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As a chef, food quality is my highest concern. As a parent, I want nothing but the best for my daughter. I am a board member and Executive Chef of Wellness in the Schools where I've been volunteering in the kitchen of my daughter's public school and 7 others in NYC for the past 2 years and I'm on a mission to change the food. Their version of barbeque sauce is a mixture of ketchup and grape jelly. Worse, chicken fingers and French fries are served on a regular basis.

Making good, fresh school food is a bigger job than I thought. Schools get \$1 per lunch to spend on food, and many have neither flame burners nor skilled staff; as you can imagine, not much cooking goes on in school "kitchens".

While the current proposal to the Child Nutrition Act is historic, it is still not enough. On March 17th, I went to Congress with some of my chef colleagues to lobby for more. We believe that \$4 billion would help with staff training, get more local food being delivered to school kitchens, and more scratch cooking which would result in healthier food for our kids. There could also be more education for children, parents and teachers on how to make healthier choices for themselves not only at school but at home.

We now need to ask Congress to do its part to ensure that child nutrition programs receive the funding they deserve through the Child Nutrition Reauthorization. I work with both sides, the management of the system and the people who serve our children. All want healthier food, all want to do better for our kids. It is a big mountain to climb, but if we are better funded, the first step up that mountain would be less daunting.

The Council can support our efforts by calling on Congress to invest significant new funding in the 2010 Child Nutrition Reauthorization. New Yorkers have been advocating for over a year for a \$4 billion investment in CNR. Thank you for making this a priority for New York City, and please continue to support our request with our members of Congress.

Thank you
Bill Telepan



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Testimony prepared by

Áine Duggan and Triada Stampas

for the

Committee on State and Federal Legislation

on

Resolution 79-2010

**Calling on the United States Congress to Renew and
Strengthen the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act**

May 3, 2010

on behalf of

Food Bank For New York City

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon. The Food Bank appreciates the opportunity to present testimony today to the City Council regarding Resolution 79 of 2010, introduced by Speaker Quinn, which calls on Congress to renew and strengthen the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act.

First, the Food Bank thanks the Speaker and the City Council for your ongoing efforts to address the issue of hunger, as well as the lack of financial and geographic access to healthy food with which far too many New Yorkers contend. It is fitting that such a statement of priorities to improve federal child nutrition programs should come from this body.

Food Bank For New York City works to end food poverty by increasing access to nutrition, education and financial empowerment. We distribute food and provide support services to approximately 1,000 emergency and community food programs citywide; manage nutrition education programs for schools and CBOs; operate benefits access programs including food

stamp outreach and enrollment assistance, and the largest Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) tax assistance program in the country; and conduct research to inform community and government efforts to end hunger in New York City.

On March 17, 2010, Senator Blanche Lincoln, Chair of the Agriculture Committee, introduced the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the first draft of legislation to reauthorize the federal child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 contains some promising improvements for these programs, which, like provisions for universal school meals models, could help lift millions of children out of food insecurity. Unfortunately, the Senate legislation provides insufficient funding to realize the full potential of these improvements, and worse, it takes money away from other nutrition programs to pay for them.

Our testimony today will key in on these issues.

FOOD POVERTY DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS CHILDREN

Food poverty is a problem that disproportionately impacts children, and households with children. The number of people living in poverty throughout the U.S reached 39.8 million (13.2 percent) in 2008, the highest number since 1960. Among children, however, 19 percent, or 14 million, were living in poverty.¹ Throughout the nation, 15 percent of households (17 million) are food insecure – meaning they lack access to nutritionally adequate diets, i.e., they are consuming insufficient amounts of food and/or food of reduced quality. Among households with children, however, the percentage rises to 21.0.²

The local data bear this out. Among the 1.9 million children in New York City under age 18, just more than 500,000 live below poverty (26.5 percent).³ Research conducted in October 2009 by the Food Bank and Marist College Institute for Public Opinion shows that 40 percent of New York City residents, 3.3 million, were experiencing difficulty affording food. Nevertheless, the poll showed almost one-half (47 percent) of households with children experiencing this hardship.⁴ Households with children constitute 40 percent of New York City residents relying on food pantries and soup kitchens for food.⁵

The federal child nutrition programs, designed to provide nutritious food for the children with the poorest access to it, constitute a targeted intervention to address this problem. Nevertheless, barriers to access in these programs – including excessive documentation requirements and flaws in program design and implementation – prevent them from reaching their full potential. The Child Nutrition Reauthorization process, which occurs once every five years, presents the best opportunity to eliminate these barriers and maximize the reach of these programs. The most promising measures in this reauthorization cycle would create provisions for universal school meals, whereby students in high-need schools would receive free school meals without the burden of an inefficient and intrusive application process. The government would assume

¹ Community Population Survey. (2008). U.S. Census Bureau.

² Nord, M., Andrews, M. and Carlson, S. Household Food Insecurity in the United States, 2008. (November 2009). U.S. Department of Agriculture.

³ American Community Survey, U.S. Census, 2008.

⁴ *NYC Hunger Experience 2009*. Food Bank For New York City.

⁵ *NYC Hunger Safety Net 2007*. Food Bank For New York City.

this burden, depending instead on reliable government data (census data, enrollment in public benefits, etc.) to determine eligibility within student populations.

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS BY ANY NAME WILL REDUCE CHILD HUNGER

The National School Lunch Program, administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides monetary reimbursements to public and non-profit private schools for providing nutritious lunch to enrolled students. Reimbursements are based on the number of meals served to children who qualify for free, reduced-price and full-price lunch. As a federal entitlement program, funding for the program is guaranteed by the federal government for every participating child.

Currently, to determine whether a child is eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch, schools must collect and verify applications from families each year (in some schools, once every four years) that attest to household size and income. Eligibility for free meals is capped at an annual household income of 130 percent of poverty guidelines (\$24,352 for a household of three); for reduced-price meals, the household income threshold is 185 percent of poverty (\$33,874 for a household of three). As of the end of the last school year (June 2009), three quarters (75 percent), or more than 750,000 of the more than one million students in New York City's public school system, had submitted documentation that rendered them eligible for free or reduced-price meals.⁶

Unfortunately, even at this high percentage, the application process is likely to produce an underestimate of actual need: missing or incomplete applications, or applications not properly filled out, result in children miscategorized for full-price meals even when their household income qualifies them for free or reduced-price meals. Language barriers, misperceptions about the use of household information in the applications and other factors can lead to non-submission of forms from low-income households.

In addition, stigma plays a role in depressing participation, particularly among older students. Because in most schools, money is collected at the end of the lunch line, many students refuse to eat school meals because the process identifies them by their household poverty. Indeed, the differences in participation are stark: approximately 35 percent of last year's high school students ate a school lunch on any given day; as elementary school students, however, that same cohort's average daily participation was 83 percent.⁷

With the recession forcing many New York City families into greater financial need and widespread child obesity – nearly half of public school students in New York City are overweight or obese⁸ – too many children are failing to receive the healthy, nutritious school lunch available to them at little to no cost. In fact, 32 percent of the students eligible for free or reduced-price meals in New York City do not participate in the program.⁹

Replacing individual applications with a rigorous analysis of reliable government data on income and household composition (from Census records, enrollment in public benefits, etc.) to determine the student population's eligibility for free and reduced-priced lunch in schools would

⁶ Food Bank analysis of New York City Department of Education Office of SchoolFood data, June 2009.

⁷ Food Bank analysis of New York City Department of Education Office of SchoolFood data, 2002-2009.

⁸ *Obesity Begins Early: Findings Among Elementary School Children in New York City*. (2003). New York City Department of Health.

⁹ Food Bank analysis of New York City Department of Education Office of SchoolFood data, June 2009.

effectively provide for universal school meals in all participating schools and school districts without requiring an application from a single student – a change that will radically expand access, alter the way school meals programs are administered and perceived, and bring federal dollars into local schools and communities. Sometimes termed “paperless eligibility and accountability,” “alternative counting and claiming,” or even “the paperless lunchroom,” this more streamlined, cost-effective, accurate method of accounting for eligibility for free and reduced-price meals in the City’s schools would result in getting more meals to children. In participating elementary through high schools, for example, New York City’s own experience with a short-term universal meals model (Provision 2 of the NSLP), has resulted in a 68 percent increase in participation.¹⁰

The “Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” creates two models for universal school meals: by indexing it to the proportion of students receiving free school meals through direct certification – a process whereby children in households receiving food stamps (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) automatically qualify for free school meals; and by authorizing pilots to create a demographically based statistical profile of income distribution within school populations to determine eligibility and federal reimbursement amounts.

Both models would take the paperwork burden off families and use reliable government data that already exists and is already being collected on a regular basis – a smart and efficient use of government resources – but both models should be strengthened and improved in the course of revisions to the Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation so as to maximize participation.

The legislation expands direct certification to foster children, and to children in income-eligible households receiving Medicaid – expansion of direct certification will certainly make the universal meals model predicated on direct certification all the more impactful. As written, however, expansion of direct certification to Medicaid households would be phased in as a pilot small enough in scope that it would render New York City ineligible simply on the basis of its size. Moreover, the federal reimbursement amounts for universal school meals indexed to the proportion of directly certified students are not sufficient to allow large numbers of high-need schools in New York City to participate in universal school meals in a financially viable way.

In addition, the provision for universal school meals based on statistical modeling of demographic data can be strengthened by expressly permitting the use of additional data sources, such as local tax data, that would be useful in creating reliable household income estimates of student populations. As currently written, the language is non-specific as to the use of data other than Census data.

The Food Bank thanks the Speaker and the City Council for supporting similar provisions in earlier child nutrition bills, and for including this in Resolution 79 of 2010, and encourages your continued advocacy during the course of the legislative process to see these provisions strengthened and expanded in a way that will benefit low-income children and families in New York City and across the country.

CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION NEEDS THE *RIGHT* FUNDING

In order to see these recommendations and other improvements in the “Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” become a reality, Congress needs to provide more funding. As written, the bill not

¹⁰ Food Bank analysis of participation data received from NYC Department of Education, School Years 2003 through 2008.

only significantly underfunds Child Nutrition Reauthorization, it pulls funding from other nutrition programs to do it.

The “Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” provides an additional \$450 million per year over ten years to child nutrition programs – less than half the \$1 billion per year called for by President Obama, and little more than ten percent of the amount (\$4 billion per year) identified by the Food Bank, the New York City Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization, the Food Research and Action Center and other anti-hunger organization as necessary to adequately address child hunger in the United States.

Adding insult to injury, the bill proposes to offset this new funding by slashing \$1.2 billion from the nutrition education component of the federal food stamp program (the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program-Education, or SNAP-Ed) over the next decade, effectively capping nutrition education programs for SNAP-eligible children, teens and adults nationwide for the next ten years.

The Food Bank is one of New York City’s main providers of SNAP-Ed nutrition education for children and families. Our CookShop program reaches over 15,000 children, teens and adults in New York City public schools with an experiential, hands-on workshops and activities that teach cooking skills and nutrition information, and foster enthusiasm for fresh, affordable fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains. Using a train-the-trainer model, we develop local knowledge and expertise in food and nutrition issues by providing more than 700 public school teachers with the training, resources and equipment to bring CookShop’s weekly cooking lessons and activities into their classrooms. Through social marketing, we are using diverse media to reach approximately 100,000 low-income teens with messages about healthy food choices.

We are not the only SNAP-Ed provider in New York – other organizations, like Cornell University’s Cooperative Extension Program and the New York City and State Departments of Health, bring nutrition education to community events, early childcare settings, emergency food programs and other venues. The funding cap proposed by the “Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” would stop any of these activities from expanding to reach more eligible New Yorkers.

Moreover, the bill would disproportionately hurt New York by freezing SNAP-Ed funding at its current levels, which currently provide New York with about one-fourth the funding per person as California, despite the fact that it is home to nearly as many food stamp recipients. As it is currently administered, SNAP-Ed is limited only by the State and local resources that can support it. Capping SNAP-Ed would eliminate any potential to reach funding parity and provide as many low-income New Yorkers as possible with the information and resources to make the best food choices possible under limited budgets.

Underfunding the programs that serve our nation’s most high-need students guarantees that they will not be successful. And cannibalizing funds from SNAP-Ed undermines federal priorities to end child hunger by 2015, prevent childhood obesity and promote child nutrition — the very purpose of the bill itself.

Supporters of this measure point to the creation of a new nutrition education program in the “Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” as an expansion of nutrition education. As detailed in the bill, this new program would be implemented in much the same way as SNAP-Ed, creating a duplicative process that parallels what is already in existence – the very picture of government inefficiency.

In this respect, the "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act" simply robs Peter to pay Paul. Our legislators must adequately fund Child Nutrition Reauthorization without undermining programs that already serve the people they seek to help.

We understand the Speaker and the City Council oppose the SNAP-Ed offsets and appreciate the online petition to our legislators that highlights this position. We ask for your continued support on this issue as the Child Nutrition legislation moves forward.

SUMMARY

The opportunity to significantly improve the programs on which millions of U.S. children rely for food comes only once every five years. The "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act" contains some promising improvements but significant flaws. The Food Bank support the priorities outlined in Resolution 79 of 2010 and calls on the City Council to continue its advocacy for a Child Nutrition Reauthorization that expands access to child nutrition programs without sacrificing other nutrition programs to do so.

Calling on Congress to Renew and Strengthen the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act
New York City Council, Committee on State and Federal Legislation
Monday, May 3, 1:00p

“Ensuring a Strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill Benefits NYC’s Most Vulnerable Children”

*Testimony Submitted by: Rachel Hye Youn Rupright, Child Nutrition Program Specialist
Nutrition Consortium of New York State*

Dear Chairwoman Foster and Members of the New York City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on how the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act can both continue supporting the federal nutrition assistance programs for children and ensure that these programs reach NYC’s most vulnerable children. The Nutrition Consortium of NYS is a statewide organization whose mission is to alleviate hunger in NYS, by expanding availability of, access to, and use of government nutrition assistance programs. Through outreach, education, and advocacy, we achieve our mission. We engage with children, schools, community-based organizations, fellow advocates, administrating agencies, and elected officials to strengthen and support these programs.

In order to fulfill President Obama’s commitment to end child hunger by 2015, we believe a robust Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill containing significant investments in and improvements to the School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NLSP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), WIC, and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) can provide some of the best solutions to achieving the 2015 goal. We commend the New York City Council for convening this hearing to renew a resolution of calling on Congress to renew and strengthen the child nutrition programs.

