wants and likes and, just as importantly, her inside tips ranging from ripening the fruit to identifying which are higher in fiber.

Unlike other fruit stands in the community, which are around only in the warmer months, Isabella’s Yum market and cart operate year-round. The program is open to the community every Wednesday from 11am – 3pm at Isabella, 515 Audubon Avenue. Payment is accepted in the

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Isabella & National Volunteer Appreciation Week: April 12- 18 *con't*

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form of cash, checks and EBT SNAP (food stamps) benefits. The produce is delivered fresh the day of sale from New York's Hunts Points Market.

On a recent Wednesday, Bobbie was overheard, *"You should try the kale this week; it will help with your glucose control. AND, do I ever have the perfect recipe for you!"* It's that kind of personal attention that makes this exceptional woman a real peach-of-a- volunteer!

BACKGROUND

Isabella, a pioneer in caring for adults since 1875, is located in the Washington Heights area of Manhattan. As part of the 705-bed nursing home, Isabella offers enhanced programming and short and long-term rehabilitation at the new Rehabilitation Center at Isabella. This nonprofit also offers independent living for seniors in Isabella House. Isabella's community-based programs are designed to promote education and healthy aging in the community and include Isabella Care at Home, Inc. (CHHA), Isabella Visiting Care, (LCHSA), Adult Day Health Care, Child Day Care, two NORC Programs, a Benefits Enrollment Center and the Institute for Older Adults.

Visit www.Isabella.org and/or [www.Facebook/Isabella.org](https://www.facebook.com/Isabella.org) for more information.

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