



**NYC AGING COMMISSIONER
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The summer started with scorching temperatures and brutal humidity that made New York City almost unbearable. After a record-setting 23 days under the city's Heat Emergency Plan, it's clear that climate change will cause periods of extreme heat to increase in the years to come.

As the group most susceptible to heat-related illnesses, older adults understand the effects of the extreme weather better than most. This year, I've observed older New Yorkers diligently taking necessary precautions and following protocols that protect them from the heat. They have visited cooling centers, checked on vulnerable friends and family, and provided care to help others push through the impact of rising temperatures. This is a great starting point, but the urgency of the moment demands us to go even further.

PROTECTING THE PLANET

As we adapt to the relentless and evolving nature of this weather, we must begin working proactively to protect the planet for future generations.

Making a conscious effort to move towards sustainable practices can help counter the effects of climate change and keep earth safe, healthy, and cool.

Small steps towards sustainable practices will benefit our children and grandchildren, and positively impact our health and wellness as well. Using public transportation or walking to nearby destinations can reduce carbon emissions while providing our bodies with necessary exercise, turning off electronics when not in use saves energy while lowering electricity bills, and growing fruits and vegetables at home can offer healthy meal alternatives while helping the local environment and eliminating food waste.

This month, NYC Aging is providing a budding opportunity for a few older New Yorkers to embrace sustainable living. On August 27 and 28, the Container Gardening Project (CGP) will distribute plants and herbs at multiple Older Adult Centers and Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, allowing participants to plant their own gardens. Herbs such as thyme, mint, and basil will be available, and CGP will also offer workshops on tending to the new plants and cooking with herbs. The program



is a great example of how taking sustainable actions can accomplish many goals. Launched in 2020, CGP promotes social connectivity, mental health, and physical wellbeing, and encourages participants to use herbs for healthy eating while making a positive impact on the natural environment by encouraging older adults to grow their own food.

550 older adults participated in CGP in the first year. In 2024, that number will triple. More people will access programs that directly benefit them, and in doing so, they are also creating a cycle that also benefits the population around them. In the true spirit

of healthy aging, participants are laying the groundwork for the sustainable practice of growing food, which they can share with families and friends.

It's a small but deliberate step with the potential to inspire incredible strides towards sustainable living and mitigating the harms of climate change. This is one great way to begin living sustainably and I urge older New Yorkers to explore some of the others previously mentioned. By adopting sustainable practices, we can all become stewards of the better world young people need and deserve. If we lead the change to a brighter future, the generations behind us will surely follow.