

Dear Fathers, Pastors, Members of St. Michael's Parish in North Andover,

Although we've posted some words and sent many individual thanks via mail and in person, I have yet to send thanks to the Parish as a group at large. I wanted to take this opportunity to send a message that could hopefully be read to the members at some point in Mass or during an event that would reach all or most of the folks that gave their time and energy to the residents and the properties at the North Andover Housing Authority, as I know we have not been able to reach each and every person that gave to us on the amazing day of Service last month at the North Andover Housing Authority.

It's a challenge for many folks that live in our communities to find the time, the resources or the physical strength to get outside and plant flowers and garden in their community or the space around their apartment. The Housing Authority's own challenges relate to very limited State resources to operate and maintain the properties in North Andover, so luxuries like flowers and beautification of the grounds often get pushed to the end of the "list" of priorities.

The Service Project gave residents in three of our housing developments an opportunity to participate in something very meaningful and enjoyable with lasting effects. Those that live in Bingham Way, O'Connor Heights and the Family Housing Development on Francis/Baldwin Street were part of something very special in that they not only received wonderful gifts of life through beautiful donated plantings and flowers, they received the gift of neighborly love, community giving and partnership, all things considered priceless in my view. Many of our residents got a chance to go outside, meet new folks and socialize with powerful positive influential people. Some residents were not able to participate directly in this project, but as a result of all that did participate, all residents get the chance to enjoy something beautiful that brings life and a sense of pride to the place they live. The cleaning of flower beds, the mulching, the stone, the plantings, the bushes, the beauty of all of this along with the volunteered work and time given to us has had a lasting effect on our communities and our staff. It is truly wonderful to be a part of this community and to be shown that our partners care and want to work together with us toward a common goal.

I want to especially thank Arthur Durkin for reaching out to me personally and extending such a warm willingness to work with our community. He took charge of this project with many other wonderful folks and spent a great deal of energy organizing all that went into this project with the biggest, most inviting smile and heart. Thank you Arthur, for being the wonderful person that you are.

On behalf of the North Andover Housing Authority and the members of our Board of Commissioners, I can't extend enough gratitude to your Parish and all that participated in the Service Day Project, but I will try through this message. Thank you all so much for what you gave to us through your time, your energy and your light. We are most thankful.

Warmest Regards,  
Cathy Hoog