



Public advocate visits Staten Island food pantry and urges more funding for programs that feed the hungry

Posted by [gnyback](#) August 05, 2009 17:37PM

There was a lot of empty shelf space at the Richmond Senior Services food pantry in Staten Island's Port Richmond section today. Instead of serving the usual 30 seniors food for three days -- or nine meals -- they served 60 yesterday.

"It's been really tough," Beverly Neuhaus, executive director of Richmond Senior Services, said. "You can see by our shelves, our supply can't keep up with them."



Staten Island Advance/Irving Silverstein
Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum talks with Beverly Neuhaus, executive director of Richmond Senior Services today.

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum visited the pantry in Port Richmond today, speaking out to urge the city to increase funding for emergency food programs and support policies -- such as increasing access to food stamps -- to fight hunger in the city.

"What a disgrace in this city people are going hungry," Ms. Gotbaum said. She also said that if more people took advantage of using food stamps -- or had better access to them -- the food pantries wouldn't be hit as hard as they are currently. "We need to serve more from food stamps."

The Richmond Senior Services pantry, which serves seniors on Tuesdays and everybody else on Thursdays, has seen a 35 percent increase in service from last month and a 65

percent increase over last year, Ms. Neuhaus said. Between 60 and 69 percent of the people served are families, a lot of them recently unemployed or under-employed.

In the annual survey by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCHA), 68.6 percent of food agencies in 2008 reported they did not have enough supplies to fulfill demand, up from 59 percent in 2007.

"The numbers are more poignant [on Staten Island]," Ms. Gotbaum said. "Transportation on Staten Island is very different, and it's very hard to get to places to get more food."

-Reported by Nicholas Rizzi