



## Horticultural Therapy Week marked in Somerset County



Pictured (from left) Adult Day Center of Somerset County member Nina Guerriero, Sen. Kip Bateman (R-16th), Adult Day Center of Somerset County staff member Debbie Cocino, Adult Day Center of Somerset County member Pauline Meske; Registered Horticultural Therapist Laura DePrado, Adult Day Center of Somerset County Board Chairman Dave Tucker, Somerset County Freeholder Pat Walsh, Adult Day Center of Somerset County member Tom Blue, Vice President of the New Jersey Nursery and Landscaping Association Jack Otterbein, Somerset County Freeholder Brian Levine and Adult Day Center of Somerset County member Bobby Rembilas. (courtesy photo)

By [Craig Turpin | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

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[BRIDGEWATER](#) - The Adult Day Center of Somerset County recently celebrated [Horticultural Therapy Week](#).

Members, staff and guests - including Sen. Kip Bateman (R-16th), Somerset County Freeholders Brian Levine and Patricia Walsh, and Jack Otterbein, vice president of New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association - took part in activities presented by [Laura DePrado](#) of Final Touch Landscaping.

New Jersey is the first in the nation to formally designate the third week of March, coinciding, with the beginning of spring as Horticultural Therapy Week, according to a news release. The Adult Day Center is a non-profit agency providing day care services for disabled and elderly residents of Somerset County.

"Horticultural Therapy is very effective because the people-plant connection proves to be therapeutic and enjoyable for everyone involved," Bateman said.

Initially established by Congress in 2006, Horticultural Therapy Week celebrates the benefits of connecting people and plants in vocational, social and therapeutic programs, according to the news release. These programs create a peaceful non-threatening environment using a horticulture modality to improve the quality of life.

[Gardening as therapy is a growing trend](#)

The Adult Day Center has been working with DePrado for the past two years and has seen first-hand the therapeutic effects of horticultural therapy on its members.

"Today was such an exciting day for the members the ADC," said Adult Day Center Executive Director Diann Robinson. "We were honored to celebrate Horticultural Therapy Week with local dignitaries. The ADC is providing a much-needed service to Somerset County and we count on their continued support."

The workshop was divided into two parts - members prepared the raised high garden bed and planted an assortment of daffodils, ranunculus and grape hyacinths. In part two, they created spring-themed arrangements that they were excited to take home to share with loved ones.

"I have joined Ms. DePrado at the ADC before and have observed that the group activity of planting makes everyone feel good," Walsh said. "It brings back memories of their childhood and of their younger days."

Otterbein said his association has been supporting DePrado and horticultural therapy for a while.

"I was pleased to gain a new perspective on how HT benefits older adults with a cognitive impairment," he said. "I observed spirited camaraderie among members working together to prepare the raised beds and the flower arrangements that they were going to be able to take home."

To learn more about the center and its horticulture therapy program, contact Hilary Kruchowy at [hilary.kruchowy@adulthoodcenter.org](mailto:hilary.kruchowy@adulthoodcenter.org) or 908-725-0068