



NYCP IS A HAVEN FOR ALL WHO SEEK ASSISTANCE

FEEDING HOPE

It's been another hard year for New Yorkers, especially for those we serve at New York Common Pantry (NYCP). Every day, we witness the struggles of individuals and families who, despite their best efforts, fall into the 50% of working-age households who don't earn enough to cover the basics: housing, food, healthcare, transportation and childcare.[1] Picture a young mother named Maria, who juggles two jobs to make ends meet. She wakes up before dawn to get her children ready for school and then heads to her first job. By the time she returns home, it's late, and her husband has already put their children to bed. Maria's paychecks barely cover the rent, leaving her with the agonizing decision of whether to pay the bills or buy groceries. The weight of these choices is a daily burden, one that no parent should have to bear.

This also is true for New York's young adults (ages 18-30) whose poverty rate is 25% and higher for students (38%) who often struggle to find meaningful work in their chosen field.[2] On top of that, new arrivals come to the city every day, looking for basic necessities: food, shelter and clothing. Many have faced unspeakable travails and undergone arduous journeys – and everything about our city that never sleeps is unfamiliar and daunting. No matter how people arrive at our doorstep, NYCP is here to welcome them. We provide services at three strategically located sites and through our mobile programs bring support directly to the communities that need them. We've even begun partnering with city-based colleges to meet the growing needs of students. But there's so much more we offer our guests.

Over our 40 years of serving the community, we've seen countless people like Maria. People forced to make impossible decisions, often sacrificing their own well-being to ensure their families have enough to eat. What this has taught us is that people long for an outstretched hand; a kind word, and someone to really listen to their struggles. That's why our case managers sit with each person, listen to their stories, and build trust. With patience and open minds, our teams determine what kind of assistance each guest needs and work tirelessly to help them. NYCP provides more than sustenance; we offer hope. The hope that their stories will be heard, hope that they will receive the help they need and hope for their futures. NYCP is a haven for all New Yorkers seeking assistance. We are honored to play this role in our beloved city and grateful for your support that enables us to do so.

[1] True Cost of Living Report, April 2023. Produced by Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington School of Social Work, for the Fund for the City of New York and the United Way of New York City
[2] "Spotlight on: Young Adults in New York City," Robin Hood and Columbia University Poverty Tracker, June 2024. <https://robinhood.org/reports/poverty-tracker-spotlight-young-adults-2024/>

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Food insecurity in New York City has reached epic proportions (epidemic levels). According to the most recent data available,[1] the City has almost twice the poverty rate — 23% — of the national average (12%) and nearly 1.8 million NYC residents are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Three (3) million of our neighbors are considered income inadequate, with 50% of working age households not earning enough to meet the minimum cost of living in New York City.[2] In addition, more than half of New Yorkers earn less than \$46,060 annually which is 200% of the poverty level for a family of three.[3]

Working New Yorkers continue to struggle with the impact of inflation, the high cost of food in grocery stores, and cuts to the pandemic-era SNAP benefit increases and child tax credits that helped to lift children and families out of poverty. In FY2023, New York Common Pantry (NYCP) served 32% more guests on a daily basis than the year prior and as of the end of our third quarter, we've seen the number of guests we serve increase ten percent and we have provided more than 8.2 million meals. While seemingly impossible to fathom, our numbers continue to rise significantly each year.

NYCP is facing many of the same hardships as our guests. According to the Economic Research Service, the cost of food rose by 25% from 2019 to 2023, faster than housing, medical care, and all other major categories except for transportation.[4] We encounter the same high prices when we are negotiating to purchase food from our suppliers. To increase our spending power, we are members of the Roundtable: Allies for Food Access, where we join forces with other emergency food providers to rescue and purchase shelf-stable items in bulk, and share vendor price lists to drive down costs. Our Food Storage and Distribution Hub enables us to receive large deliveries and store more food. In addition, our proximity to the Hunts Point Market (HPM) and enhanced refrigeration capacity have enabled NYCP to rescue more produce from HPM vendors. All of this reduces our cost per meal, fostering NYCP's ability to serve even more guests.

Recently, we focused our energy on making the case to Mayor Eric Adams and members of the City Council to preserve the Community Food Connection (CFC) budget – the city's only dedicated funding allocated to support emergency food providers who are on the frontlines serving the millions of New Yorkers struggling to with food insecurity. These efforts have paid off. The Mayor and City Council Speaker have just agreed to keep funding this critical program. Our guests now face the prospect of their SNAP benefits being reduced again. The bulk of the 2024 Farm Bill budget -- 80% -- is the state-administered SNAP program. The current House plan stipulates that even though it costs 25% more now than in 2019 to purchase the same amount of food, the allocations will not be adjusted. The Congressional Budget Office estimates this will result in a \$30 billion cut to SNAP over the next decade. With the number of New Yorkers receiving SNAP benefits increasing every year, these budget cuts will mean more families will be receiving less each month to help purchase food.

