

## **HUNTER'S POINT BUZZ: Rooftop urban farm at new Queens rental complex will have 13,000 honey bees**

Bryan R. Smith/Bryan R. Smith

**Lenny Librizzi of GrowNYC and David Graves of Berkshire Berries install a beehive on the 13th floor garden area of Hunter's Point South Commons, a 619 unit affordable housing complex in Long Island City's waterfront neighborhood**

These homes are generating serious buzz.

Renters at a new subsidized rental complex in Long Island City will have 13,000 new neighbors: honey bees.

The developers, led by real estate giant the Related Companies, are installing an apiary as part of a huge urban farm attached to the project.

Expert beekeepers will tend to the hive, located behind a wooden fence on one of the complex's large terraces, and residents can have a taste of the honey they produce.

Kids who move into the property this summer will even get a shot at naming the hive's queen bee, which is expected to lay close to 1,500 eggs a day, quickly expanding the colony.

"They're very gentle," said beekeeper David Graves of Berkshire Bees. "You don't need to worry about that."

And the farm fun doesn't stop there.

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**Kitchen of an apartment in Hunter's Point South Commons, a 619 unit affordable housing complex in Long Island City's waterfront neighborhood, Hunter's Point**

Residents of the buildings will also be able to get their hands dirty in 13 planting beds comprising the urban farm, which was put together with GrowNYC.

Eight varieties of tomatoes, five varieties of peppers, eggplant, arugula, radishes, turnips, beans, carrots, beets, cucumbers, kale, blueberries and raspberries will all be grown on site.

“These 13 beds could yield about 1,000 pounds of produce,” said Gerard Lordahl of GrowNYC, which is managing the initial launch of the farm. “Residents will be able to harvest in June and July and then there will be another harvest in November.”

Advocates believe the rooftop farm will help residents eat healthfully and on a budget — but mostly it will help neighbors meet each other.

“We wanted to put amenities into these buildings that were going to engender a sense of community,” said Frank Monterisi, senior vice president at Related, which is developing the buildings in partnership with Phipps Houses and Monadnock Construction.

“We thought, ‘How cool would it be if we put a community garden up on the roof?’ ”

Apartments at the project, which comprises two towers known as Hunter’s Point South Crossing and Hunter’s Point South Commons, are a mix of mostly moderate-income and some low-income units, meaning the rent is directly tied to how much a prospective resident makes.

For instance, a single resident making \$18,618 to \$23,520 a year will pay just \$494 a month for a studio apartment, and a family of three with a total household income of \$93,806 to \$124,740 a year will pay just \$2,684 a month for a two-bedroom pad.

That’s a sweet deal — with a side of veggies.

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