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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITY HARVEST RECEIVES \$175,000 THROUGH USDA SPECIAL RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

Congressman Serrano Secures Research Grant for City Harvest Programs in the South Bronx

New York , NY- February 22, 2010 – With critical support from Congressman José E. Serrano, City Harvest, the world's first food rescue organization dedicated to feeding New York City's hungry men, women, and children, has been selected to receive a \$175,000 special research grant from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The grant will provide City Harvest with the opportunity to collaborate with Cornell University's Cooperative Extension in New York to investigate nutrition and food access issues in the South Bronx and evaluate existing Mobile Market services in the Melrose community at a time when more New Yorkers are in need of food assistance.

This grant recognizes City Harvest's focus on groundbreaking, researched-based initiatives. Since 2005, City Harvest has invested heavily in Melrose in the Bronx, where poverty rates approach 50 percent with extremely high rates of obesity and diabetes. In 2004, City Harvest launched its first Mobile Market to channel free fresh fruits and vegetables into the community for residents of several New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) buildings.

According to the most recent quarterly data reported by City Harvest agencies, visits to emergency feeding programs across the city have increased 15% compared to the prior year. Data collected by the Gallup Organization and released in January by Washington, DC-based Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) also shows that more than half of New York City's districts face severe food hardships, with Congressman Serrano's district in the Bronx at the top of the list.

"We thank Congressman Serrano for truly stepping forward to help address hunger's underlying causes in New York City, in the Melrose community in particular where more support is needed," said Jilly Stephens, City Harvest's executive director. "City Harvest can now look ahead to building on our work in Melrose, partnering with the community to increase the access residents have to nutritious food like fresh produce."

"Our community suffers more than many others from diet-related diseases and obesity," said Congressman Serrano. "We must do all we can to turn the situation around, and

provide better food options. I am pleased to be able to support the work City Harvest is doing to raise awareness about proper nutrition and promote diet changes that can prevent chronic conditions.”

In 2006, City Harvest conducted a Community Food Assessment (CFA) to study factors that affect the food people buy and eat in Melrose, engage the community to advocate for change, and identify community-driven solutions to improve food resources.

Three key themes emerged from the 2006 Melrose Community Food Assessment. First, the assessment found that there was adequate availability, quality, and variety of fresh produce, but residents needed to search for it, therefore making it difficult to obtain. Second, produce was found to be reasonably affordable, but overall food costs were still felt to be a large strain to residents, especially given high costs of living. Third, the overall food environment was not conducive to healthy eating, as unhealthy food retailers outnumbered healthy retailers by a ratio of five to one. Additional barriers to healthy eating also included knowledge and skill gaps on budgeting, food preparation, and the composition of a healthy diet.

To address the results of the study, City Harvest began conducting nutrition education courses to increase residents’ knowledge of healthy foods, and the organization continues to support the creation of market-based healthy food outlets like co-ops and low-cost buying clubs, most recently partnering with the city’s Healthy Bodegas Initiative. The City Harvest team continues to work closely with residents and community-based organizations with the goal of creating a stable, food secure community.

About City Harvest

Now serving New York City for more than 25 years, City Harvest (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 over 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 nearly 600 community food programs throughout New York City 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.

City Harvest also addresses hunger’s underlying causes by educating individuals, families, and communities in the prevention of diet-related diseases, channeling a greater amount of local farm food into high-need areas, enhancing the ability of agency partners to feed hungry men, women, and children, and supporting affordable access to nutritious food in low-income communities.