The federal nutrition assistance programs for children touch thousands of NYC’s low-income children every day. Last year over 635,000 children ate school lunch and nearly 210,000 children ate school breakfast everyday in public schools alone; over 150,000 children ate summer lunch at over 1160 NYC meal sites every day in July; and over 380,000 women, infants, and children participated in WIC throughout the metropolitan area.

As a member of the NYC Alliance for CNR, we recognize these programs not only bolster positive physical, social, and academic well-being in children, but help low-income parents and caregivers stretch their food dollars, augment the existing services of organizations that sponsor the programs, support food service-related jobs, and draw down federal reimbursement to support our local economy. Child nutrition programs are good for our children and greater community.

It is equally important that we build upon success of these programs with a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill. Our guiding principles, in conjunction with organizations across the country, call for a Reauthorization bill that: 1. strengthens program access and supports participation from underserved children and communities; 2. enhances nutrition quality and providing adequate meal reimbursements; and

3. modernizes technology and simplifies program administration and operation. *In order to meet these three principles, it is critical that Congress provides a Reauthorization bill that matches President Obama's proposed \$1 billion annual funding.* We believe the proposed additional funding can help achieve the following goals in regard to the SBP, NSLP, SFSP, WIC, and CACFP:

Options for Schools to Provide Universally Free School Meals: The process to qualify children for free or reduced-priced school meals is often burdensome to both schools and parents. Establishing a paperless application system where children are served meals at no charge would eliminate this barrier. Several methods of survey and statistical methods have been identified, proposed, and/or piloted: statistical surveys in Philadelphia, calculations based on direct certification for free school meals, and Census data. *The Reauthorization should allow school districts to choose from options to establish universal school meals, with methods that will maximize benefits to both families and school districts.*

Improvements of Direct Certification for Free School Meals: Children already receiving food stamps and/or TANF are automatically eligible to receive free school meals. In NYC, the direct certification process successfully uses data matching between HRA and the Department of Education to identify and qualify these eligible children. *The Reauthorization bill should improve direct certification by expanding data matching to children receiving Medicaid and foster care children.*

Breakfast in the Classroom Initiatives: Numerous studies prove a direct correlation between eating school breakfast and increased student performance. Yet, breakfast participation still remains low in NYC and NYS – often due to stigma, pressure to get to class on time, and conflicting morning schedules. We commend NYC for adopting universal school breakfast in all schools and breakfast in the classroom initiatives in select schools. *The Reauthorization bill should include incentives for more schools to establish breakfast in the classroom methods, including start-up grants for schools.*

Support Grants for Summer Food: SchoolFood is the largest sponsor of summer food in NYC and NYS. However, nearly 100 other community-based organizations, youth programs, and faith-based organizations throughout NYC also operate summer food. *The Reauthorization bill should include funding for sponsors to establish and maintain quality summer meals through efforts such as: site improvement grants, programming activities at meal sites, outreach, and incentives for sponsor retention.*

Third Meal Service Option for Child Care Settings: In a time of extended work hours, non-traditional work hours, and more families relying on child care, CACFP meals are more critical than ever. However, child care settings are limited to claiming reimbursement for two meals only. *The Reauthorization bill should allow child care settings the option to serve a third meal, thus allowing our youngest children proper nutrition for positive growth.*

Continued Quality WIC Services for All Eligible Participants: In order for WIC to continue quality services, it must strengthen program management, improve nutritional services, and advance program technology. *The Reauthorization bill should allow children to certify for up to one year (instead of six months), promote breastfeeding initiatives, and mandate states to adopt electronic benefit transfer implementation within ten years.*

Protection of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education Program (SNAP-Ed) Funding: The Senate Agriculture Committee's version of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act identifies federal nutrition education program funds to support the Reauthorization bill, restructuring the now entitlement program to mandatory funding. NYS draws down SNAP-Ed funds to operate successful nutrition education programs including Eat Smart New York, Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables, and Eat Well Play Hard. By capping this funding for states, programs funded by SNAP-Ed (including over 1600 child care settings throughout NYC and the Food Bank for NYC's CookShop program) could face less funding and a decrease in quality of services. *The Reauthorization bill should find alternative funding sources within each Committee's jurisdiction that does not undermine other nutrition programs.*



TESTIMONY OF

**STEPHANIE GENDELL
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**PRESENTED TO
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS**

REGARDING CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION

MAY 3, 2010

Good afternoon. My name is Stephanie Gendell and I am the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Public Affairs at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC), Inc. CCC is a 66-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization whose mission is to ensure that every child is healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Council Member Foster and the Committee on State and Federal Legislation for holding this hearing today regarding the strengthening and reauthorization of the federal Child Nutrition Act. In addition, CCC is grateful to Council Members Quinn and the 26 additional members of the City Council for sponsoring and co-sponsoring Resolution #79, which calls upon the United States Congress to renew and strengthen the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act.

CCC appreciates all of the work the Administration and the City Council have taken to increase access to healthy and affordable food for New Yorkers. New York City is emerging as a national leader in ensuring that children and families have access to healthy and nutritious food. The City Council has taken the lead in many critical initiatives such as the funding to support the usage of food stamps at Farmer's Markets, the passage of the GreenCart legislation and the recent passage of the New York City Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (F.R.E.S.H) Initiative, which will bring supermarkets to underserved communities and improve the capacity of existing smaller retailers to offer fresh foods.

As you know, good nutrition has lifelong consequences. Healthy eating affects a child's growth and development, and their ability to learn in school. There has been such a large increase in Type 2 Diabetes in children that the American Diabetes Association now refers to this trend as a new epidemic for children.¹ Problems with attention and short-term memory, as well as lower IQs, math and reading scores have been linked to childhood obesity and the inability to regulate blood sugar. In the last 20 years, obesity rates have doubled in the United States. Approximately 25 million children 17 and under are obese.² Nearly half of New York City's elementary school children are either overweight or obese³ and 27% of the city's children in Head Start programs are obese.⁴

¹ <http://clinical.diabetesjournals.org/content/20/4/217.full> (accessed 1/12/10). Note that Type 2 diabetes has historically been called Adult Onset diabetes.

² Strom, Stephanie. "\$500 million Pledged to Fight Childhood Obesity." *New York Times*, 4 April 2007.

³ NYC Department of Health and Mental Health. "Obesity Begins Early: Findings Among Elementary School children in New York City." *NYC Vital Signs*, Vol. 2, No. 5. June 2003.

In a national comparison, New York has the 18th highest rate for overweight and obese children and adolescents.⁵

While parents strive to provide their children with healthy meals, children spend a substantial part of their lives eating meals in child care centers, schools and after school programs. Federal programs such as school meals, school breakfasts, summer food, SSNP, WIC and CACFP are all aimed at addressing child hunger and child nutrition. Sadly, even with these programs, child hunger persists, and thus President Obama has called on his key staff (and the First Lady) to develop a plan to combat child hunger by 2015. Reauthorizing and strengthening the Child Nutrition Act is a key step to combating childhood hunger.

As a member of the NYC Alliance for CNR, Citizens' Committee for Children has been urging Congress to increase the funding for these children's meal programs by \$4 billion annually. President Obama's budget has proposed adding \$1 billion per year (\$10 billion over 10 years) and Senator Lincoln, Chair of the Agriculture Committee, has called for a \$450,000 annual increase (\$4.5 million over 10 years). While CCC appreciates these additional investments, we believe that significantly more resources are needed for CNR to truly combat child hunger.

Specifically, a CNR allocation of \$4 billion (\$40 billion over 10 years) would provide funding to make free and healthy breakfast available to every child in a Title 1 school already receiving free lunches; to improve the quality and nutrition of school meals; to increase the number of meals in child care centers; and reduce paperwork at programs providing meals to children after school and during the summer.

The CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) provides meals to child care (centers and family based), Head Start programs, after school programs and senior programs. For the infants, toddlers and preschoolers in child care programs for 8-10 hours per day, the nutritional value of these meals and snacks are critical to their healthy development. In NYC, child care and Head Start programs serve over 36 million meals each year (approximately 159,000 meals per day to 50,000 children). Additional resources for

⁴ NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. "Obesity in Early Childhood: More Than 40% of Head Start Children in NYC are Overweight or Obese." *NYC Vital Signs*, Vol. 5, No.2. March 2006.

⁵ F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America 2009, Trust For America's Health (2009).

CACFP would allow for higher quality food and an additional meal for children in child care over 8 hours per day (currently programs can only serve either two meals and one snack or 1 meal and snacks).

At a minimum, Congress must support the investment proposed by President Obama. CCC is extremely grateful to the City Council for its leadership on food issues and on CNR. We strongly support Resolution 79 and thank the Council Members for their efforts to pass this Resolution and influence Congress.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



**Testimony of Joel Berg, Executive Director
New York City Coalition Against Hunger**

**Before the New York City Council
Hearing on Child Nutrition Reauthorization**

April 28, 2010

Introduction and Overview

Good morning. I'm Joel Berg, Executive Director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCA), which represents the more than 1,200 food pantries and soup kitchens in New York City, and the more than 1.4 million low-income New Yorkers forced to obtain food from these charities. This testimony is submitted on their behalf.

I want to thank chairs and all the committee members for having this vital hearing and continuing to focus on this issue. Given that one in five New York City children lived in homes that couldn't afford enough food in 2009, and that the situation is clearly worsening, this is perfect timing to call for strengthening the current version of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

The improvements to CNR that I advocate for below are necessary in New York City because despite the obvious need and the availability of the meal programs, 33 percent of eligible children (329,000) do not participate in the School Lunch Program and 79 percent of eligible children (792,000) do not participate in School Breakfast in New York City.

How the CNR Bill Can End Hunger, Increase Participation, and Reduce Paperwork within Lunch and Break Rooms

Not only is child hunger in the world's wealthiest nation morally unacceptable, it costs the U.S. economy at least \$28 billion per year, because poorly nourished children perform less well in school and require far more long-term health care spending..

While the school breakfast and lunch programs have succeeded dramatically over the past 60 years in slashing the previous, Third-World-like, levels of child hunger in America, they are currently hampered from achieving further progress. There is tremendous paperwork and bureaucracy needed to comply with the current program requirements that children from poor families receive free meals, children from near-poor families receive reduced-price meals, and children from families slightly better off than near-poor pay “full price” (a misnomer, since these meals are also subsidized by the federal government) for meals. In most American schools, many teachers must spend at least some time collecting eligibility forms and administrative staff must be assigned to collecting those forms and submitting them to the district. Every school district must assign additional staff to collect those forms from the schools, analyze them, and submit them to the state. Then every state must assign extra staff to collect the forms from the districts, analyze them, and submit them finally to USDA. Furthermore, each school day, staff in school cafeterias have to collect and then submit breakdowns of meals by the incomes of the students’ families.

The Best Option: Achieving Complete free, universal, paperless meals for all students in schools

To provide every student with a free lunch and breakfast would cost: \$11.9 billion (\$4.9 billion for lunch and \$7 billion for breakfast). It would impact 31.2 million, but some of that money would be covered by cost savings of reducing paperwork: through reducing existing paperwork, we would save \$1.01 billion at the school level/year for all 101,000 schools.

Background:

To make the lunch rooms paperless to meet that money savings goal, instead of collecting lunch applications from students – which requires action on the part of children, parents, school administration, school staff, and local and state government – the federal government would use existing demographic data (e.g., the Census Bureau American Community Survey) to determine the income level of a student body for a given school or district. To accomplish this task, administrative resources are no longer used daily to collect and categorizing soon-to-be-obsolete school meal applications, and instead the school system uses a miniscule amount of staff time and effort to simply conduct a data match once ever five years.

Kathy Goldman and Agnes Molinar of Community Food Advocates have been working on a project to calculate how much New York City schools actually spend on the meals paperwork collection and submission. In 2006, they collected data from 23 local schools (14 elementary, five middle, and ten high schools). They calculated that the schools spent the following average time per year on the following meals paperwork-related tasks:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Hours Per Year</u>
Distributing applications	5.7
Collecting applications	48.6
Reviewing applications	66.1
Contacting families	110.9
Average outside school hours	7.0
Follow up on non-returns	111.1
Assigning categories	46.7
Tracking categories daily	121.9
Lost tickets	7.8
Collecting money	1.4
Lunch accountability	363.6
Breakfast accountability	121.8
Total	1012.6 hours per year per school

They further calculated that, of those hours, 780 were provided by school aides, 10 by the principals, and 223 by other staff. Factoring in the average wages for those categories of employees, they calculated that each school spent \$19,190 per year just on staff salaries for the school meals paperwork system (not even including the employee benefits). At the time, New York City had 1,500 schools, therefore, the system spent an astounding \$28.8 million annually on collecting and submitting the school meals data.

Since there are 101,000 schools nationwide that participate in federal school meals programs, if each school spent \$19,190 on such data collection and submissions, the astonishing total would equal \$1.9 billion at the school level alone, not even including spending at the district, state, and federal levels.

Since costs in New York City are likely higher than in much of the rest of the country, we will make the very conservative assumption that the nation spends the equivalent of at least \$10,000 a year on this data collection and submission, which equals \$1.01 billion per year of tax dollars (at the federal, state, and school district levels) spent solely on collecting and submitting required forms and daily meal counts. Thus, the best way to both end wasteful spending and to feed more children is for the CNR to create paperless school breakfast and lunch rooms nationwide, with the federal government paying the full cost of meals for all school children, regardless of their family income, thereby entirely eliminating the paperwork collection and processing bureaucracy.

To provide every student with a free lunch and breakfast would cost the federal government \$11.9 billion (\$4.9 billion for lunch \$7.00 billion for breakfast) and extra per year, still far less than the cost to the nation of child hunger. (Although each lunch costs far more than each breakfast, because most students currently eat lunch but don't eat breakfast.

The Second Best Option: Universal/paperless breakfast in all schools and Paperless Lunch:

To minimize costs, providing free breakfasts in the classroom automatically to every student in the U.S. who participates in the school lunch program would still make a large dent in ending child hunger. Lunch reimbursements would be based on census data. Doing this would eliminate the stigma and paperwork associated with breakfast and ensure students could get the most important meal of the day. It would cost \$7.0 billion per year, and impact 31.2 million children. Savings from reducing existing paperwork would be \$1.01 billion at the school level/year for all 101,000 schools in the nation.

