



**MORE NEW
YORKERS
THAN EVER
NEED OUR
HELP**

AS THE CRISES CONTINUE, YOUR SUPPORT KEEPS US GOING

While everyone is hopeful that the city will bounce back from the effects of the COVID pandemic and the high rates of inflation that came on the heels of recovery, the truth is, we have been continually hit with one crisis after another. The latest is the loss of government “emergency food funding” and the recent cut to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The average SNAP benefit has fallen to \$6 per person per day, and for older adults who only qualify for the minimum allocation, the SNAP benefit has dropped to \$23 per month – less than \$1 per day.

The 2023 True Cost of Living Report reveals that nearly 1.3 million households (nearly 3 million people) in NYC are struggling to make ends meet. 50% of working-age households do not have earnings to meet the minimum cost of living in New York City to cover housing, food, healthcare, transportation and childcare. Single mothers have the highest rates of income inadequacy, with 86% unable to cover the cost of basic needs when young children are present.¹

New York Common Pantry is seeing the impact of these hardships in the communities we serve. Our meal count across all programs is up by 12% and our visitor count is up by 17%. We continue to serve more than 17,000 seniors each month with commodity supplemental groceries. The use of our shower and laundry services by our unhoused guests has nearly doubled. In addition, we’ve stepped up to provide food and other services to more than 165 migrant households.

Your ongoing support enables us to help the growing number of families and communities experiencing food insecurity. Please join us in the fight against hunger with a donation today to feed a family.

¹ The 2023 True Cost of Living Report, United Way of NYC and Fund for the City of New York, March 2023. www.truecostofliving.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, is an essential program, helping lift more than 41 million Americans out of poverty last year. Due to record inflation and wages that have not kept up, 1.6 million New York City residents rely on SNAP. Sarah, a single, working mother of three young children, is one. Sarah recently had her monthly rent raised nearly 32%, from \$1,900 a month to \$2,500. With the cut in SNAP benefits that went into effect on March 1, 2023, Sarah had to spend more of her earnings on food, and signed up to participate in NYCP's Choice Pantry Program. She faced the difficult decision of whether to pay for lights, internet or rent. NYCP's Help 365 case management team assisted her with applying for, completing and filing, a housing voucher to help pay a portion of her rent, and to cover her rent arrears.

Sarah was one of the lucky ones that sought assistance, and that we were able to help. Many will not be eligible for other resources, and will rely solely on food assistance. We are witnessing this first-hand. Our brick-and-mortar Pantries experienced an 18% increase in both meals and individuals served, comparing March 2022 to March 2023. Looking at the meals we served in February 2023 to those served this March -- just one month after SNAP cuts -- NYCP saw a 20% increase in the number of Choice Pantry meals served.

We've also seen a jump in our social services case management program. Fiscal year to date in the Bronx, which has the highest rate of food insecurity in New York State, there has been a 12% increase in guest membership renewals and a 34% increase in new members over the same time last year. Simply put, there are more people needing and seeking help.

“ WE SERVE MORE THAN 300 PARTNER SITES ACROSS NEW YORK CITY ”

Our Program teams continue to serve more families in communities throughout the city. We currently serve more than 300 partner sites across New York City with resource and food access, as well as nutrition education. As New York residents feel the impact of prolonged COVID-related poverty, inflation and the high cost of food, the loss of government “emergency food funding” initiated during COVID, and the aforementioned SNAP cuts, New York Common Pantry will be a lifeline for many.

Moving into our new spaces in the Bronx, including a warehouse space we affectionately call “The Hub,” will increase our ability to receive, pack, store and distribute more food, while strengthening our purchasing power. NYCP is now in a better position to serve more families than ever before to meet this growing demand. Please help us to help our neighbors in need. Please advocate for a stronger SNAP policy that includes the restoration of the so-called “Emergency Allotment” that helped so many during COVID and during the massive price inflation we all have been experiencing. Please support food pantries and soup kitchens, all of whom are on the front lines of this current crisis.

Thank you for your support in addressing food insecurity during this difficult time.

