

## **Why is the Baby Bloomers Garden Important?**

By: Leighton Sorkin

I volunteer at the National Children's Center in Washington, D.C. The NCC Early Learning Center works with kids who have different abilities and families who may be experiencing food insecurity. There are many volunteer opportunities, but my favorite is the Baby Bloomers Garden. Urban gardens may be rare, but they give kids like me a place to experience nature, even in the middle of a busy city.

The Baby Bloomers Urban Garden is important because some people in the community rely on it for fresh food. Each year, the garden needs help during all the seasons, especially during the fall to prepare the beds for winter. I helped in October and while I was there, we harvested the crops, cleared the plant beds and then covered them with hay. I learned that the hay helps protect the beds from any frost that could harm the soil. Thanks to volunteers that day the garden will be ready next spring.

While in the garden I was assigned to collect the Kale. I was taught which kale to avoid by looking for wilted leaves that look wrinkled and folded. Had there been more volunteers earlier in the year, the kale wouldn't have rotted on the vine. Instead, it could've fed 2 families by my estimate, maybe even more. The day I was there, only 6 people showed up to help with the job of closing the garden for the season. While it is very helpful to donate money to help, sometimes the gift of your time is more important.

To conclude, the Baby Bloomers Urban Garden is important, helpful and inspiring because it helps many people. To you, it may look like another garden. But it's more than just a garden. It's a place for everyone.