The Third Option: Universal/paperless breakfast for students in Title 1 Schools, and Paperless Lunch:

To reduce costs even further while still making progress to end child hunger, we can provide universal, free, paperless breakfast in the classroom to every student in a Title I school in America. For each Title 1 school (the lowest-income schools, where at least 40 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals) breakfasts would be served directly in first-period classrooms. Lunch reimbursements would be based on census data. Ensuring that students in low-income communities get breakfast is a sure way to improve behavior in school and reduce child hunger. Sixty-four percent of children who receive school lunches do not receive school breakfasts. To ensure students in low-income communities get breakfast would cost \$3.6 billion per year, and impact 17 million children in high-needs schools. We would save \$1 billion by reducing existing paperwork.

Thus, to come even close to ending child hunger, the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill would need to spend an additional \$4 billion per year, or \$40 billion over ten years. U.S. Senator Kristen Gillibrand, who is on the Senate Agriculture Committee, has pledged to try to work to reach that 40 billion goal. If such funding were allocated it would cost an estimated \$3.6 billion each year (\$36 billion over ten years) to make free and healthy breakfast available to every child in a Title 1 school that already receives a free lunch, a goal worthy of prioritization. The remaining \$400 million per year could be used for such other worthy goals as improving the quality of school meals, rewarding states for innovative efforts to reduce child hunger, further enabling schools to buy food from local and regional farmers, expanding the WIC program, expanding access and reducing paperwork in programs that provide meals to children after school and during the summer, and boost school gardens.

Proof exists that school breakfast helps

In 2008, New York City launched a pilot project to try out in-classroom breakfasts in a number of schools. I must again point out that, on school meals issues, the Bloomberg Administration has been excellent. They've improved the nutritional quality of school meals and greatly expanded participation through some innovative initiatives. At one pilot site I visited, Public School 68 in the Bronx, every student ate breakfast together during their first-period class.

The pilot is working better than anyone could have anticipated. The school's principal told me that, before the pilot, an average of 50 kids came to school late everyday, so many that she had to assign extra staff to writing out late slips. When they started serving breakfast in their classrooms, kids came in early just for the meals, and now only about five kids a day are late—a 900 percent decrease in tardiness. The principal also told me that absenteeism and visits to school nurses also dropped, and in the afternoons, kids fell asleep in the classrooms less frequently. This is obviously not only good nutrition policy but also good education policy.

Given that most school districts must now have a complex system in place to collect forms and data on the income of each student's parents to determine the eligibility of each child for either free, reduced-price, or full-cost meals, when a district adopts a universal breakfast or lunch policy, not only does it reduce the stigma faced by children and thereby increases participation, it also reduces the paperwork and bureaucracy, saving the school district time and money. When kids eat breakfast in a classroom instead of a lunchroom that is a hallway or two away, they have more time to focus on their studies and are protected from the stigma of having to leave their friends to go to a special breakfast room "for the poor kids." Given that textbooks are widely understood to be a critical educational tool, public school districts typically lend them out free of charge to all students. The time is ripe for the nation to view school meals in the same way. Free breakfast and lunch should be universal in all classrooms around the country.

The Federal government should provide technical assistance and funding to aid such in-classroom breakfast programs in New York and nationwide as part of this Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Bill. With more federal support, the City could – and should – expand breakfast to every classroom in the City.

Other CNR Improvements Needed:

The bill should:

- 1) Set a goal of cutting food insecurity among U.S. children in half by 2013 and ending it by 2015;
- 2) Increase reimbursements to school districts that provide healthier foods, particularly for districts buying from small local farmers;
- 3) Make the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutritional assistance program an entitlement available to any low-income parent or child who needs it and fund nutritional improvements in the WIC package;
- 4) Increase reimbursements for both government and non-profit agencies that sponsor after-school and summer meals for children;
- 5) Create the Beyond the Soup Kitchen Grants Program as proposed in the Anti-Hunger Empowerment Act of 2007 (HR206); and

6) Create a pilot program to reward states for reducing child hunger and food insecurity. States must be rewarded for improved performance in reducing child hunger. It is encouraging that USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced his support for grants to states to bolster anti-hunger innovation, and the the Senate Agriculture Committee included provisions to so in its Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill. As one example of what such grants could fund, this program could reward Michigan State Superintendent of Schools Mike Flanagan for his *Michigan School Breakfast Challenge* and help other states replicate its success. On November 24, 2008, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, cajoled by the national hunger organization Share Our Strength, announced a partnership aimed at making Maryland the first state in the nation to end child hunger. If such efforts begin to show early success, they should be rewarded by USDA grants, which would also encourage other states to follow suit.



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Testimony of Kristen Mancinelli, MS, RD
Manager of Policy and Government Relations
New York City Council, Committee on State and Federal Legislation
"Calling on Congress to Renew and Strengthen the Child Nutrition and WIC
Reauthorization Act"

May 3, 2010

City Harvest thanks Chairwoman Foster and the Committee on State and Federal Legislation for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of City Harvest and the 85 organizational members of the NYC Alliance for CNR in support of a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act that meets the needs of New York City.

As many of you know, City Harvest rescues food that would otherwise go to waste from food businesses throughout the City and distributes this food free of charge to our network of emergency food providers within the five boroughs, who in turn use the food in their soup kitchens and food pantries. In addition to this core work we also partner with community members and local organizations to help New Yorkers gain ongoing access to healthy food outside of the emergency food system, including through promotion of federal nutrition programs. Because 1 in 5 children in NYC is fed through a soup kitchen or food pantry, City Harvest also works to promote and expand the reach of the child nutrition programs and has done so this past year specifically by coordinating the NYC Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

This Alliance is in part the result of a recommendation from this Council. In November 2008 the Council held a number of hearings on ways to support the food needs of struggling New Yorkers in the midst of the economic downturn. In the months following in discussions with council members it was recognized that the Child Nutrition Reauthorization represented a huge opportunity for the city to address growing food insecurity among children, and also to bring in more federal dollars to the city as use of these vital entitlement programs increased as a result of the recession. It was well known that NYC could have a powerful voice in this reauthorization process, not only because we serve the largest number of school meal and WIC participants, but also because we have Members in both chambers of Congress on the authorizing committees for this bill as well as two Members in senior positions on committees with influence over funding. The council recommended that NYC anti-hunger, food and nutrition advocates form a cohesive group to advocate for this legislation, knowing that the City would be best able to support our efforts if we shared a common platform. With that in mind City Harvest reached out, in March 2009, to a wide array of organizations in NYC with an interest in child nutrition and solicited priorities for a common platform that was finalized in May



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2009. Among the organizations that contributed significantly to this process were: Food Bank for NYC, NYC Coalition Against Hunger, Public Health Solutions, and Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens, along with many others. Input was also sought from administering agencies including SchoolFood and ACS, as well as the Mayor's Office. Building on this discussion the Alliance established 4 broad goals for this important legislation:

1. End child hunger and food insecurity;
2. Ensure that all children have access to nutritious foods;
3. Reduce childhood obesity and ensure productive, healthy generations; and
4. Support regional farm and food economies while increasing jobs, protecting the environment.

And three overall strategies to achieve these:

1. Make federal child nutrition programs universal and more nutritious while reducing their administrative paperwork and bureaucracy.
2. Give programs more resources and technical assistance to serve all children with nutritious food, local and regional whenever possible, produced in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.
3. Make nutrition education available to all children and caregivers through child nutrition programs.

We offer specific recommendations in each category for the legislation to achieve these goals. This priority document is attached.

Since then, the NYC Alliance for CNR has advocated collectively for these consensus priorities to be included in the CNR bill. In June 2009 we made our first group lobby visit to Washington DC, and we've met with our members in Congress numerous times since then, both on Capitol Hill and in their NYC districts. We've maintained active communication with these offices and have provided input to the reauthorization process through the year long extension.

The Alliance has grown tremendously in the last year. We now have more than 85 organizational members. Members have done an incredible job educating their communities and networks about CNR, gathering over 3000 letters to key Congress members at sites all around the city including at Greenmarkets and in food pantries, soup kitchens, and schools. Members have giving presentations on CNR in meetings on food and nutrition, and even at diverse community events like the Bronx Food film festival. They've hosted CNR-focused events, such as a Passover Seder for Child Nutrition; and have convened conference calls for their membership to learn about this legislation hitherto unknown to them. A group of youth from the Children's Aid Society even worked with City Harvest to create a video and facebook campaign challenging viewers to eat lunch for \$1 to raise awareness about the cost of school lunch and the need for



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greater investment in the CNR bill. There is a list of 45 such “past events” on the NYC for CNR website <http://nycforcnr.org/events>.

This gathering of new voices into the CNR debate has been without question one of the major accomplishments of this Alliance. Everyone from members of faith-based organizations, to youth and community development organizations, to grassroots community networks to restaurants and celebrity chefs have raised awareness of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization and the need for greater investment in the programs with their supporters. This work has helped your constituents to recognize the importance of this legislation and appreciate the work the Council has done to advocate for NYC in this national debate.

The NYC Alliance for CNR is grateful to the Council for its own work this past year to raise awareness about CNR both within city government and in the public and media in New York. The resolution you adopted last year and reintroduced this year offers a comprehensive set of goals for CNR that align closely with those of the Alliance. We’re especially grateful to Speaker Quinn, for holding a press conference on the issue with Senator Gillibrand last August. At the time, New York City had high hopes for the Child Nutrition Bill, calling for a 70 cent increase in the reimbursement rate for school meals and an extension of free meals to more children in areas like NYC with high cost of living, among many other provisions. We also thank the Committee on Federal and State Legislation to draw attention to New York City’s needs at a critical time – just as the House of Representatives is drafting their CNR bill and Congress Members have the opportunity to ensure their constituents priorities to be included.

To that point I’d like to underscore our current efforts to urge Congress to invest more than they have thus far in the CNR bill. The Senate version of the bill has passed committee with only \$450 million a year, less than half of the \$1 billion called for by President Obama and much less than the \$4 billion NYC has called for since the start of this debate. The Senate version contains only a 6-cent increase in the reimbursement rate. Though it’s much less than the 70 cents NYC wanted this is still a huge portion of the new money already included – about \$3 billion of the 4.5 billion allocated to the bill over ten years. Other very vital priorities to expand access to meals for low income children have not even gotten such a share of the pie. That’s why it’s vital that we keep pushing for a much bigger investment than Congress has so far made in this bill. Just last week the incredibly dedicated members of this Alliance secured the sign on of every single Congressional Representative from NYC to a Dear Colleague letter calling on Nancy Pelosi to secure full funding for CNR. This is the result of persistent efforts through phone calls and emails to our Representatives and is a huge success for NYC. We will continue to advocate for NYC as the House drafts its version of the bill, which we understand will be introduced in mid-May. We are also directing requests to Senator Schumer for support from the Finance Committee to invest additional dollars in the



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Senate bill as it goes before the full Senate sometime this summer, and similar requests to Congressman Rangel in recognition of his role in the Ways and Means Committee.

We ask that the Council support these efforts and continue to call on Congress to secure full funding for the Child Nutrition Reauthorization, *at a minimum* upholding President Obama's request for \$1 billion additional per year, and *ideally* investing \$4 billion additional in CNR to make needed improvements to these vital programs so that all kids have easy access to nutritious food through child nutrition programs.

I'd also like to share a hope. NYC is a recognized leader in policies to improve nutrition and access to healthy, affordable food and as such can continue to influence the national debate on these issues. The city also is home to a large portion of recipients of USDA food assistance benefits. I hope that the Council will see fit to use this platform to continue to raise awareness of the need for federal food programs to better meet the food needs of vulnerable New Yorkers and consider holding a hearing early on in the Farm Bill debates – either this fall or early in 2011 – to hear New Yorkers' priorities for that process.

For now we continue to focus on Child Nutrition Reauthorization and ensuring that NYC's children are well represented in that process.

Thank you.



The Child Nutrition Reauthorization is important to New York

What is this Bill?

Congress will soon reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act that governs the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, WIC, and other federal programs that provide food to children.

Why is this bill important?

This is a once in five year opportunity to make improvements to programs that feed millions of children from infancy through adolescence. In New York State alone, over 1.8 million children eat school lunch every day, and nearly half of those meals are eaten in NYC public schools.

What is the value of NYC action in this national debate?

NYC has FOUR representatives in Congress with tremendous power over CNR:

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand sits on the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Congresswoman Yvette Clarke sits on the House Education and Labor Committee. These committees write the bill. Senator Charles Schumer sits on the Senate Finance Committee and Congressman Charles Rangel sits on the House Ways and Means Committee. These committees can invest new funding in CNR.

What is the NYC Alliance for CNR and how are we influencing this debate?

Groups in New York representing varying interests have formed an alliance to advocate for changes to the 2010 Child Nutrition Reauthorization. We are united around four goals:

- End child hunger and food insecurity,
- Ensure that all children have access to nutritious foods,
- Reduce childhood obesity and ensure healthy children, and
- Support regional farm and food economies while creating jobs and protecting the environment

We've delivered to Congress our consensus statement of priorities that outlines how to achieve these goals through CNR. We're also urging Congress to invest an additional \$4 billion per year in CNR to reinforce President Obama's promise of a new investment in Child Nutrition as a means to achieve his goal of ending child hunger by 2015.

We're leading an action campaign for New Yorkers to engage in this debate. Please visit our website at www.NYCforCNR.org to join us!



