

# The New Normal: The Landscape of Uncertainty

## HUNGER RISING —

Before the pandemic, about 1.2 million New Yorkers were food insecure, including **one in five children**.

Since March, that number has risen dramatically. As an essential service in New York City, New York Common Pantry remained open during COVID-19 and served thousands of New Yorkers trying to adapt to our new normal. When businesses and schools closed mid-March, thousands of New Yorkers lost hours, shifts, and wages, severely impacting the local economy as well as their household stability. To meet increased demand, and to adhere to health and safety measures, New York Common Pantry adjusted our Choice Pantry and Hot Meals models, but remained true to our vision to provide food for all who need it. To date, we've served **over 1,200,000 meals** to our neighbors in need.

We have forged key partnerships with community partners across the city to extend our reach to new areas and keep families safe including Seniors-Only Distribution Hours, To Go Meal Services, Home Deliveries, and much more. ■



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

**U**ncertainty is certain but fear and worry are optional. Until this past March, I believed and acted from that motto. Then came a pandemic that disrupted people's lives in so many ways—health, income, food, social connection, resources. And yes, it prompted fear and worry.

NYCP has dealt with many crises over the years: September 11, 2001, the economic crash of 2008, Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and SNAP cuts in 2013. In each one of those our biggest limitation was leveraging the support of institutions and raising enough funds to respond. It's never been easy, but our operation is mobile, flexible and impactful.

So what makes the COVID-19 pandemic different? This time, everyone was impacted.

All of our human resources and assets, volunteers and staff at all levels and in all departments. We changed how we commuted, interacted, engaged with each other and our participants. Unemployment across the city skyrocketed bringing more people to our doors. We made sure to have the necessary PPE when there was little to none available. We partnered with FreshDirect to pack and deliver boxes when we had no volunteers. We changed our Hot Meals model to takeaway meals, home delivered meals to help those who were more at risk, established a lunch program to serve two meals at once instead of asking people to risk exposure by coming twice a day. We worried about the safety and health of those we served who had little to no savings. We worried that the unsung heroes addressing food insecurity would contract the virus, too.

While we have turned the corner, we are not done yet. NYCP has already surpassed 1,200,000 meals served since March 16. New intakes—people who have never before needed our services—have increased by a staggering 41%.

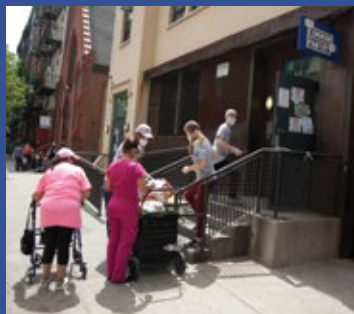
We can't do this alone. We've partnered with over 12 non-profits, food industry and delivery companies, willing individuals, elected officials, sports franchises and eventually, returning volunteers. We found all of you, donors, supporters, funders, new volunteers, all helping in different ways. It reminds us that while we may not have quelled all aspects of fear and worry, there are many working alongside us. And that certainty is not only reassuring, it's sustaining. We'll need that for 2021 and beyond. Please stay with us. Thank you.



**STEPHEN GRIMALDI**, Executive Director of New York Common Pantry

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen Grimaldi'.

## MEET CANDACE V.-



Late winter and spring were dominated by COVID-19. Schools closed, restaurants and retailers shuttered their doors, businesses cut hours and thousands of New Yorkers were left without a paycheck. Families “sheltered in place” at home, tasked with keeping children educated and entertained, while having to figure out how to pay monthly bills without incoming pay. Inflated food prices at local groceries only aggravated an already stressful situation.

The coronavirus vividly reminds us of the harsh reality that many live paycheck to paycheck, and even one missed shift often means they cannot make ends meet. Candace, a newcomer to New York Common Pantry, is one such neighbor. Due to COVID-19, both she and her partner lost their jobs. Tasked with adjusting to a severely depleted income, homeschooling their children, and finding affordable access to healthy food, Candace was looking for solid options. She came to New York Common Pantry.

“Before COVID, I enjoyed making food for my family, especially using fresh fruits and vegetables,” Candace said. “New York Common Pantry helped me continue to do that. The Pantry provides good and nutritious options for me and my family to eat. It’s been a blessing.”