So where will these families turn for help? New York Common Pantry. As always, we will serve everyone who comes to our doors for help. We will continue to implement more efficiencies, expand and streamline our operations, and seek more partnerships to meet this growing demand in our city. We also will be advocating for a stronger SNAP program to assist our communities in need.

Thank you for joining and supporting NYCP in our efforts to address this City's food insecurity epidemic. We can only do this with your help.

Stephen Grimaldi
Executive Director

MEET OUR GUEST

CASILDA DE LA ROSA



Casilda grew up in the Dominican Republic and came to New York City in 2001. She currently lives with her mom, husband, and daughter.

For nine years, she was a Choice Pantry participant and now is enrolled in the Food MD program. Through Food MD's workshops, she learns new recipes and how to use foods that were not in her diet before such as okra and tofu.

Before the program, her diet would include processed foods that were high in saturated fat. Her family joins her in the workshops where they learn how to incorporate more vegetables into their cooking and make the dishes together.

In addition to the Pantry helping her with the high cost of food, Casilda receives support from other programs such as Hot Meals, where she comes with her daughter at least four times a week, and works with a case manager to apply for Rent Relief.

MEET OUR VOLUNTEER

JOSEPHINE MANGUAL



"YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO BE FOOD INSECURE SO IT'S ALWAYS IMPORTANT TO GIVE TO OTHERS WHAT THEY NEED."

After retiring from 35 years of teaching literacy at schools in East Harlem, Josephine started volunteering at New York Common Pantry.

She enjoys packing the Pantry bags the most because it reminds her of making sancocho. Sancocho is a Puerto Rican soup made by putting whatever you have in your refrigerator into a big or small pot. She makes a connection of how someone else might be making sancocho with the produce that she packed and that makes her feel grateful. Josephine was born and raised in New York City. For fun, she dances Afro-Caribbean, drums, and paints.

NYCP'S PARTNERSHIP WITH TACOMBI COMMUNITY KITCHEN

A partnership that started in the Spring 2023 that has been crucial to providing our community with meals and that also shares our mission to fight food insecurity is The Tacombi Foundation.

The organization prepares and donates delicious meals for our Hot Meals program and has invited their staff to volunteer at the Pantry. Their volunteers helped pack fresh produce and shelf-stable groceries for distribution and served hot meals to our guests. Guillermina Fernandez, Program Manager of the Tacombi Community Kitchen program says, in addition to preparing the meals to distribute them, "I have also had the opportunity to interact with the guests of the Hot Meals Program, which has allowed me to see the impact that we have been able to accomplish together firsthand."



In an NYCP guest survey to receive feedback on Tacombi meals, guests say that the food has helped them with their daily lives and that it is nutritious.

In total, we have received **13,745 pounds** of food over the course of **97 pickups** averaging 132 lbs per pickup.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER FOOTNOTES

- [1] Poverty and Food Insecurity in New York, New York City Council, <https://council.nyc.gov/data/emergency-food-in-nyc/>
- [2] True Cost of Living Report, April 2023. Produced by Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington School of Social Work, for the Fund for the City of New York and the United Way of New York City, <https://unitedwaynyc.org/true-cost-of-living/>
- [3] "Big Apple's Bitter Bite: Food Hardship in New York City." Debipriya Chatterjee, Jennifer Hinojosa for Community Service Society, April 2023. www.cssny.org/publications/entry/food-insecurity-new-york-city.
- [4] Food Prices and Spending, Economic Research Service, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/food-prices-and-spending/?topicId=1afac93a-444e-4e05-99f3-53217721a8be>



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2ND ANNUAL DICK CATTANI MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING



The 2nd Annual Dick Cattani Memorial Golf Outing, held in partnership with Restaurant Associates (R/A), was a tribute to Dick Cattani, R/A's former CEO and New York Common Pantry's former Board member who was an avid supporter of NYCP's mission. The event, at The Tuxedo Club in Tuxedo, NY, raised **\$170,000+** to support distribution of fresh, nutritious grocery packages, hot meals, and case management services.

Guests enjoyed a day out on the golf course with friendly competition for a chance to win on-course skills contest awards and a spot on the perpetual trophy. Boat rides were available during cocktail hour followed by dinner and silent auction winner announcements. The Cattani Family shared a heartfelt speech in remembrance of their father and his passion to help others less fortunate in the community. The event was a success in fundraising and in creating a lasting legacy.



Top Photo: Ed Brown, R/A CEO and the Restaurant Associates Team.

Bottom Photo: Nardyne Cattani and her daughters, Danielle Cattani-Post, Dara Weiss and Dorian Cattani.