As Visiting Neighbors celebrates our 40th anniversary of service to the elderly of Community Board #2, we would like to pay tribute to NYU which has been a reliable source of strength and support to our organization. Without the help of NYU, we might not be here today, and many of the seniors we serve might be resigned to spending their final years in nursing homes, unable to get the help they need to stay independent.

Our relationship began in the mid-1970s when we reached out to NYU students to help provide daytime assistance to our seniors who needed help getting to medical or other important appointments during daytime hours when it was difficult to count on adult volunteers. We established a mutually beneficial relationship with the university which endures to this day, benefiting seniors and students alike. Many of our seniors live in our community’s historic walk-up buildings and cannot leave their apartments without assistance. NYU students help seniors access the assets of our community – our professionals, our stores and our many service organizations and community groups.

Our partnership with NYU is mutually beneficial to students and seniors alike. Many NYU students, who are away from home for the first time and who miss their families, enjoy the opportunity of getting to know our seniors. Our seniors, some of whom are retired teachers, help international students improve their colloquial English and enjoy the opportunity to feel they are giving something back to the students, rather than just accepting help.

For many years, through the NYU Community Fund, the faculty and administration of the university has helped fund Visiting Neighbors’ special projects that our budget couldn’t cover.

NYU has been a key supporter of our holiday elfing project, generously providing gifts and gaily decorated shopping bags as our elves, including many NYU students, pay special visits to our lonely and isolated seniors, reminding them that they have not been forgotten during the holidays.

NYU has been a true friend to Visiting Neighbors and the seniors we serve, and we urge your support of their request so they can continue to grow, to meet the needs of their students, faculty and administration and the people of our community.

Submitted by: Laura Scharf, Director of Community Development
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