



The West Harlem Farm Fresh Produce Anti-Hunger, Anti-Obesity Project

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger – in partnership with the Hunger Action Network of New York State, the West Harlem Action Network Against Poverty, and the United Way of New York City – is about to launch an innovative new project to bring more nutritious food to West Harlem residents. Seed funding for the project has been provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and additional assistance will be provided by the federally-funded AmeriCorps National Service Program.

Formally starting in late May 2007, the project will increase the consumption of fresh, organic, New York State-grown produce in West Harlem and Morningside Heights, enabling low-income residents to obtain the produce for free and/or with their food stamp benefits and enabling other residents to purchase the produce at market rates. This effort will reduce hunger, promote economic self-sufficiency, improve nutrition, and limit obesity.

This project is a modified Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) arrangement. In a typical CSA, a “buying club” of consumers pays a local farmer in advance for an entire season of fresh produce. Each consumer purchases a stake, or “share” of the season’s product, taking on the financial risks associated with farming in exchange for a weekly delivery of extremely fresh, nutritious food that can be consumed in tandem with the growing season.

Like a typical CSA, this project will provide nutritious, regionally-grown produce to neighborhood residents. What makes this project groundbreaking is that it will provide such food in three ways:

1) Local soup kitchens and food pantries will purchase institutional-sized shares of produce, which they will then distribute for free to their low-income clients. Such purchases will be funded by the New York State Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) through an arrangement with the United Way of New York City.

2) Clients of these charities and other local low-income residents will be able to purchase larger, family-sized, shares using federally-funded food stamp benefits. These shares will be purchased in advance by the project partners using a revolving loan fund, which will be replenished over the course of the season through families making weekly food stamps payments. The project will also conduct community outreach to enroll people in the Food Stamp Program who are eligible but not currently participating.

3) Other neighborhood residents will also be able purchase shares using cash.

Get involved! Are you interested in helping us with this innovative project? To donate resources, volunteer, or obtain produce during the Summer 2007 season, contact jcdwyer@nyccah.org or 212-825-0028 x217.