NYC Alliance for CNR Organizational Members

American Farmland Trust - NYS Office
Baum Forum / Public Market Partners
BedStuy Campaign Against Hunger
Brooklyn Food Coalition
Brooklyn Rescue Mission
Bronx Health REACH / NY CEED
Cathedral Community Cares
Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens
CHEFS for Schools
Child Center of NY
Children's Aid Society
Citizens' Committee for Children of NY
City Harvest
Cleaver Company
Code Foundation
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc.
Communities Impact Diabetes Center
Connecting to Advantages
D'Artagnan
Democratic Leadership for the 21st Century
East Williamsburg CSA
EAT FOOD
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
FGE Food and Nutrition Team
Food Bank For NYC
Food Systems Network NYC
For a Better Bronx
Forest Hills/Rego Park Green Committee
Harlem Children's Zone
Harvest Home Farmer's Market, Inc.
Healthcorps
Healthy Moon
Hip for Kids, INC
Hip World Foods
Hour Children, Inc
Hunger Action Network of NYS (HANNYS)
Hungry in America, LLC
Hunter Bellevue School of Nursing
Hunter College, Program in Nutrition
JC Food
Jean Georges Management, LLC
Just Food
Lenox Hill Neighborhood House
LightBox
Livesip
Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty
Montefiore School Health Program
move on.org
National Action Against Obesity (NAAO)
National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)
New York Academy of Medicine
New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH)
New York City Nutrition Education Network (NYCNEN)
New York Coalition for Healthy School Food
New York State Dental Association
No Doubt, Inc
Nutrition Program Teachers College, Columbia University
NYC for Change
Park East High School
Park Slope Food Coop
Public Health Association of New York City
Public Health Solutions
Public Health Student Group of NYU
Queens County Farm Museum
Red Hook Initiative
Slow Food NYC
Small Ville Youth Club
Smallville Learning Farm
Society of Jesus, NY Province
Spotted Pig (restaurant)
Staten Island Interfaith Coalition of Feeding Ministries
Strategic Alliance for Health
Sustainable Flatbush
Telepan (restaurant)
The Point
The Sylvia Center
Tuv Ha'Aretz Forest Hills Jewish Center CSA
UFT Green Schools Committee
United Community Centers and East New York Farms!
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1500
United Neighborhood Houses
Urban Health Plan
Welfare Rights Initiative
What's On Your Plate? Film Project
Wellness in the Schools
West Side Campaign Against Hunger
WHY Hunger
Xavier Mission

The Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) is important to New York City



What is this Bill?

Later this year the federal government will reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act. This legislation sets rules and funding levels for all the federal child nutrition programs, including the School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Why is this bill important?

This is an opportunity that comes only once in five years. Today, as rates of poverty, hunger and diet-related disease simultaneously increase, greater access to healthful foods through these programs is sorely needed. This year, the bill is particularly important, because Congress now has the opportunity to take very significant and concrete steps to advance President Obama's goal of ending U.S. child hunger by 2015. As food production and transportation increasingly contribute to negative environmental and health effects, attention must be paid to the origins and the processing of the food procured for our children through these programs. To maximize the use of our tax dollars, we should both feed children healthfully and support the sustainable development of our city and our region. The 2010 Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act can help us accomplish the following goals: dramatically reduce child hunger and food insecurity; ensure a generation of healthy, productive, nutritionally-aware children; reduce energy use and pollution; create jobs; and stimulate economic activity.

What are we doing to influence this bill?

Groups in New York City representing varying interests have formed an alliance to advocate for changes to the 2010 Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR). We've established a consensus statement of priorities to share with policy makers, the public, and interested parties. The stakes are so high in obtaining a strong bill that this alliance has brought together various groups that haven't historically come together in order to advocate for changes and improvements to CNR.

Rationale for this Alliance

Nationwide, groups such as anti-hunger, nutrition and public health, food service and industry, community food security groups and others are advocating for specific policy changes in the 2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization. These groups have long recognized the importance of this legislation to their constituencies and have a history of advocacy in this arena. Today, as we recognize the systemic nature of our social problems and realize that they can better be addressed working together, groups are coalescing across boundaries of interest to shape how this legislation will affect us all. Diverse groups in other cities – including Seattle, Boston, Chicago, and LA – are organizing now to develop their collective priorities for CNR. With the largest school district in the nation and large numbers of WIC and CACFP participants, NYC can be a very strong and influential voice for positive change within the Child Nutrition Reauthorization. Especially in this time of fiscal crisis, increased hunger, and concern for children's health, we must take this opportunity to ask for increased federal funding and improvements to programs that benefit New Yorkers.

Specific goals

Overall, the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act must:

- 1) Make significant progress towards the goal of ending child hunger and food insecurity in America by 2015;
- 2) Ensure that all children have access to high quality, nutritious foods, local and regional whenever possible, in their schools and through other child nutrition programs;
- 3) Reduce obesity and diet-related diseases and ensure productive, healthy generations; and
- 4) Support and expand regional farm and food economies, increasing jobs, enhancing infrastructure, and reducing unsustainable environmental impact.

Summary of the Three Key Strategies to Achieve Those Goals

1. Make federal child nutrition programs universal and more nutritious while reducing their administrative paperwork and bureaucracy.
2. Give programs more resources and technical assistance to serve all children with nutritious food, local and regional whenever possible, produced in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.
3. Make nutrition education available to all children and caregivers through child nutrition programs.

Proposed strategies:

Goal #1: Make significant progress towards the goal of ending child hunger and food insecurity in America by 2015.

School meals, summer meals, and meals served in childcare and afterschool settings are a significant part of children's diets. The Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act is an opportunity to increase access to federally funded and regulated meals for all children. This is especially important for the over 12% of children in the United States who live in "food-insecure" households; households that are unable to afford enough food¹. In NYC, 56% of households with children have said they worry about being able to afford enough food. Despite this need, many child nutrition programs are currently underfunded and underutilized. Children are often unable to access meals offered through the child nutrition programs due to the administrative obstacles described below.

Rationale:

By making eligibility guidelines for school meals programs consistent with other benefits programs, more low-income children will be able to have access to school meals. In addition, by eliminating unnecessary administrative requirements, agencies providing school meals will be better capable of meeting the demand. As the impact of the recession results in lost jobs, more children will fall into lower income categories in the coming years and the demand on child nutrition programs will increase. This Reauthorization is fortunately timed to ensure that vulnerable children have access to and receive the positive health benefits of these meals through the next 5 years.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/cps/>

1) In schools, districts, or municipalities² located in areas where at least 50%³ of persons have incomes that are equal to or less than 200%⁴ of the federal poverty threshold, the federal government should provide full reimbursements for breakfasts and lunches and CACFP meals to all students, eliminating the reduced-price and full-price categories entirely, and requiring no additional paperwork or documentation to the state and federal governments other than Census Data.

2) In all other schools, districts, or municipalities, eliminate the reduced-price category for school meals and CACFP meals by extending free meal eligibility to households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level.

3) Allow districts to implement alternate counting mechanisms to provide more meals to students while minimizing administrative burden and making it easier for states or districts to pay the difference to provide “universal” meals, where free breakfast and lunch is provided to all students regardless of income.

4) Increase reimbursement rates for school meals by *at least* \$0.35 per meal aiming for a \$0.70 increase as called for by the City of New York, for the first year of the bill, to both meet the increased cost of healthy food and higher food prices overall. In subsequent years, reimbursement increases should reflect food and labor cost increases.

5) Allow the expansion of direct certification for school meal eligibility (currently available for families receiving food stamp/SNAP benefits) to additional federal human services benefits programs, such as WIC and Medicaid

6) Provide financial incentives for schools that offer breakfast in the classroom or grab-and-go breakfasts, which make it easier for students to access these meals. For example, schools or districts that increase breakfast participation by at least 10% from the start of the school year should receive an end-of-year financial bonus.

7) Extend the child certification period for WIC to one year. Fund nutrition services in the WIC Program at a level commensurate with the increased demands placed upon WIC in recent years. Provide funding for essential management information systems (MIS) to implement the WIC food package changes, as well as technical assistance and grants to WIC vendors to facilitate transitioning to offering fresh fruits and vegetables.

² NYC has data for various geographic subdivisions that can facilitate determination of eligibility.

³ This criteria is used to determine eligibility for the SNAPED (formerly Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP)). Using this same threshold for child nutrition programs would result in consistent benefits across programs serving the same population.

⁴ SNAP benefit eligibility in New York State was recently expanded to households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level (for those households that have child care expenses) in order to address the increasing need from diminishing incomes due to the recession. Since these are the same households whose children will benefit from school meals, free meal eligibility should be expanded to households at this same income level to maintain consistency across programs. In addition, it is widely recognized that the federal poverty level does not reflect the cost of living in certain areas, such as NYC (which has proposed a new poverty measure to reflect the higher cost of living).

8) Fund an additional meal through CACFP for center and home-based providers that have children in their care for more than 8 hours.

Goal #2: Ensure that all children have access to high quality, nutritious foods, local and regional whenever possible, in their schools and through other child nutrition programs.

Rationale: Diet-related disease is epidemic-- many children live in households with limited access to fresh, healthy, and high quality, nutrient-rich food options Child nutrition programs can provide all children, especially those vulnerable to hunger and diet-related disease, with access to healthful foods. Rules and regulations for child nutrition programs can be greatly improved in the ways outlined below to achieve this potential.

1) Require that federally funded meals are consistent with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines to ensure dietary balance and to promote health. Specifically, promote increased amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lowfat/fat-free dairy products in weekly menus. Include healthful foods not traditionally offered and foods that meet special dietary needs, such as water, lactose-free milk and soy beverages, and vegetarian and vegan options, within the reimbursement structure for school meals and CACFP meals. Ensure that national nutrition standards set a minimum for healthfulness and do not restrict the ability of localities to implement stricter standards.

2) Update the national school nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold outside of school meals to conform to current nutrition science as called for in S. 934 bill introduced on April 30th to the Senate Agriculture Committee by Senators Harkin and Murkowski. Ensure that national nutrition standards for competitive foods set a minimum for healthfulness and do not restrict the ability of localities to implement stricter standards.

3) Reestablish funds for school kitchen infrastructure, including full cooking machinery, to ensure programs have the ability to prepare healthful foods. Establish funds for training for culinary and nutrition training for food service staff of school and CACFP meal programs to ensure a skilled workforce can prepare meals using healthful cooking techniques, and can promote positive diet behaviors among students.

4) Simplify the procurement system for school meal program administrators and provide incentives for district school meal administrators to decentralize food purchasing and food preparation, including procurement pilots and training for school food service districts and early childcare program settings.

5) Fully implement the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommended changes to the WIC food package to include yogurt, and the full amount of fruits and vegetables. Fund the development of materials and resources to help maximize the use of WIC fruit and vegetable checks and WIC FMNP coupons. Fund the development of a national campaign to encourage the use of fresh, seasonal produce.

Goal #3: Reduce obesity and diet-related diseases and ensure productive, healthy generations

Rationale: Obesity and diet-related disease are epidemic among children in NYC. Nutrition education and promotion offered through child nutrition programs can serve as a model for children to learn appropriate dietary habits. Widespread education will result in a generation of healthy adults to reverse the current trend of increasing disease prevalence.

1) Ensure that children and their caregivers receive comprehensive nutrition education and promotion that supports access to healthful food. Include funds for the development and distribution of educational materials and programs to inform parents and caretakers of why nutrition standards exist for federal meal programs and how they can support them in the home

2) Fund the development and/or adoption of elementary school curricula which include food and nutrition education and which includes money for teacher training. Include \$0.01 cent per meal reimbursement for nutrition education. Provide funding and technical assistance to schools to meet existing mandates for wellness councils and implementation of wellness policies.

3) Fund training on nutrition education for staff of CACFP programs, and provide reimbursements for meals of staff and volunteers to participate in family style meals to model positive dietary habits.

Goal #4: Support and expand regional farm and food economies, increasing jobs, enhancing infrastructure, and reducing unsustainable environmental impact.

Rationale: Federally funded food programs such as School Lunch, School Breakfast, Summer Food, and CACFP bring millions of federal dollars into New York City each year. These programs can serve as an important economic engine for NYC and the surrounding region, which includes a large farm sector that lacks access to adequate markets. These programs also provide jobs to the many New Yorkers employed in kitchens in schools, childcare and senior centers. Increased investment in the programs, especially institutional purchase of regional food, will have significant positive economic benefits throughout the supply chain.

1) Encourage USDA to interpret the Farm Bill ruling on geographic preference to allow for schools to purchase local and regional products in a usable form. USDA should offer technical assistance to schools and childcare institutions to purchase locally and regionally grown and processed foods, and provide financial incentives to school districts that demonstrate that a percentage of their food purchases over a year's time come from local growers.

2) Establish mandatory funding for farm to school programs

3) Encourage the procurement of local and regional produce through the Summer Food Program to take advantage of the wide supply of foods available locally during the summer months.

4) Encourage the purchase of local and regional produce through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and DOD Fresh program.

COMMUNITY FOOD ADVOCATES

Testimony of Community Food Advocates, Inc.
New York City Council Committee on State and Federal Legislation
May 3, 2010

Thank you for holding this important hearing on Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

- Childhood hunger **cannot** be ended without the School Breakfast, School Lunch, Summer Meals, Child care meals and WIC programs.
- These programs **can** have a major, positive impact on children's health, nutrition, obesity, and assist families struggling to make ends meet.
- The Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation is crucial if we are to realistically support that positive impact.

Therefore, we are here to urge our New York City Council and Mayor to do everything in your power to support and improve the legislation so that the Department of Education's SchoolFood division can provide the best food possible to our children and youth.

Current system in NYC: Paper applications provide family income information in order for children to qualify for free or reduced price meals. In the lunchroom, if they qualify students receive a free meal while others pay for food. The result: the school food program is so stigmatized that as they reach middle and high school few students eat, fearing their peers will think they are poor.

(This is the only time in the public education system when families are asked about their income. The NYC school system spends between **\$25 and \$40 MILLION annually** processing these forms and meeting the daily accountability requirements.)

There is a solution: Paperless Universal School Meals (USM), which would rely on demographic data to determine income in each school zone and eliminate paper applications and save millions of dollars. Experience has shown that where USM is instituted participation rises dramatically and the stigma quickly fades away.

The best way to increase participation is a universally free school meals system instituted as soon as possible. It will take three to five years for this legislation to pass and regulations to be devised by USDA, and that means tens of thousands of children, especially pre-teens and teenagers, will not receive the nutritious benefits of SchoolFood's already improving meals.

New York City should be a leader in establishing a census data-based USM system.

Although the legislation calls for pilot programs to test the use of Census data and/or other data sources as alternatives to the current system, it limits the number to no more than 5 local educational agencies for each alternative model tested. NYC should be a leader here as we probably have the best income data resources in the nation. The Department of City Planning has indicated that applying income information to individual schools is totally feasible. However, they are waiting for the Department of Education to make a request to test its applicability. NYC missed an opportunity to test this model last year and two years ago when USDA was interested in exploring such options. We believe that USDA is still interested in a USM pilot and New York City can make a unique contribution by testing this as soon as possible.