Stephen Grimaldi
Executive Director

MEET OUR GUESTS

HELEN PIGATT



NYCP's Nourish Program provides low-income seniors, aged 60+, with nutritionally balanced, shelf-stable groceries each month. We served more than 365,000 meals to more than 16,000 seniors in FY22, helping them to get the nutritious food they need, but often can't afford.

Meet one of our Nourish seniors: Helen Pigatt, a 78-year old grandmother and former Board of Education employee. She has been receiving Nourish pantry packages since the program started serving the Bronx River Community Center. Helen loves the food and stresses how the Pantry program has allowed her to eat healthy and nutritious food that she might not be able to afford on her own. "The food that the Pantry hands out is more nutritious and helps me with my diabetes because it doesn't have sugar or salt. And they give us my favorite, peanut butter, and I love it." We recently opened our new service site at 788 Southern Blvd., where we'll be able to support even more Bronx seniors.

ANA COLON



We continue to assist the unhoused with our Project Dignity program. People like Ana Colon, who was chronically homeless, living on the streets, sleeping in trains and never knowing where her next meal was coming from. When she reached her breaking point, Ana reached out to Project Dignity for help.

Our team worked with Ana every step of the way over several months, assisting with paperwork and interviews to secure her an apartment. Now Ana can make her own favorite dishes in her own kitchen and sleep soundly in her own bed each night.

"When I first saw (the apartment), tears came to my eyes. I was so proud of myself that I came this long way. Now I have my own apartment; it's a reality, I live here. It feels good having your own keys, own mailbox, own refrigerator, and your own stove. I'm very grateful," said Ana.

ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE HELPS FEED NEIGHBORS

At New York Common Pantry, we pride ourselves on our strong partnerships with community-based organizations such as Muslim Volunteers for New York (MV4NY). Founded in 2015, Muslim Volunteers for New York partners with New York City nonprofits in grass-roots efforts related to health and wellness, education, environmental stewardship and, alleviating hunger and poverty.



MV4NY organizes an annual Ramadan School Food Drive to support NYCP, recruiting students at participating schools to serve as ambassadors. For their 2023 Ramadan School Food Drive, MV4NY partnered with schools across the city to collect more than 1,000 pounds of food for NYCP! MV4NY also organizes produce packing events for volunteers and their families at the Pantry.

"The best thing about our relationship is that [New York Common Pantry] is one of the first organizations we started our work with. There are so many elements we learn from NYCP about how to do this work. The beauty of our relationship is how it has deepened and expanded," said Sahar Husain, Founding MV4NY Board Member.

"This journey of ours has been short but very sweet. I think because of partners like you we have grown by leaps and bounds," explained Saira Khan, MV4NY Communications Director. "We love the fact that we can come and help you do your good work."



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GOAL! FILL THE BAG BENEFIT RAISES \$1M+



Fill The Bag Benefit 2023 was a success, raising \$1 million+ to support NYCP's programs to reduce hunger and poverty in NYC. Our evening's host, NBC News Anchor **Willie Geist**, passionately spoke of NYCP's impact in the community and auctioneer **Charles Antin** rallied our guests in an exciting paddle raise.

This year NYCP honored **New York City Football Club (NYCFC)** with its "Distinguished Partner Award." The MLS Cup Champions 2021 trophy and NYCFC players lent a sporty feel to the evening. The **"Saturday Regulars"** volunteers, who started working with the Pantry around 2014, received "The Estée Lauder Companies Distinguished Volunteer Award" from NYCP Board Vice Chair, **Sara Moss**.

Top Photo: New York Common Pantry Board and Advisory Board members celebrate another successful Fill The Bag Benefit.

Bottom Photo: The "Saturday Regular" Volunteers, from left to right: Bryan Ngo, Darlene Lee, Lydell Tyson, Monica Rounds, Fiona Cousins, Stephen Grimaldi, NYCP Executive Director; Sara Moss, Vice Chairman of The Estée Lauder Companies Inc.; Nola Magno, Toby Greenfield, Elaine Clark, NYCP Board Chair, and Willie Geist, event MC and host of NBC's Sunday TODAY with Willie Geist.



Photos by James Poster Photography