



Childhood Hunger Fact Sheet

New York City is home to nearly 350,000 children who rely on emergency food. And, while most of them have homes, none can always be sure where their next meal is coming from. Childhood hunger is a growing epidemic across the United States. Working families often fall between the gap where poverty officially ends and self-sufficiency begins. Nowhere is this more evident than in New York City. Many households earn too much to be eligible for food stamps, but they still need food. In New York City, a family of three earning about \$23,900 would not qualify for food stamps, but needs to earn over \$56,000 to be considered self-sufficient.

Childhood Hunger in New York City, a Snapshot:

- One of every five children in New York City is fed through a soup kitchen or food pantry.
- About one third of all New Yorkers living in households that rely on emergency food are children.
- Subsidized school food programs, while helpful, are limited to school-aged children, school days, and school hours, and do not meet children's daily needs. All children need three square meals a day, including weekends and vacations.
- Hungry children suffer from two to four times as many individual health problems as low-income children whose families do not experience food shortages. Chronic hunger and food insecurity can result in delayed growth and development and in behavioral problems stemming from anxiety, poor self esteem, and hostility toward the outside world¹.

City Harvest's Response:

Every week, City Harvest brings more than 75,000 children their next meal via its groundbreaking food rescue program. With a fleet of 17 trucks, bikes, and volunteers on foot collecting food from New York City restaurants, local groceries, corporate cafeterias, manufacturers, and farms, this year the organization will deliver over 26 million pounds of food to soup kitchens, food pantries, and other community programs across the five boroughs.

With more than 25 years of experience tackling hunger, poor nutrition, and obesity among lower-income New Yorkers, City Harvest is emerging as a leader in children's nutrition education. In 2004, we launched our Fruit Bowl program, which supplies fresh fruit and low-fat dairy to more than 2,000 New York City

¹ Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project

children. Beyond meeting each child's immediate need by providing healthy snacks to preschoolers and school-aged children in 29 preschool and afterschool programs across the city, the initiative also gives children the longer term benefit of teaching them to make healthier food choices.

City Harvest also runs an annual "Feed the Kids" food drive from Mother's Day to Father's Day. New Yorkers can organize food drives to collect formula, baby food, afterschool snacks and other nonperishable nutritious foods for the city's hungry children. During the 2009 Feed the Kids drive, City Harvest delivered more than 170,000 pounds of kid-friendly food to community food programs serving children and families.

Skip Lunch Fight Hunger supports City Harvest's efforts to feed hungry children and families in New York City. This one-day fundraising initiative, conceived in 2002 by City Harvest Board Member Dana Cowin, encourages individuals at hundreds of companies and organizations across the city to donate what they would normally spend on lunch to City Harvest. In 2009, Skip Lunch Fight Hunger teams raised more than \$400,000 in a single day. Held annually, the next Skip Lunch Fight Hunger will take place in May 2010.

As part of the NYC Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR), City Harvest is working with other organizations and individuals in New York to ask our members of Congress to make specific changes to the Child Nutrition Act. This legislation, currently up for reauthorization, sets rules and funding levels for school-based nutrition programs, such as the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and Summer Food Service Program, as well as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). These programs bring over \$350 million into New York City each year and feed over 860,000 NYC schoolchildren every day. Changes suggested by the NYC Alliance for CNR will improve federal child nutrition programs so that they can feed more children and provide more nutritious food. Learn more and sign on to our priorities at www.NYCforCNR.org.

For more information about City Harvest, please call John McCook at 212-843-8365.