

Soup Man Donates 800 Gallons to NYC Hungry

By Jonathan Weeks
Epoch Times Staff

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GOOD SOUP: A fraction of the 1.3 million people that can't afford food in New York City were fed from a much-needed donation of 800 gallons of soup from the 'Soup Man.'
(Jonathan Weeks/The Epoch Time)

NEW YORK—The original Soup Man, Al Yeganeh, the New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH), and the World Hunger Year (WHY) announced a joint venture to help fight hunger.

A press conference was called on Wednesday to demonstrate the need for increased government assistance as financial situations worsen throughout the tri-state area, and to highlight the demand for donations in the fight against hunger.

The number of people using emergency food programs is currently 1.3 million and increasing. Not only homeless people are being fed. "The key problem here is jobs," said Bill Ayres, executive director of WHY. "We used to have jobs in New York City that paid a living wage that you could feed a family with. Now most jobs

in America pay less than \$12 dollars an hour. More people know about the crisis now," said Ayres, "everybody is hurting."

This latest effort to feed the hungry is in step with Yeganeh's charitable philosophy. 800 gallons of soup, which sells for premium prices at franchise locations, are being donated to NYC's hungry. The New York City Rescue Mission, the Bowery Mission, and the Union United Methodist Church will be the outlets for this donation that will feed 20,000 people.

"We continue to stress that the federal government is the only entity capable of ending hunger" said Joel Berg, executive director of NYCCAH. "Citizens can and must push President Obama and his administration to fulfill their campaign promises to end child hunger by 2015 as a down payment on ending all domestic hunger. We cannot let 'yes, we can' become 'yes, we could have.'"

After the speakers, singer/songwriter Lisa Bouchelle sang the single "Time," which is featured on WHY's benefit album "Serve3." She then helped serve approximately 20 12-step program graduates some of the first of the donated soup, along with a full meal.

Yeganeh was made nationally famous in the TV series "Seinfeld," in which a cranky soup purveyor routinely turned away customers who were not prepared to order, bellowing "No soup for you!" A slightly less well-known fact about Yeganeh is that he has a soft spot for feeding the hungry. At his first soup stand, people would wait in long lines for the soup and were asked to know what they wanted and to have their money ready by the time they got to the counter. Any homeless person wanting food, however, was ushered to the front of the line and served immediately.