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AN UNCOMMON SOLUTION TO HUNGER

New York Common Pantry

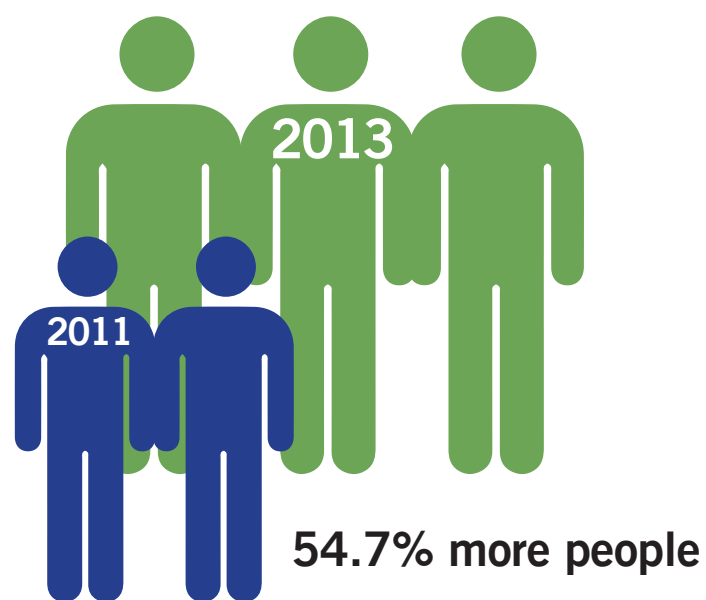
8 East 109th Street

New York, NY 10029

917-720-9700

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Snapshot: More People, More Meals—our city-wide response



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The Pantry Press

Spring 2014

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Food Rescue: Meeting the city-wide need with new van, new partners



Tommy Robinson unloads a delivery outside of New York Common Pantry

In our last Pantry Press, we introduced our new name and mission to serve people throughout New York City. One part of expanding our reach has been increased food rescue—bringing in good food given by businesses and community organizations before it has to be thrown out. In each of the past two years, New York Common Pantry has seen an increase of over 20% in the demand for our services. Yet as demand increased, the amount of food donations supported by city and federal sources dwindled. As one way to address this, in 2011 we purchased a new van with increased cargo capacity, which enabled us to complete more pickups and rescue more food for our Choice Pantry and Hot Meal programs. Integral to this initiative is driver Tommy Robinson. Tommy tactically plans his routes to start in lower Manhattan and end in uptown, picking up food at locations like

Trader Joe's, a Morgan Stanley corporate cafeteria, or any of 10 Chipotle outlets before returning to NYCP.

To keep building the effort a second van was needed, so in 2013 with support from Food Bank for New York City, Order of Malta US, and The Hyde & Watson Foundation we purchased a large Freightliner Sprinter van which allows us to collect greater amounts of food as well as visit more sites each week. Equipped with rubberized flooring and a high ceiling, it allows for safe and efficient loading and transport of larger food pallets. In addition to food rescue, the new van was essential during our response to Superstorm Sandy, its increased cargo space allowing us to deliver more food and supplies to areas affected by the storm. As the demand for our services continues to increase we are committed to finding innovative solutions like these to help hungry New York City residents.

Mobile Help: Expanding our reach to meet the needs of more New Yorkers



Mobile Help RV parked in the Rockaways

In the wake of Superstorm Sandy and the relief work that followed, we established partnerships with grassroots organizations in Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens. Even after our full relief efforts ended, we've kept working to build the services offered in their neighborhoods. One exciting example is our new Mobile Help project, modeled on the successful Help 365 Program at our main site. With a mobile office in an RV provided through our Frontline Community Response partnership with Food Bank for New York City and the American Red Cross, we are now offering benefits and resource-focused case management to households served by The Action Center for Education and Community Development in Far Rockaway, Queens. Program Coordinator Mario Arrendell explains, "Connecting someone to these resources stabilizes the person or household's living situation and gives them a basis for becoming self-sufficient." In addition to offering Mobile Help and Live Healthy! classes, we are also providing The Action Center with guidance on building up its food pantry and other services.



Mario Arrendell assists a Pantry member at our main office before joining Mobile Help this Spring

Live Healthy! Grows



NYCP's Live Healthy! classes encourage children, their family members, and other adults and seniors to embrace healthy eating, active living, resiliency skills, and social support—all factors shown by research to improve the quality of people's lives. Live Healthy! instructor Michael Montanez and program aides Jasmine Jackson and Renata Bermudez-Velasquez infuse each class with energy by asking participants to help prepare the meal and share what healthy choices they have been making. With support from The Heckscher Foundation for Children, we introduced this new model just over a year ago, to enhance our nutrition education efforts. Since March of 2013 hundreds of children, adults, and seniors have taken part in classes at our home in East Harlem as well as community centers and schools in upper Manhattan and the South Bronx; they also made trips to Katchkie Farm and NYC Farmers' Markets. Most recently, children at The Action Center in Far Rockaway, Queens have been excited to take part!

Renata Bermudez-Velasquez presents the quinoa used to prepare the healthy meal for the class.

Culinary Training Pilot: Skills for the kitchen and beyond

Visit our kitchen on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon and you might hear the sounds of knives chopping shallots and cutting up chickens, while social work intern and French Culinary Institute trained Anastasia Sfiroudis looks on. When she began in the fall, the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College intern had no idea that she would be researching, creating, and teaching a culinary training pilot program. For the past few years our participants have requested more job training assistance and information and this year provided an optimal opportunity to pilot such a program. Anastasia

used knowledge from her own culinary training and combined it with best practices from other organizations to create a program that teaches people job-focused cooking basics. Additionally, she incorporates soft skills such as interviewing and resume building, as well as effective communication and conflict resolution. When the class is finished, NYCP will pay for graduates to take their Food Handler's License test. Then, this first session of the class will be evaluated to determine if NYCP can offer it on an ongoing basis. Stay tuned for more details!



Anastasia Sfiroudis (right) lines up a shallot for a program participant