



DOWNTOWN DIALOGUE

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS HERE? JOIN US AT BOWLING GREEN

BY LIZ BERGER

FALL COMMUNITY PLANTING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011 | 10 AM TO NOON | RAIN OR SHINE | BOWLING GREEN PARK

THE DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE IS GREENING LOWER
MANHATTAN! YOU BRING FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AND
WE'LL BRING THE PLANTS AND GARDENING TOOLS.

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COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS AND
ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

Lower Manhattan is the city's oldest—and also newest—neighborhood.

It is where George Washington was inaugurated as President in 1789 and where the first Congress of the United States convened that same year. It is where the New York Stock Exchange has traded on almost every business day since 1817 and where narrow, winding, cobblestone streets laid out by the Dutch in the 1600s are the business address of some of the world's dominant creative, philanthropic and—of course—financial institutions. And for 56,000 of us, it is home.

I've lived south of Fulton Street for almost 30 years. This is where my husband and I bought our first apartment, where we brought our children home from the hospital, and where they went to school. We remember life here before there was a single all-night deli—back when the nearest movie theaters were in New Jersey and Battery Park City was mostly beach.

We wanted to build a new kind of community, where people lived *and* worked. We wanted a place that was alive and active, clean and safe, local and authentic—amid 400 years of history and character—and we waited for restaurants and stores to match Lower Manhattan's new dynamic. We loved our neighbors, pioneers all, but we longed for a *neighborhood*.

Today we have one.

The population of Lower Manhattan has boomed—from under 10,000 in the early '80s to 56,000 now. We're one of the city's fastest-growing residential neighborhoods, with six new primary and secondary schools that have opened in the last two years alone.

A recent Downtown Alliance survey found that a steady surge of newcomers is moving to Lower Manhattan for the quality of life, excellent housing stock, access to subways and other mass transit, and walkability. Thirty percent of our residents walk to work, and the average commute time for those who don't is just 22 minutes, about half the citywide average.

As we did three decades ago, Lower Manhattan's newer residents are putting down roots. Almost two-thirds have lived in the community for five years or more, and the overwhelming majority plan to live here for at least three more. Lower Manhattan today is home to more couples and households with children than singles and roommates. We believe that the number of households with children—already 25 percent — will only increase, because, in a recent survey, 40 percent of households without children indicated that they want to have children within the next three years.

All of which is to say that Lower Manhattan is a new kind of central business district. A globally recognized business address and international tourist destination, it is also where more and more New Yorkers want to live and raise their families: a newfangled, old-fashioned neighborhood.

Want to meet your neighbors? Put down real roots? Join the Downtown Alliance team and me at our Fall Community Planting Day on Saturday, October 22 from 10 AM to noon in Bowling Green Park, rain or shine. You bring family and friends, we'll bring the plants and gardening tools, and together we will plant more than 4,000 tulips in New York City's oldest park.

Anyone who lives in, works in, or is visiting Lower Manhattan is welcome to drop by and help. This is a fun way to bring together one of the city's newest residential communities in a park that dates back to 1733. It's a great way to make Lower Manhattan greener and more beautiful.

Fall Community Planting Day is co-sponsored by Con Edison, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, New York City Council Member Margaret Chin, Community Board 1, Whole Foods and Crumbs.

See you there!

Liz Berger is President of the Downtown Alliance.