New York City government should support other elements of the legislation as put forward by the NYC Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

Community Food Advocates staff is available to meet with you and/or your staff to discuss details of the proposed legislation and our comments.

Who We Are

Community Food Advocates was established in January 2010 as a nonprofit advocacy organization to focus on child nutrition programs in New York City. Its founders, Kathy Goldman and Agnes Molnar, each have over 30 years of experience in working to expand participation in these programs and have achieved many successes, such as:

- convincing the Office of School Food to implement Provision 2 in several school districts beginning in 1990;
- convincing the Chancellor to offer free breakfast to all NYC public school students in 2003;
- piloting school breakfast "Grab and Go" in a number of high schools;
- promoting school breakfast in the classroom;
- expanding summer meals sites to NYC parks, swimming pools and the NYC Housing Authority; and
- initiating the highly successful "CookShop" nutrition education program in hundreds of public schools.

Kathy and Agnes are continuing to advocate for additional improvements and initiatives to encourage more eligible children to take advantage of government nutritional benefits.

At Community Food Resource Center (CFRC), which Kathy Goldman founded in 1980 (and Agnes joined in 1981) and as executive director for 22 years, Kathy initiated and carried out many other programs in addition to the above child nutrition activities.

The following is a brief list of CFRC's activities:

- pre-screened food stamp applicants;
- conducted food stamp outreach and media programs;
- initiated the first free EITC centers to help working families receive tax refunds;
- started a "community kitchen" in West Harlem in 1984 which fed dinner to well over 500 people daily;
- was one of the founders of the Food Bank for New York City in 1983 (formerly called Food for Survival);
- was instrumental in the opening of a full-service supermarket in East Harlem, the first inner-city market in decades; and
- opened senior dinner programs in two public schools, using their facilities after school hours.

“Paperless” A Proposal for Universal School Meals for all New York City Schools

Universal School Meals

New York City can **increase school meals participation** and save **millions of dollars in staff time** and costs by implementing Universal School Meals (USM) in New York City public schools for breakfast and lunch. *USM means no forms to fill out and all children eat free.*

Under USM **no applications** are distributed or collected and **no system is needed to categorize and identify students. No money is collected.** Only total meals served would have to be counted. Reimbursement for meals is determined by percentages of free, reduced price or paid students as established by existing income or demographic data that would provide this information for each school, but would not identify any student or family by name or income. (This data could also be used to determine Title I status/funding for each school.)

Universal School Meals would **remove the stigma** associated with school meals by eliminating the need to identify students by payment category and ensure that more hungry children will participate. This has already been proven in New York City’s Universal Free Breakfast program. Since implementation, participation has increased by 35 percent. At the same time, USM would save the city tens of millions of dollars in staff time and other costs associated with the current accountability system.

The Current Reimbursement System

Federal reimbursement for each meal served depends on the accuracy of the accountability system in every school. The system is outmoded and labor-intensive and involves school personnel at all levels, including principals, assistant principals, teachers, aides and other administrative staff.¹ To meet federal requirements under the current system each school must:

- Distribute income eligibility applications to every student’s family
- Collect applications from each student
- Check each application for accuracy and completeness;
- Follow-up incomplete or unreturned applications;
- Categorize each student by eligibility for free, reduced price or paid meals
- Assign numbers or tickets, or develop rosters to identify students
- Identify each meal served every day by eligibility category by collecting tickets, or checking off names or numbers at the point of service
- Document the number of meals served in each category
- Collect and account for money paid to teachers and/or designated staff

In addition, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) centrally must develop and print approved applications (translated into 14 languages) and distribute them to every school and to each family of our 1.1 million students. Once applications are collected, DOE must verify a selected sample of thousands of families to provide further proof of their income to qualify for free meals.

¹Based on informal surveys, we estimate an average of 1,000 hours/school, or almost one full-time position per school per year.

Summer Meals Participation – Comparisons**OFFICE OF SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS****Average daily participation**

Year	<u>Average</u>		<u>July</u>		<u>August</u>	
	Breakfast	Lunch	Breakfast	Lunch	Breakfast	Lunch
2009	63,288	124,012	72,400	140,732	54,076	107,292
2008	66,936	132,666	78,284	153,363	55,589	111,969
2007	64,461	128,891	74,284	145,909	54,638	111,872
2006	58,966	123,878	70,123	144,729	47,808	103,027
2005	61,159	124,560	71,437	142,018	50,881	107,102

Office of SchoolFood Programs (lunch)

	<u>POOLS</u>	<u>PARKS</u>	<u>NYCHA</u> ¹	<u>LIBRARIES</u>	<u>S.K.</u> ²
<u>July</u>					
2009	6,186	1,818	3,067	599	780
2008	4,921	2,163	3,181	792	237
2007	3,490	2,169	3,834	269	
2006	2,567	2,326	(2,455) ³		
2005	2,346	1,632	(3,343)		

¹NYCHA = New York City Housing Authority² Soup Kitchens³ Not under OSF. NYCHA was its own sponsor before 2007.

SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST FACTS

Year- to-Date 2008- 2009 school meals data

Students Registered 1,043,254
Average Daily Attendance (ADA) 923,245 (88% of Registered students)

Eligible for Free Meals 670,959
Eligible for Reduced Price 105,875
Total low income 776,834 (74% of Registered students)

2008-09 Average Daily Participation

	<u>Free</u>	<u>Red. Price</u>	<u>Paid</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Breakfast	150,987	18,849	34,916	204,752	(22% of ADA)
Lunch	457,803	60,518	103,525	621,846	(67% of ADA)

Federal Reimbursement Rates per Meal: 2009-10

	<u>Free</u>	<u>Red. Price</u>	<u>Paid</u>
Breakfast	1.74	1.44	.26
Lunch	2.70	2.30	.27

Income eligibility 2009-2010

<u>Family size</u>	<u>Free</u>	<u>Red. Pr.</u>
1	14,079	20,036
2	18,941	26,955
3	23,803	33,874
4	28,665	40,793
5	33,527	47,712

Testimony of the Hunger Action Network of New York State
to the NYC City Council on the federal Child Nutrition Programs
May 3, 2010

The Hunger Action Network of New York State is a statewide membership organization of emergency food programs, advocates, faith groups and low-income individuals whose goal is to end hunger and its root causes, including poverty, in our state.

The three thousand food pantries and soup kitchens in New York help feed nearly three million New Yorkers a year - more than a third of whom are children.

We thank the City Council for drawing attention to the need to strengthen our federal child nutrition programs, which includes the School Breakfast and the National School Lunch Programs, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). We urge the City council to support at least an additional \$4 billion a year of funding for the reauthorization. The funding is the most critical issue, since each of the policy recommendations have fiscal implications.

President Obama has pledged to end childhood hunger by 2015. Not only is this a good idea, but we have the proven and effective programs to help accomplish this — if they are properly funded. Federal child nutrition programs have made a huge difference.

Congress has a unique opportunity this year to take a major step towards ending childhood hunger, but it appears to be scaling back the goal instead. Cutting back on feeding kids is unacceptable.

There is agreement on the goals for improving these vital, life-sustaining federal programs: Feed more children; Improve the nutritional value of the food served; Make it easier for both children and schools to participate.

Even with the help of existing child nutrition aid, an estimated 16.7 million children lived in food insecure households in 2008. In New York, one million children are fed by emergency food programs every year.

The bottom line is funding. It costs more to serve nutritious food, including fresh fruits and vegetables. More funding is also needed to ease eligibility requirements so that more children can be fed.

Most advocates, joined by New York's Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, have pushed for a \$4 billion a year increase — a realistic goal. If Congress can give \$700 billion to bail out Wall Street and even more than that for this year's military budget, certainly they can come up an extra \$4 billion a year to feed our children.

So far Congress is falling short. President Obama asked for \$1 billion a year increase, already a cut from the necessary sum. Then, the Senate Agriculture Committee (over Sen. Gillibrand's objections) only provided \$450 million new money annually — most of it to increase existing reimbursements, not to feed more children.

A big challenge is that Congress requires any new funding for domestic program to be funded by cuts in similar programs. So the Senate is proposing to feed more children by cutting funding for nutrition education, environmental and farm programs.

The one program Congress exempts is the military. President Obama is asking for a huge increase in the military budget, bringing it to well over \$700 billion - equivalent to what the rest of the world spends on its armies. It is time for Congress to cut the military budget to create a peace dividend. We applaud Councilmember James for introducing a resolution for the Council to call upon Congress to cut our military

budget in order to free up funding to resolve the city budget deficit and to invest in critical domestic needs such as child nutrition, affordable housing, environment, jobs and education.

President Eisenhower, the leader of the Allied military forces in WWII, warned the country to protect itself against the military industrial complex and its grip on Congress. He proclaimed that "every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired' was 'a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said that, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

The federal budget is all about priorities. Right now Congress isn't making ending childhood hunger much of a priority.

Three key priorities for reauthorization include: increasing access to and participation in the various programs; improving the nutritional quality of the food provided (e.g, strengthen nutritional standards); and, streamline both the application for and administration of the programs.

The Food Research Action Center, which is helping to coordinate a nationwide coalition around reauthorization, cites key reforms such as: Expand the Afterschool Meal Program to all 50 states (which was included in the Senate Agriculture Committee markup; NYS already does this); Improve the area eligibility test so more communities can operate afterschool, summer, and child care food program; Provide funds for a grant program to support the start-up and expansion of universal and in-classroom school breakfast programs; Invest in Summer Nutrition Programs by providing funding for start-up, outreach, and transportation grants; and, Allow child care centers and homes the option of serving a third meal.

In NY, Hunger Action coordinates the Faith and Hunger Network along with Bread for the World. Below is a summary of Bread's recommendations.

Improve Access:

Families cannot get access to benefits for their eligible children if there isn't a program operating in their community. Congress should increase the number of breakfast, summer, and afterschool sites and explore alternative models to connect hungry children with food during the summer.

Explore alternative strategies to reach children without access to summer food sites, such as increasing children's SNAP (food stamp) benefits in the summer or providing WIC-style vouchers for the purchase of nutritious foods.

Provide outreach, technical assistance, and start-up funding to potential sponsors to help them establish breakfast, summer, and afterschool sites in underserved communities. Expand the CACFP supper pilot nationwide so afterschool programs can provide supper to at-risk children whose parents work late into the evening.

Increase Participation:

Congress should simplify enrollment procedures and encourage school districts to find creative solutions to participation barriers. Expand cross-program direct certification to include Medicaid so children in that program are automatically connected with school meal programs. Encourage states to maximize the use of direct certification to more seamlessly enroll SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid children in school meals.

Provide universal free breakfast and eliminate the reduced-price fee in high-poverty school districts. Support the use of creative solutions – such as grab-and-go breakfasts, mobile SFSP, and satellite WIC clinics – to

overcome transportation and other barriers to participation. Provide transportation assistance to help children access out-of-school feeding programs like summer and afterschool.

Encourage Progress Toward Ending Child Hunger:

President Obama set the ambitious goal of ending child hunger by 2015. With significant, targeted federal investments, this goal is achievable, but it requires a commitment from the states. Congress should encourage states and school districts to be active partners in the 2015 goal by setting targets, providing incentives, and rewarding progress.

Improve Benefit Adequacy:

While we must ensure that children have enough to eat, but more expensive whole grains and fresh produce are essential to giving children a healthy start. Congress ought to provide children not just with enough food, but the right food. Base nutrition standards for WIC food packages and school meals on scientific data from the Institute of Medicine and USDA's Dietary Guidelines. Reward schools that improve the nutritional quality of meals with higher reimbursement rates.

Our country has the resources to ensure an adequate diet for all our children. What we need is your leadership to make it happen. Help end child hunger in our communities.

Good afternoon, my name is Stacey Flanagan and I'm the Director of Public Health Service Programs at Public Health Solutions.

We are pleased that the City Council is hosting today's hearing session. We believe the City Council can play a highly meaningful role in overseeing the alignment of New York City's Strategies for Achieving the President's Goal of Ending Childhood Hunger by 2015.

As a large not-for-profit public health agency that has been operating the largest WIC program (46,000 individuals served annually) in New York State for 35 years, we have a long-standing interest in and concern for reducing hunger, promoting improved nutrition, and fostering sustainable agriculture. Public Health Solutions has also added services at many of its WIC centers to help low-income families obtain additional benefits such as health insurance coverage and SNAP, or food stamp, enrollment assistance in culturally familiar environments.

For the past two and a half years, we have been operating a SNAP assistance program in Corona, where we pre-screen and assist households apply for SNAP benefits. In this location alone, staff report an estimated 30% rise in requests for assistance over the past two years; and our WIC program is now experiencing increased demand as well. Unfortunately, there appears to be little reason to expect any significant improvement in these trends in the near future, as recent reports estimate that the unemployment rate in NYC will continue to remain high for some time. We can therefore anticipate that dependence on all types of social benefits will continue to increase, particularly as unemployment coverage extensions lapse.

Recognizing this increased need, we obtained private funding to allow us to add SNAP assistance services at two additional Neighborhood WIC Centers. In this way, families can obtain WIC nutrition counseling and checks redeemable for specific nutritious foods; assistance applying for SNAP benefits and for enrollment in health insurance. Since direct programming is crucial to the creation of a hunger - free NYC, we hope the City Council can provide resources to support the expansion of services that help families learn how to prevent obesity in their young children while putting sufficient healthy foods on their tables.

In addition, Congress has the opportunity to make serious improvements to programs that feed millions of children each day. We believe that by passing a strong Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act this year, Congress can take significant steps towards ending child hunger and the obesity that results from the consumption of unhealthy but inexpensive food. This legislation includes all the federal child nutrition programs, including: the School Breakfast Program, the National School Lunch Program, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

In reauthorizing the bill, Congress and the President will jointly decide how much will be spent on properly feeding hungry children, how many children will be aided, how much schools and non-profit groups will be reimbursed for providing meals, and what the nutritional qualities of those meals will be.

We cannot overstate the importance of these decisions. A strong Reauthorization at the federal level will allow NYC to move closer to ending child hunger, prevent obesity, and considerably improve the nutritional health of our children. In order to help Congress achieve these objectives through this Reauthorization, we

have worked with the NYC Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization over the past many months to require that the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act:

- Make significant progress towards the goal of ending child hunger and food insecurity in America by 2015;
- Ensure that all children have access to high quality, nutritious foods, local whenever possible, in their schools and through other child nutrition programs;
- Reduce obesity and diet-related diseases; and
- Support and expand regional farm and food economies, increasing jobs, enhancing infrastructure, and reducing unsustainable environmental impact.