Candace is not alone. New York Common Pantry has seen an unprecedented increase in new members since March, most, like her, trying to get through the pandemic with enough to eat and with enough nutrients to stay healthy.

Candace has been able to take advantage of many of the services offered at New York Common Pantry, keeping her family stable and allowing her one less thing to worry about. Your support is the reason why. ■



# ALLIES AGAINST HUNGER.



**CHOICE, QUALITY, DIGNITY**, are all essential words to describe both New York Common Pantry and Fresh Direct. As the Northeast's leading online fresh food grocer, Fresh Direct partnered with New York Common Pantry to help raise awareness about food insecurity, an important issue that plagues millions of New Yorkers. With the completion of the successful "A Month of Love" campaign in February the online powerhouse immediately jumped in to help New York Common Pantry with COVID-19 relief initiatives in March. Donating thousands of meals, deploying trucks, and teams of employee volunteers to assist with the picking, packing, and delivery of fresh food to New York Common Pantry's East Harlem and Bronx locations, Fresh Direct reassured nervous New Yorkers and ensured no one missed a Pantry package. "Fresh Direct is committed to partnering with like-minded organizations who are making a significant impact within their communities," said David McInerney, Chief Executive Officer, FreshDirect and a Board Member at the New York Common Pantry. "New York Common Pantry and Fresh Direct share the common values of nutrition, choice and, most of all, fresh food. We commend New York Common Pantry on the incredible work and vital services they provide and we are proud to announce this long-term collaboration."

Fresh Direct customers have stepped up as well. Since the inception of our partnership, customers have donated over \$1 million dollars and provided over 1 million meals to New York Common Pantry in the fight against hunger! ■

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**—DAVID MCINERNEY,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
FRESHDIRECT**



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## 12TH ANNUAL FILL THE BAG BENEFIT CELEBRATED A RECORD BREAKING NIGHT AT THE ZIEGFELD BALLROOM



**ON MARCH 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2020**, New York Common Pantry welcomed and celebrated with friends across the food, beauty, and other industries as it hosted its 12th Annual Fill The Bag Benefit. The Fill the Bag Benefit took place at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in New York City and surpassed previous records with an attendance of over 500 guests and by raising approximately \$1.5 million to combat

hunger and food insecurity in New York City. This funding is instrumental in providing support for the thousands of New Yorkers who rely on New York Common Pantry's programs and services. The evening's theme *Setting an Uncommon Table* celebrated New York Common Pantry's commitment to health and hunger relief in New York City. The evening honored Sara Moss, Vice Chairman, The Estée Lauder Companies, with "The Distinguished Partner Award" and Peter Diminich, Managing Director, ING, with "The Estée Lauder Companies Distinguished Volunteer Award" for their work with the New York Common Pantry, and their commitment to solving the issue of food insecurity in New York City.

"Every day, New York Common Pantry's heroic work is improving the lives of our neighbors in need by giving them access to fresh and healthy food," said Sara Moss, during



her speech. "I am so proud to be part of The Estée Lauder Companies who has been a longtime partner and supporter of the Pantry and look forward to continuing to work together towards our shared goal ending food insecurity in New York City."

"I had the privilege of being amongst an impressive collection of individuals that truly believe in ensuring that the Pantry is not only able to continue its current mission but expand it further into the community," Peter Diminich told the crowd. Being in a room full of these people, and their incredible generosity and positive energy, really made the moment of receiving the Distinguished Volunteer Award a truly humbling and rewarding experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life."

New York Common Pantry Executive Director Stephen Grimaldi remarked, "We celebrated the many ways that New Yorkers set an uncommon table by continuing to propel and support New York Common Pantry's goal of ending hunger, and each honoree was honored for their commitment to creating lasting, positive change to feed New Yorkers in need. Our mission rests on decades of personal legacies of those like Sara and Peter who have contributed in so many ways to making stronger communities." ■

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT... PLEASE MAKE A GIFT THIS SUMMER!**

To make a donation please visit [nycommonpantry.org](http://nycommonpantry.org) or use the mailer inside.

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