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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CITY HARVEST RELEASES FIRST ANNUAL AGENCY CONFERENCE REPORT**

*Panel of Representatives from All Five NYC Boroughs Finds Increase in Need, Decrease  
in Funding*

NEW YORK –July 1, 2009– On June 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, City Harvest hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Agency Conference at The Jewish Community Center in Manhattan, 334 Amsterdam Avenue (76<sup>th</sup> Street and Amsterdam). Over 200 emergency food agency directors from across the city came together to discuss such important issues as budgeting in hard times, how to survive the recession, and problems agencies are facing due to the increased need. City Harvest's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Agency Conference was held in partnership with Community Resource Exchange, which delivered the event's five workshops, and made possible by funding from The New York Community Trust.

City Harvest hosted a panel consisting of fifteen agencies representing all five boroughs to bring attention to the challenges these programs are confronted with on a daily basis. It revealed across the board increases in middle class and recently unemployed clients who have never gone to emergency food providers for help before or received government assistance.

The following encapsulates the findings of several emergency food providers that participated in the panel and includes links to video clips of the respective representatives' commentary. Additional commentaries can be found at:

<http://www.cityharvest.org/home.aspx?catid=5&pg=180>

**Yorkville Common Pantry – Manhattan** [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81Zpd\\_IHTY8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81Zpd_IHTY8)

- Participation in the Saturday food pantry (people who are typically employed, partially employed, or job hunting) have increased 25%
- YCP is currently serving 23,000 distinct people
- Increase from 1.4 million meals served two years ago to a projected 2 million by the end of June 2009

**Oneg Shabbos – Brooklyn** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ex1u1slpTN4>

- 65% drop in donations since April 2008
- Providing 45% more food to the community
- Former donors are now seeking help

**Masbia Soup Kitchen – Brooklyn** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rpHMJZMr14>

- Serves 150 to 200 meals a day
- In May 2008, often served about 20 children a day; in winter 2009, served 65 children in one day

**Community Food Pantry at Highbridge – Bronx**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHyEACvMGs>

- Conducted survey of 877 Highbridge residents in June 2008 revealing a 50% unemployment rate
- Runs a children's nutritional program designed to accommodate 200 children during the school year; currently there are 275 participating children

**The Hope Line – Bronx** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVFSHobPYzc>

- In 2007, there was a 5% increase in people seeking help in the past year; in 2009 it will rise to 20%.
- Have implemented a “walk in basis” during the week to accommodate first-time visitors

**Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry – Queens**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8EPyyXSXuo>

- Increase from 300 maximum food pantry clientele to 400-500 in the past six months
- Increase in soup kitchen clientele

**Richmond Senior Services – Staten Island** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M28v5ZQm3H4>

- 65% increase in clients from 2008
- Increase in middle class people and senior citizens facing foreclosure or eviction

### **Saint Edwards Food Pantry – Staten Island**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYUoLOVXKpE>

- Increase of working poor and families seeking help
- Appearance of families from all over Staten Island (used to be exclusively regional clientele)

### **About City Harvest**

Now serving New York City for more than 25 years, City Harvest ([www.CityHarvest.org](http://www.CityHarvest.org)) is the world's first food rescue organization, dedicated to feeding the city's hungry men, women, and children. This year, City Harvest will collect 26 million pounds of excess food from all segments of the food industry, including restaurants, grocers, corporate cafeterias, manufacturers, and farms. This food is then delivered free of charge to more than 600 community food programs using a fleet of trucks and bikes as well as volunteers on foot. Each week, City Harvest helps over 260,000 hungry New Yorkers find their next meal.

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