The City Council can be effective advocates in making federal child nutrition programs universal and more nutritious while reducing their bureaucracy, and give programs more resources and technical assistance to serve all children.

Committee on State and Federal Legislation, New York City Council
Monday, May 3, 2010, Hearing on Child Nutrition Reauthorization

My name is Kristen Schoonover. I work with a non profit organization called Wellness in the Schools. We are a 501(c) 3 organization that works in New York City public schools to improve the food & fitness environment. I cook in the kitchens at PS 107, PS 130 and PS 157 in Brooklyn. I also teach a class called Wellness Cooking to 2nd through 5th graders.

Thank you to Speaker Quinn and the other Committee members for this opportunity to speak. My position is that we need additional funding for CNR.

The children in our public schools are a captive audience, and we have a unique opportunity to model the best possible behaviors through serving balanced meals composed of minimally processed foods. We currently have a heat and serve culture in the school kitchens. With additional funding we could serve more fresh fruits and vegetables, which are proven to protect health and prevent disease.

In the schools I work in, there has been pushback from the School Food Service Managers when we try to add Salad Bars for children, or to prepare something simple like a vegetarian chili or BBQ chicken from scratch. Right now we have volunteer interns preparing the salad and volunteer parents serving it. "We don't have enough staff to have a Salad Bar. Fresh vegetables are too expensive."

Too expensive? Won't it cost us more later when these children are developing chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes? NYC DOE SchoolFood is serving 860,000 children a day, many of whom rely on school meals for their nutrition. Some of them are eating three meals a day at school, and if they weren't, they wouldn't be eating at home. Many school children are already food insecure.

Serving fresh food will help all of New York City's children learn to eat healthily. With local sourcing mandates, it will support New York's economy. With additional staff in the kitchen, you have job creation. With more fresh fruits and vegetables and scratch cooked food on the school menus—modeling healthy behaviors-- you will have less incidence of chronic diseases and lower health care costs.

EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, HEALTH CARE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. All of these elements are a win for New York City. Public school children may be voiceless constituents, but be sure that public school parents, especially those who are registered to vote, are not. This is a clearly actionable issue that the general public can understand and rally behind.

Thank you to the City Council for giving its time and attention to Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

Sincerely,

Kristen Schoonover
Brooklyn Program Manager,
Wellness in the Schools
kristens@wellnessintheschools.org

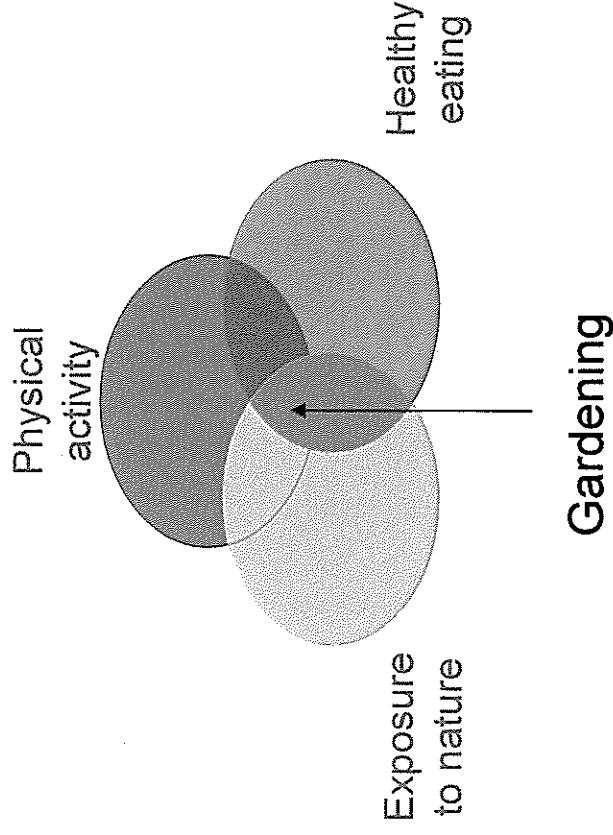
Gardening and Nutrition Education

The New York Botanical Garden



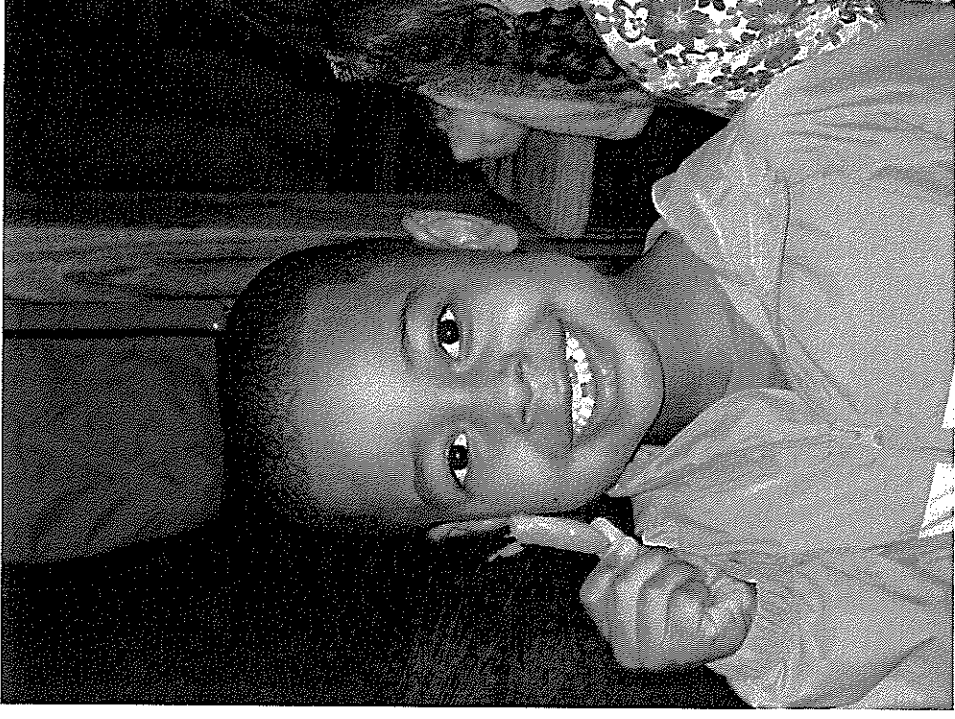
Gardening Programs Can Reduce Childhood Obesity

- In New York City, 43% of elementary school children are overweight or obese.
- Lack of exposure to nature (nature deficit disorder) can lead to obesity.
- Prevention and management of obesity relies upon lifestyle changes such as healthy eating and physical activity.



Gardening Programs Promote Healthy Food Choices

- Eating patterns are developed at an early age.
- Fruit and vegetable consumption plays a protective role in the prevention of obesity.
- Fewer than 1/2 of children ages 4 – 19 consume more than 5 servings of fruit and vegetables daily.



Gardening and Nutrition

- Garden-based nutrition education has a significant effect on consumption of fruits and vegetables and selected nutrient intake.
- Nutrition education alone is not as effective.



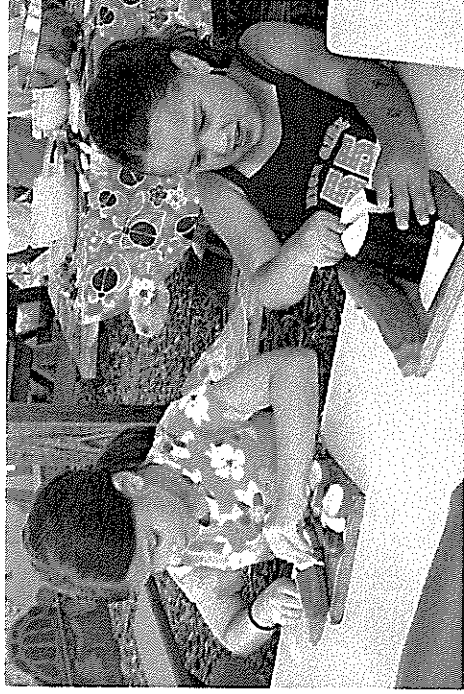
Gardening and Exercise

- Tending a garden is a physical activity



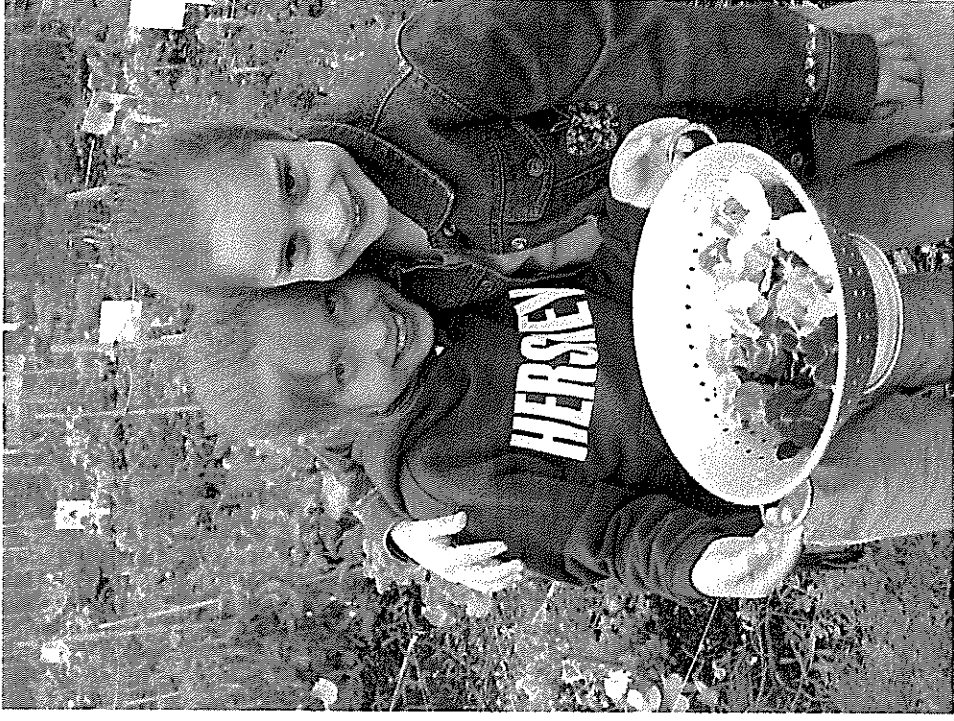
Increased Vegetable Intake

- Growing, harvesting, and preparing food leads to a sense of pride and ownership and has shown to increase the quantity of fruits and vegetables a student will consume.



Exposure to Nature

- Gardens provide access to nature so desperately needed for New York City school children.

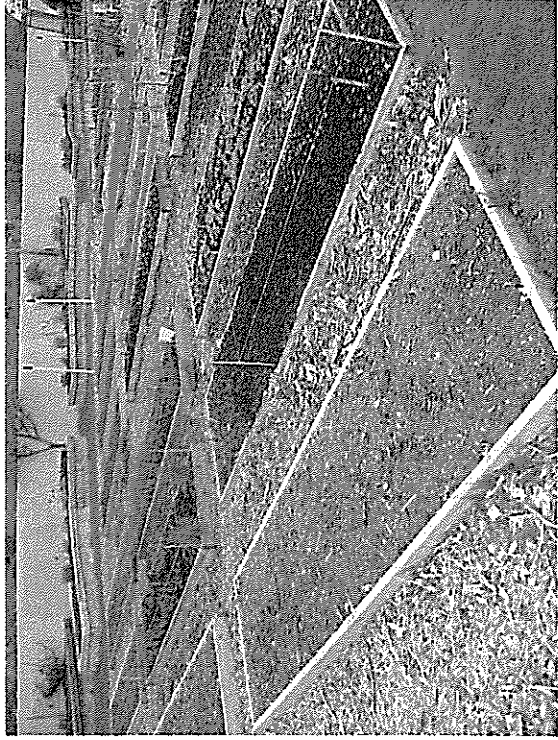
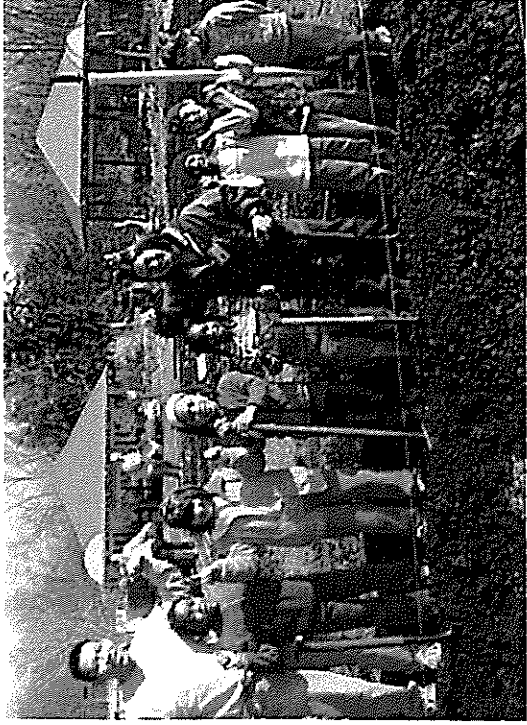


Gardening Curriculum

- School gardening programs can contribute to all curriculum including math, science, history, social studies, and art.



The New York Botanical Garden





THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

Maureen K. Chilton
Chairman of the Board

Caroline A. Wamsler, Ph.D.
Chairman of the Education Committee

Cordially invite you to attend
a briefing on

Education Programs at The New York Botanical Garden

Thursday, May 13, 2010
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

—o—o—o—

PROGRAM

Tour of the Everett Children's Adventure Garden
and Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden

Presentations by Education Staff

Luncheon

Tours also available of the exhibition
Emily Dickinson's Garden: The Poetry of Flowers

R.S.V.P. 718.817.8850 or gkonrad@nybg.org

COLD OR HOT FOOD AND MUSIC MINISTRY (COHFAMM)

PERSPECTIVE ON CNR/CNA

Good afternoon to NYC Council persons, my name is Rev. Dr. Ben Monroe. I represent Cold or Hot Food and Music Ministry (COHFAMM). It may be referred to as COHFAMM. Thank you for taking the time to hear what people like me have to say about CNR that is before congress to act upon. I don't claim to know all the particulars that are needed to move this effort forward. Therefore, I will share with you what I do think within and about our hungry communities.

