

# BUILDING A NEW FUTURE FOR NYCP



## WE ANSWER THE CALL AS DEMAND RISES, BUT ONLY WITH YOUR HELP

NYCP has always partnered collaboratively with other community-based service organizations (CBO), sharing resources with after-school or family service organizations to ensure our communities receive the assistance they need. When the pandemic hit NYC and the city experienced widespread job loss and food shortages, when nearly 40% of NYC food pantries and soup kitchens closed permanently,<sup>1</sup> and when an additional one million New Yorkers became food insecure, we heard from those partners. Their families needed food. Could we help?

In response to this urgent call, NYCP launched our Mobile Pantry program. By delivering Pantry packages of nutritious food to the CBOs families already trusted, we were able to bring a safe solution directly to the communities where it was most needed.

As we've seen through increased Pantry enrollment, the rate of food insecurity hasn't dissipated. The news continues to report that more local pantries are closing, leaving many of our neighbors struggling to feed their families. To meet this rising need, we have expanded our Mobile Pantry program, making nearly 1,600 distributions since April of 2020 and delivering more than 2.5 million meals. We also continue to establish new relationships with CBOs throughout NYC to reach even more people.

Reducing hunger in New York is a daily battle. We work tirelessly to provide nutrition security to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who are trying to recover from the pandemic. We cannot meet this increased demand without your help. Please make a gift today to feed a family!

<sup>1</sup> Food Bank for NYC Report, "Fighting More than COVID 19," June 2020

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

**"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new."  
-- Dan Millman, American author and self-help coach**

Since 2020, NYCP has been innovating and adapting to meet an abundance of new needs in the communities we serve. We've dealt with supply chain issues; the implementation of rapidly changing safety protocols; a huge spike in demand; and the deployment of staff across multiple sites, boroughs and counties. In addition, we've provided services outdoors in all types of weather; made changes to remote service provision; and managed shortages of space, donated food and volunteers.

All of these necessary shifts have taught us to be nimble and to embrace change in order to "build the new." NYCP has doubled capacity in existing food distribution and service sites, built a new pantry on wheels, sourced food and supplies from a multitude of new vendors, and enhanced our personalized service approach.



## TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD THE NEW

We built new online programming to teach participants how to get the support they need, whether it's counseling or nutrition education and food preparation. NYCP also launched a Mobile Pantry program that served nearly 1,600 distribution points and more than 2.5 million meals by March 2022.

We've assisted hundreds of thousands of new visitors, providing access to healthy, nutritious food. They are people like Barbara Woods, a mother and longtime Pantry member who would not have been able to feed her children adequately without access to the Pantry, and Angel Morocho, a senior who just can't afford some of the healthier foods he loves on his fixed income. Last year we served nearly 8 million meals and are on track to serve more than 9 million this year.

Of course, we can't continue this unprecedented growth without our great team. During this two-year period, NYCP recognized those that took on these new challenges and who demonstrated extraordinary effort by promoting more than a third of our staff. We created 27 new positions and hired a total of 50 people to meet our growing need and larger workload.

So what's ahead? This year, expansion will encompass renovating a new space to store more food, to use as a distribution hub, and to centralize our food warehousing and operations. This new space will enable us to serve more people, return our sites to in-person service, utilize resources to identify efficiencies across our food programs and bring down the cost per meal.

Change, and the need for nutrition security, is constant in our communities. Please, help us continue to find innovative and uncommon solutions to hunger. Together, we can build the new -- site by site, borough by borough, one person at a time.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Stephen Grimaldi".

**Stephen Grimaldi**  
Executive Director

# JORGE NEGRON



**Jorge Negron** has worn many hats at New York Common Pantry. He started nearly 5 years ago as a Food Programs Manager at our Bronx Pantry. He then became Manhattan's Pantry Manager, the first-ever Mobile Pantry Manager and is currently the Assistant Director of Food Programs. He oversees all operations for NYCP's physical Pantries, the Mobile Pantry, and the Hot Meals Program.

Over time, Negron has seen the organization change in many ways and grow exponentially in scale and reach.

"We've definitely built a strong team and have worked on embracing challenges at the Pantry," Negron said, continuing, "Learning from them has helped us better serve people and provide food in a more equitable way."

One such way is through NYCP's Mobile Pantry Program. Originally born out of necessity to serve participants unable to travel to our physical locations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mobile Pantry has since become a robust, large-scale program.

"The Mobile Pantry Program has really helped to shape a lot of our next steps not only in terms of our reach, but also in terms of building better relationships with communities in the city," Negron said of the program.

Additionally, Fall 2021 saw the launch of NYCP's first state-of-the-art Mobile Pantry vehicle, complete with refrigeration and a service window to directly host distributions across the city.

Perhaps one of the most exciting elements of NYCP's expansion is the construction of our new Food Storage and Distribution Hub and new service site in the Bronx. In addition to creating more food storage space, the Hub will serve as a centralized location for Food Programs and as an additional volunteer site.

Negron looks forward to the collaborative environment the Hub will offer and calls it "the next frontier" for the Pantry. "We can all really come together to expand the way we think about food, how we offer food, and what types of food we offer."

Negron also has noted that expansion of NYCP's food programs has helped more people access other NYCP resources such as social services, nutrition education, and senior programs.

"Everyone is excited about food and that's a great gateway," he stated, "But food isn't the final stop. Food is what opens the door."

## PARTNERS IN SUCCESS

New York Common Pantry (NYCP) partners with more than 200 community-based organizations that we work with to help distribute food and other Pantry services. One such partner is Fresh Youth Initiatives (FYI), a Washington Heights-based youth development organization that works with thousands of low-income, immigrant, and first-generation children to promote healthy living and strong academic achievement.

Our partnership began during the start of the pandemic. FYI's families faced food insecurity long before COVID, but the pandemic brought it to the forefront.



We spoke with Jeremiah Roman, the Director of Youth Culture, Sports, and Food Relief at FYI on how partnering with NYCP has affected their organization.

"The pandemic made us realize that, when parents are struggling, kids are stressed out as well," said Roman. "[With the NYCP partnership] we're not just supporting the kids, we're supporting the whole household as well."

FYI has since created a Department of Food Relief and Social Services, citing NYCP as the catalyst and model for its offerings. The community's need has become so great, that FYI is now one of NYCP's regular Mobile Pantry sites and serves nearly 200 families.





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# FILL THE BAG BENEFIT 2022



**New York Common Pantry** (NYCP) hosted its Fill The Bag Benefit on March 1, 2022 at the Ziegfeld Ballroom. The evening successfully raised more than \$1.3 million to fund NYCP programs that support hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers each year. Since the pandemic started in March 2020, NYCP has served 16.4+ million meals to New Yorkers experiencing food insecurity and poverty.

"We are grateful for this outpouring of community support that will enable us to continue to help the large number of people in need throughout the city," said Stephen Grimaldi, Executive Director.

The evening honored Board Member and Development Committee Co-Chair, **Margie Sung**, as "The Distinguished Partner Award" recipient and long-time volunteer, **Alex Friedman**, as "The Estée Lauder Companies Distinguished Volunteer Award" recipient for their dedication and service to NYCP. Additionally, the event was hosted by NBC News Anchor, **Willie Geist**, and the outstanding paddle raise was conducted by Lead Benefit Auctioneer at Christie's Auction House, **Lydia Fenet**.



Left to right: Willie Geist (NBC News), Margie Sung, Sara Moss (Vice Chairman of The Estée Lauder Companies Inc.), Stephen Grimaldi, Alex Friedman, and Elaine Clark (NYCP Board Chair).

Photos by Marc Goldberg Photography.