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Sr. Margaret Fitzpatrick, S.C.  
*Board Chairperson*

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To whom it may concern,

I am very pleased to write this letter in support of the innovation credit for the sustainability project's organic garden that grows and delivers their wonderful harvest to St. John's Bread and Life program in Bed Sty Brooklyn. The project is innovative in its design and implementation and meets a very important need for low-income and hungry individuals and families seeking assistance at our program. It also allows us to create many activities for our participants that feature the vegetables grown for us around health and nutrition education including cooking demonstrations and classes.

We are the largest emergency food program in Brooklyn, serving over 2200 meals a day in both our on-site and mobile soup kitchens and supplying over 100 families a day with groceries to bring home through our digital choice food pantry. Many of our participants are struggling with not only poverty but diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. It is our belief that many of these illnesses that low-income communities disproportionately suffer from are in large part due to lack of access to affordable healthy whole foods.

We are excited and honored to be the recipients of the St. John's organic garden. It helps us to stem the tide of these debilitating diseases and give our participants free fresh organic produce grown right here at home, with an added bonus of a reduced carbon footprint. The garden's bounty also helps families to create more nutritious and valuable meals and introduce their children from an early age to these all important foods. These are literally the building blocks of many of these young children's future health and well-being. In addition these children are able to get the proper "brain food" that will help them learn and retain information.

I have also been in conversation with both Eleni and Raelynn about the possibilities of our participants visiting the garden and even possibly volunteering. This could be a wonderful experience for many of them and open new doors both experientially and therapeutically.

In closing, the fact that we are asked for nothing in return for this wonderful gift from the students who tend and harvest this urban farm and it seemingly magically arrives on our doorstep is very rare if not non-existent. St. John's University garden is the exact type of project that many of the food funders are the most interested in promoting and funding because of their innovative approach to the hunger problem and the springboard they provide to help us educate and promote healthier food choices to those most in need. We couldn't agree with them more! Thank you so much for this wonderful partnership and opportunity.

Sincerely,

Christy Robb, Director of Food Services