I would like to begin my perspective on this matter before us with Council Member Robert Jackson's statement: "It is essential that we eliminate hunger and nutritional deficiencies in this country, one of the world's most advanced and wealthiest nations." With this in mind, my passion for hungry people revolves around hungry families, which include children. That is why, to receive my doctorate degree, I developed a model at New York Theological Seminary called Cold or Hot Food and Music Ministry (COHFAMM). This model introduces an expansion of the food pantry ministry to include referrals to community services, nutrition education, food choice selection and enhanced hospitality. This model has increased vital social and spiritual services to empower and transform the lives of people. Presently, COHFAMM provides free meals, independently, to Seniors at USA Diner in Rosedale, Queens, New York, at the same time, offer scholarships to young people 18 – 24 years of age to help position them to be present and future volunteer advocates against hunger.

While children's hunger is our main concern here today, and we want every pertinent agency to hear and act upon our concerns about CNA/CNR, I feel that in order to move this issue about children's hunger forward, while we are waiting for the government to act, and further on,

we can address innovative ideas such as appealing to existing supermarkets, restaurants and diners to give free food to Women, Infants, Children (WIC) and Seniors one time, or more, per month. The supermarkets could allow shopping for needed food without charge. The restaurants and diners could serve them food with dignity free of charge. This would include the whole family, which is not always a nuclear family. In such a ministry, food becomes not only the means for physical and social survival, but also the basis of dignity in food choices, and a spiritually enhanced hospitality that is meant to comfort people where they need comforting.

Again, I thank the Council for allowing me to speak at this CNA/CNR Hearing and hope that my suggestions have been helpful and they can be acted upon.

Rev. Dr. Ben Monroe, COHFAMM

1-212-561-0416



The Children's Aid Society

www.childrensaidsociety.org

Testimony of Stefania Patinella, Director of Food and Nutrition Programs, The Children's Aid Society Prepared for the Committee on State and Federal Legislation, New York City Council May 3, 2010

Good afternoon. My name is Stefania Patinella and I am Director of Food and Nutrition Programs for The Children's Aid Society (CAS). On behalf of our CEO, Richard Buery, and our Board of Trustees, I want to thank the City Council for holding these important hearings on the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act (CNR). I also want to express our gratitude for the strong leadership Speaker Quinn and the City Council have demonstrated on CNR. We are happy to be advocating alongside Council members for legislation that will provide healthier food for children in New York City and across the country.

The Children's Aid Society provides services to over 100,000 children and families in New York City each year, particularly in Harlem, Washington Heights, the South Bronx, and the North Shore of Staten Island through community centers, camps, and community schools; medical and mental health clinics; foster care, adoption and preventive services; early childhood programs; housing for homeless families; juvenile justice; teen pregnancy prevention; legal advocacy and more.

For 155 years, safeguarding the health and wellness of disadvantaged children has been central to our mission. In 2003, The Children's Aid Society launched a number of programs aimed at preventing and slowing the rates of childhood obesity in the communities we serve. The programs come together under the umbrella of **Go!Healthy**, an initiative that follows children from birth through adolescence and beyond, educating them about wellness and the joys of healthful cooking and eating. New York City has been investing in aspects of this initiative through early childhood, OST, and government-sponsored food contracts.

From the beginnings of Go!Healthy, Children's Aid recognized the dearth of tested and effective responses to this urgent crisis in child health. We set out to create program models that would not only work within our own Community Schools and Centers, but in low-income communities across the country. Our resulting obesity prevention programs are innovative and effective; they have been tested by independent evaluators, refined based on best practices, and shared with others through the technical assistance capacities we have developed. As childhood obesity continues to climb around the country, we are increasing our efforts to train organizations in our proven models. Go!Healthy takes a holistic and comprehensive approach to child health. Our three-pronged approach includes:

1. **Education:** We work across the life cycle to teach children, teens and parents how to choose, shop for and prepare healthy foods. Our programs include:
 - a. Go!Kids, our obesity prevention initiative for early childhood programs
 - b. Go!Chefs, our healthy cooking and gardening program for young people
 - c. Parent Cooking and Nutrition Education programs
2. **Foodservice:** We have launched an ambitious and agency-wide Go!Healthy Menus project with whole foods and plant-based recipes cooked from scratch.

3. **Advocacy:** We support efforts to increase access to high-quality, affordable, healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods.

CNR is a critical piece of legislation, and we thank the Council for passing a strong and targeted resolution outlining much-needed improvements to the Act. We support the Council's comprehensive vision for changes to the Act. Today, we'd like to weigh in on one area that is especially critical to our programs and to the children we serve: the importance of providing fresh, high-quality Child and Adult Care Food Programs (CACFP) meals to children in our care.

Foodservice

The Children's Aid Society feeds approximately 1,500 children each day, 95% of whom are eligible for a free meal as part of the New York State Child and Adult Care Food Programs (CACFP), and many struggle with food insecurity in their homes. Children in our early childhood programs consume as much as 80% of their daily calories and nutrients while in our care, and for those in the after-school programs at our Community Centers, we provide a hot supper that is often the most nutritious meal of their day. This puts us in a position to profoundly affect children's well-being and health through the meals that we serve, and we take this responsibility seriously by ensuring that those meals meet the highest standards for nutrition, freshness and appeal.

Unfortunately, most foodservice for children in the United States, including many CACFP-reimbursed meals, are based on a heat-and-serve model, and rely on processed foods that are higher than they ought to be in fats, sugar and sodium. Not only do these meals fall short from a nutritional perspective, they also present an extremely limited picture of "kid-friendly" foods. If young people are served pizza, chicken fingers, and tater tots again and again, and their exposure to healthful, deliciously prepared vegetables is limited, we miss an important opportunity to help them develop healthy habits for life.

In fall of 2007, we set out to rethink this model, and today our Go!Healthy Meals paint a very different picture: they are made entirely from scratch and based on whole and fresh foods. We have eliminated heavily processed foods altogether; substituted refined grains with whole grains; reduced the amount of meat we serve; and increased substantially the amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables in our meals. Working with Grow NYC (formerly CENYC), we have also established a farm-to-school connection to increase the amount of locally grown foods in our meals. Our healthful recipes originate at our sites—with input from cooks, parents, staff and children—and they reflect the wonderful cultural diversity of the families we serve. Of course, they not only meet the minimum CACFP nutrition standards, but far exceed them.

On the one hand, this approach is far from revolutionary: it's a return to a basic notion that cooking from scratch with whole foods is best. On the other hand, because children's foodservice has fallen so far from basic principles of home cooking, it was a big institutional change. We did it by investing in an intensive training program for cooks across our sites. Our cooks learn about nutrition, such as how to read labels, why whole grains are more nutritious than refined, and the importance of fiber. And most important, they learn healthy cooking techniques, such as how to roast vegetables to bring out their sweetness, blanch broccoli to keep it bright green and appealing, and make brown rice with *gandules* taste as good as grandma's. Three years in, Children's Aid Society cooks are our full partners, and children across our centers enjoy vibrant, delicious and nutritious meals every day. Indeed, our program has been so successful at Children's Aid that we have begun to secure funding to train other organizations in our model. For instance, we are embarking on a Cooking for Healthy Communities project with member organizations of United Neighborhood Houses this fall.

In some places, we were able to find cost savings. For example, by substituting half the ground turkey with pinto beans in our Turkey Tacos, we both reduced the cost and increased the nutritional profile. But overall, our financial analyses show that our healthier meals cost more money—an average of 25 cents more per child per meal. Children’s Aid Society continues to seek funding to support this program because we believe it is of the utmost importance to children’s health. However, as with so much else, this has become more difficult with the economic downturn.

We appreciate the Council’s efforts to support an increase in CACFP reimbursement rates and also to speak out about making federal nutrition standards “a floor, not a ceiling” so that programs like ours are encouraged to serve food that exceeds minimum standards. Indeed, we advocate for raising the whole floor of federal nutrition standards so children across the country are served wholesome and fresh foods every day in day cares, schools, after-school, and summer programs. We would like to see a similar effort by the Council to ensure *training funds* for foodservice staff because in our experience, hands-on training for cooks is by far the most effective way to truly reform foodservice for children.

Listening to our Children

We often hear from adults that children don’t want to eat healthfully, but at Children’s Aid Society, we have seen in our cooking programs and foodservice program that this is simply untrue. Children will happily make healthy food choices when they are presented with them, and when they are delicious. We gave children in our Community Schools a chance to express their thoughts on CNR and to visualize their ideal school lunch. In closing, I would like to present to you a few excerpts from letters our children wrote to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand:

- **Luz, age 11, says:** “I would like school lunch to have fruits, salads, fruits with salads, and cheese sticks.”
- **Deannaliz, age 11, says:** “I think healthy foods are important because they help the community have more energy, pay attention in class, and learn better.”
- **Natalia, age 11, says:** “I would like more money, Mr. Senator and Ms. Senator, because we need healthier food and more good, delicious food.”
- **Nanjelyn, age 11, says:** “I really think the lunch ladies should get more money than what they get because they work really hard, and some lunch ladies need more money to pay rent, for food, water and taxes.”
- **And Marc, age 8, simply says:** “Would you please give us more go foods and more vegetables and more milk.”
- **Jossie, also age 8,** found a picture easier than words, and drew a picture with carrots, soup, watermelon, cherries, pancakes, strawberries, and spaghetti...all on one plate!

These are but a few of the young voices all over the city asking for healthier, better tasting food. On behalf of these, and all, of our children, we thank the City Council for holding these hearings and for taking a strong stance for health for New York City’s youth. We support every effort to advocate for an increase in reimbursement rates, and to ensure that all meals served to children are of the highest quality. We know that investing in child nutrition now will save us many thousands of dollars in health costs in the future.

Testimony prepared by
Sarah Frank
for the
New York City Council State and Federal Legislation Committee
Hearing
on
Resolution 79-2010
Urging Congress to Renew and Strengthen Child Nutrition and
WIC Reauthorization Act
May 3, 2010
on behalf of
HealthCorps

Introduction

Good afternoon, all. My name is Sarah Frank. I am a resident of West Harlem, and I work as a health educator and mentor with HealthCorps, a non-profit organization focused on fitness and nutrition education. I work full time at Edward A. Reynolds West Side High School in Manhattan. On behalf of HealthCorps and my school community, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today to the New York City Council State and Federal Legislation Committee. Thank you all for being here today to discuss the Child Nutrition Act and support our children and community health.

HealthCorps works in 50 schools in 9 states on three main fronts: to educate the student body; to connect and empower citizens and organizations through community outreach; and to advocate for policy shifts at the national, state, and city levels to put health and physical education back into the core curriculum of the American education system and move the country towards safer environments affecting health. HealthCorps' impact and efficacy was confirmed in a two-year study of our New York City schools conducted through Affinity Health Plan.

My work as a HealthCorps Coordinator involves education, community organizing, and activism in a high school that serves a mostly low-income population.

This past winter, staff from Food Bank For New York City, Global Kids and I taught a class at West Side High School in which students learned about the history of the Child Nutrition Act and examined the role of school meals in their own lives. This class was created because we all wanted to empower my students and inform them about our political system. The class was entitled, "Politics of Food." For six weeks, every Tuesday and Thursday, for two hours, students who are often disempowered in many ways got an opportunity to be a part of this process.

My students were shocked to learn that policy makers valued their opinions. They were eager to share their sense of empowerment with the other students in our school. My students became advocates for the Child Nutrition Act, and one even traveled with me and other community advocates to Washington, D.C. to support Universal School Meals. In Washington, D.C., we both presented to House and Senate staffers about the importance of including Universal School Meals in Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

At West Side High School, we are in year two of New York City's Universal School Meals Program under Provision 2. I believe that our Provision 2 status has led to an increase in the number of students who eat school lunch and a decrease in the stigma so often associated with school food. Provision 2 status means that our students do not have to fill out the paperwork required by other schools to participate in school food, and we have no money exchanged at all for food in our school. At West Side, we also have a closed campus, which means that students cannot leave to buy lunch at the many stores and restaurants nearby. School food is no longer the lunch for poor students who can't afford to go out; it is simply what's for lunch, for everyone. When our four years of Provision 2 status finish and we have to begin collecting school food applications for reduced and free lunch again, I worry that our

participation rates will decline; I know that this has been the case for many other schools.

Many of my students rely on two meals a day from school. Many have challenging home lives, and for a variety of reasons cannot count on a nutritious meal from home, even if their family might not qualify for free or reduced price lunch. I started a Grab-N-Go breakfast and lunch program in my school in which I give out cold, brown-bag breakfasts and lunches on the first floor of the school. Every day I have students tell me how grateful they are to have such easy access to school food. Many students tell me that without school food, they would wait until school ended to eat their first meal or they would cut class because they were too hungry to stay in school.

We all know that feeding New York City students breakfast and lunch is integral to their success. Just as they have a right to attend school, they have a right to good, nutritious, high-quality food every day that they're there. And as we would encourage our own children to eat breakfast and finish their vegetables, we must empower all New York City students to do the same. I believe that Universal School Meals will be essential to ensuring that all school children eat at least two nutritious meals a day and will help reach President Obama's goal to end Child Hunger by 2015. Without adequate funding for the Child Nutrition Act, feeding all of our school children will not be possible. As a HealthCorps Coordinator, every day I do my best to make sure that the young people I work with eat breakfast and lunch, make healthier choices, and advocate for their health and well-being. On behalf of HealthCorps and students in the program, I ask you today to write to Congress and ask that they increase the funding to Child Nutrition Reauthorization and strengthen the Universal School Meals provision. Thank you again for allowing me to speak before you today.

Testimony prepared by
Claudia Coger
for the
New York City Council State and Federal Legislation Committee
Hearing
on
Resolution 79-2010
Urging Congress to Renew and Strengthen Child Nutrition and WIC
Reauthorization Act
May 3, 2010
on behalf of
Astoria Houses Residents Association

Introduction

Good afternoon. My name is Claudia Coger, and I am the Astoria Houses Residents Association President. On behalf of the Astoria Houses Residents Association, I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony today to the New York City Council State and Federal Legislation Committee regarding the need for more funding for the Child Nutrition Reauthorization. Thank you, for your attention to this critical and timely issue.

I advocate on behalf of my community. I am a parent, grandparent, great-grandparent and a foster parent.

I interact with many families and agencies. I know from experience that the process of filling out school meals applications, for some families, can prohibit a child from being the recipient of school meals. As a foster parent, my experience with one of my teenage sons was he would not participate because he felt that it segregated him from his friends as being poor, so he would not eat at school. I believe that if all children had Universal School Meals, this would alleviate stigma. The present

system of proving your income is an added burden to families that live with a restricted budget. I personally have experienced parents who have knocked on my door requesting lunch money for their child. One of my neighbors asked me for lunch money because she was forced to choose between having carfare to go to the clinic with one child and give the other lunch money. These should not be choices a parent or a child should have to make in their daily lives. Children should not worry about where their meals should come from. With better access to school meals, students will be able to focus more; this will make not only our children stronger, but our country strong. I understand that there is a proposal from the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee, which has some form of Universal School Meals in it, however, this current provision will allow only a few New York City Schools to participate in that program.

I worked with Food Bank For New York City, and other community advocates to get signatures in support of Universal Schools Meals. We went door to door talking about the importance of Universal Schools Meals. Hundreds of Astoria Houses residents signed letters in support of Universal School Meals. I have advocated not only in my community, but have traveled to Washington, DC to speak to staffers of representatives in Congress, because I believe that Universal School Meals would play an important role of reaching President Obama's goal to end Child Hunger by 2015. I, as a community advocate have done my part in advocating for our children, I pass the baton to you and ask that you write to Congress and ask that they increase the funding to the Child Nutrition Reauthorization and that they strengthen the Universal School Meals provision, so that more New York City Public Schools will get an opportunity to participate and more importantly, more of our children will have better access to school meals.

Again, thank you for allowing me to speak before you.

My name is Frances Chapman. I am an advocate of fresh, healthy food for all my fellow New Yorkers, most particularly the city's children. I know and support the work of many here. However, my only affiliation is to my community supported agriculture group. I speak here as an individual citizen.

First I want to thank the elected officials here for the opportunity to speak. This cannot always be taken for granted in our city. Yesterday, those of us who went to a rally in Times Square and march to the UN to call for the abolition of the nuclear weapons, which also pose a threat to our children, were not treated as respectfully as citizens are we are here today. Yesterday, a police officer told citizens, many of them elderly, to "get back in your pens" as if we were livestock in a factory farm and instructed to walk blocks back to the end of the march should they want leave their confinement. Nuclear weapons and healthy food are connected issues. Let me explain.

Recently, there has been concern about funding an expanded and improved school lunch program without cutting other nutrition programs. The NYC Alliance for CNR has asked for a \$4 billion appropriation at the Federal level, while the Administration has asked for \$1 billion. I want to remind citizens and officials here today that current building projects at Los Alamos and Kansas City for nuclear weapons research total \$6 billion. Why should nutrition education programs be cut for funding? If we as a nation can spend \$6 billion on investment in weapons that we all hope will never be used, can we not invest in our children, who are our future?

In the glass and steel skyscrapers of our city, caterers routinely serve elegantly garnished sandwiches and fresh vegetables at business meetings for prospective clients and customers. In this setting "access to food" is considered a cost of doing business. Are children many of whom go home to an inadequate evening meal less worthy of nourishment than dealmakers? They are our city's future.

Members, I realize that you do not control the Federal budget, but you do represent New York's citizens. Like the ordinary citizens here in this room, you can only call for sufficient funding for CNR. Many of you represent constituencies who do not eat catered lunches or work in fancy offices. Join with us to speak up and advocate healthy, appetizing school lunches for all schoolchildren without the bureaucratic and demeaning certification process for health and life. I respectfully submit that calling for improved school lunches and appropriate funding for CNR should be a no brainer. Our children deserve no less.

The advocacy evidenced here and your support for CNR are only a small, symbolic first step to righting the priorities of our city. Many issues do fall within your jurisdiction. As our representatives, you work in public space and thank you again for opening it to ordinary citizens. Every vote you cast should reflect a judgment on whether it empowers citizens and expands public, as distinguished from governmental, space. I submit that overpolicing of peaceful demonstrations be ended and the civil liberty of assembly be restored. We must nourish our children on the example of an active, vocal citizenry as well as on healthful food. Democracy does not exist solely in legislative chambers; it also is in the streets. Or should be. Let us fix New York together.

Source: <http://www.ananuclear.org/Portals/0/documents/ANA10%20weapons%20final.pdf>



70 West 36th Street, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10018
tel: 212-967-0322 fax: 212-967-0792
www.unhny.org

**Testimony Before the New York City Council
Committee on State and Federal Legislation
Honorable Helen Foster, Chair
Regarding Child Nutrition Reauthorization
And the Child and Adult Care Food Program**

May 3, 2010

Good afternoon. Thank you Chair Foster and members of the Committee on State and Federal Legislation for the opportunity to testify. My name is Gregory Brender and I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses. United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is the membership organization of New York City settlement houses and community centers. Rooted in the history and values of the settlement house movement, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. UNH's membership comprises one of the largest human service systems in New York City, with 38 agencies working at more than 400 sites to provide high quality services and activities to half million New Yorkers each year. UNH supports its members through policy development, advocacy and capacity-building activities.

UNH member agencies depend on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to fund nutritious meals for children in child care and early education programs including Family Child Care Networks, child care centers, Head Start, pre-schools, and Universal Pre-Kindergarten classes.

We strongly support the City Council's endorsement of President Obama's call for an additional \$1 billion for child nutrition. These funds are crucial for improving the nutritional value of children's meals and making access to subsidized meals easier for children, parents, schools and child care providers.

We are also working to improve CACFP procedures so that our member agencies and other child care providers can more easily provide children with more nutritious meals. Today I would like to submit to the City Council the following suggestions for reforms of CACFP:

Include a Fourth Meal for Full-Day Child Care Programs.

In order to meet the needs of working parents, many center based and family child care providers have children in their care for more than eight hours a day necessitating an extra meal or snack which is not covered by CACFP. We urge funding that would allow a fourth meal for full-day child care programs.

Geographic Reimbursement Rates.

The increase in transportation costs has contributed to rising food prices in New York City and other urban areas. According to the Administration for Children's Services, New York City, for example, the price of eggs increased 25% and the cost of milk has increased 36% between 2007 and 2008. We propose increasing reimbursement rates to provide the full cost of food in urban areas.

Allow Staff Participation in Family Style Meals.

Federal Head Start performance standards encourage family style meals where an adult participates in meals with the children in their care in order to demonstrate and teach healthy eating habits. However, under current guidelines, CACFP funds can not be used to provide reimbursement for the meals eaten by adults who participate in family style meals. We propose allowing CACFP funds to be used to encourage staff participation in family style meals.

Special Dietary Needs.

Providers need to accommodate medically based dietary needs including common allergies to CACFP approved items such as dairy products. The provision of an alternative meal can cause financial hardship for the provider. CACFP should provide a higher rate of reimbursement to providers whose children who have a medically documented special dietary need.

Promotion of Wholesome / Quality Food.

UNH supports the proposal by the New York City Administration for Children's Services to allow for pilot programs to encourage healthy eating including a higher reimbursement rate for providers who incorporate whole grain products, fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy eating choices.

Eliminate Requirements that Family Child Care providers keep records after they are submitted to Family Child Care Networks.

Every day that meals are served, Family Child Care Providers are required to provide to Family Child Care Networks :

- Meal Count Sheet which lists which children were present and what meals they ate
- daily menus
- attendance sheet signed by each child's parent or guardian
- day care enrollment forms listing all enrolled children including those who are absent during the time submitted.

Furthermore, these documents, which providers create daily and submit monthly to the State CACFP office, must be stored for specific time periods:

- On site at a provider's home for one year from the date paperwork is submitted.
- In a location either at a provider's home or nearby for three years after the date submitted.
- 7 years in a site either at a provider's home or nearby if the provider has been found to be in deficiency.

We propose eliminating the requirement that providers keep menus after they are submitted.

Provide Family Child Care Networks Funding for training on CACFP Family Child Care networks are required to have staff supervise family child care providers on their use of CACFP funds. However, they are not funded to provide this training to providers on how to comply with the often complex CACFP regulations. We propose allowing CACFP funds to be used to allow Family Child Care Networks to train providers on the use of CACFP funds and children's nutrition.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is the membership organization of New York City settlement houses and community centers. Rooted in the history and values of the settlement-house movement, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. UNH's membership comprises one of the largest human service systems in New York City, with 38 agencies working at more than 400 sites to provide high quality services and activities to half million New Yorkers each year. UNH supports its members through policy development, advocacy and capacity-building activities.

UNH Members: Arab American Family Support Center - BronxWorks - CAMBA - Center for Family Life in Sunset Park - Chinese American Planning Council - Claremont Neighborhood Centers - Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation - East Side House Settlement - Educational Alliance - Goddard Riverside Community Center - Grand Street Settlement - Greenwich House - Hamilton-Madison House - Hartley House - Henry Street Settlement - Hudson Guild - Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House - Kingsbridge Heights Community Center - Lenox Hill Neighborhood House - Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center - Mosholu Montefiore Community - New Settlement Apartments - Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation - Project Hospitality - Queens Community House - Riverdale Neighborhood House - SCAN New York - School Settlement Association - Shorefront YM-WHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach, Inc - Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers - St. Matthew's and St. Timothy's Neighborhood Center - St. Nick's Alliance - Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center - Sunnyside Community Services - Third Street Music School Settlement - Union Settlement Association-United Community Centers - University Settlement Society

Statement by Janet Poppendieck, Ph.D
Professor of Sociology, Hunter College
Author: *Free For All: Fixing School Food in America*

Within the Child Nutrition community there is sometimes a tension, particularly in regard to school meals, between those whose primary concern is the **quality** of the food—

with quality broadly defined to include not only healthfulness and palatability but also the broader environmental impact of the way in which the food procured for the program is produced and transported.

and those for whom the primary concern is **access**—are the meals effectively reaching those who need them? How can we remove the many barriers posed by the current system of application, certification, verification and counting and claiming?

I want to use my few minutes to make clear that these are not separate issues at all—they are inextricably interwoven. The more students who participate, the lower the unit cost of producing a meal and the greater the amount that can thus be devoted to food and preparation—the higher the quality in all senses of the word. Thus provisions in CNR that support increased access—like the paperless pilots and the use of Medicaid for direct certification contribute to the quality and sustainability of the meals.

Conversely, anything we do to increase the quality, such as Farm to Cafeteria programs and funds for equipment and training and implementation of the new IOM recommendations, is likely to draw more students into the program and thus increase participation, lower the unit cost, reduce waste, and move us closer to the ideal of healthy food, integrated with the school curriculum and served in an atmosphere of social solidarity—the kind of school meals that will help students develop healthy habits and preferences.

We need you to support, and to urge our Congressional Delegation to work hard for, the full funding of CNR that would make these improvements in access and quality possible. And we need you to continue your interest in Child Nutrition, beyond CNR as we work for implementation of the improvements achieved by the current legislative round, and toward a program of universal free school meals for all our children that would make real access and real quality possible.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

12:44pm

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. CNR
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Denker

Address: 64 Fulton St., NY NY 10038

I represent: Hunger Action Network of NY

Address: 64 Fulton St NY NY 10038

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

12:45

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: MAY 3, 2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: REV. DR BEN MONROE

Address: 120-43 195th Street

I represent: COLD DR HOT FOOD AND MUSIC MINISTRY

Address: SAME

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

12:46pm

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathy Goldman

Address: 15 Maiden Lane^{Apn} 1200 NY 10038

I represent: COMMUNITY FOOD ADVOCATES INC

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

12:43 pm

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Miguel Acevedo (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 400 W. 175th

I represent: Fulton Youth of the Future

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 79A
 in favor in opposition

Date: 5/3/10

Name: Kristen Mancinelli (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: City Harvest

I represent: 575 8th Ave NY, NY 10018

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Joel Berg (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1 Plaza St Brooklyn

I represent: NYC Coalition Against Hunger

Address: 50 Broad, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: May 3, 2010

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Janet Poppendieck

Address: 282 16th Street, Brooklyn, NY 1125

I represent: NYC FOR CNR

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 79

in favor in opposition

Date: 05.03.10

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Aine Duggan

Address: 39 Bway NYC 10006

I represent: FOOD BANK FOR NYC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/3/10

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Jennifer Pothman + Carrie Lacey

Address: _____

I represent: The New York Botanical Garden

Address: 200th St + Kazimiroff Blvd, Bronx

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/3/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BRYAN MULLEN

Address: _____

I represent: ES FOODS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 79

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/3/2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kristen Schoonover

Address: 1611 11th Ave #2 BKLYN NY 11215

I represent: Wellness in the Schools

Address: New York NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephanie Gendell / Danelle Marchione

Address: 105 E 22nd

I represent: Citizens' Committee for Children

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 792010
 in favor in opposition

Date: 5/3/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sarah Frank

Address: 297 W. 112th St #4C NY, NY 10026

I represent: Health Corps

Address: 191 7th Ave #2N, NY, NY 10011

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 792010
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claudia Coger

Address: 3-20-27th Ave ASTORIA NY 11102

I represent: Astoria Houses Residents Assoc.

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: May 3 2010

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adriana Velez

Address: 216 Lincoln Pl # C1

I represent: Brooklyn Food Coalition

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Stacey Flanagan (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 220 Church St

I represent: Public Health Solutions

Address: u

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Stefania Patinella (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: The Children's Aid Society

Address: 105 E 22nd St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/3/10

Name: Frances Chapman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 107 Broadway #4 Brooklyn NY 11211

I represent: myself

Address: ~~107~~

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gregory Brender

Address: 70 West 36th Street

I represent: United Neighborhood Houses

Address: 70 West 36th Street

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/3/10

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: AGNES MOLNAR

Address: 15 MAIDEN LANE

I represent: COMMUNITY FOOD ADVOCATES

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Nancy Roman
Address: 445 6th St Bklyn
I represent: Brooklyn Food Coalition
Address: 782 Union St Bklyn NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Fern Gate Estron
Address: 200 W 18th St
I represent: FlE Food + Nutrition Team
Address: 200 W 18th St NYC NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms