



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Annual Food Drive Fills Pantry and Shelter Shelves Across the State

Students Collect Thousands of Non-Perishable Food Items and Other Donations at Halloween Themed Trick-or-Eat Events

New York – Dressed in Halloween garb, students working with NYPIRG took to their communities and collected over 8,000 donated items for local shelters and food pantries. As donations continue to roll in, over 4,300 food items, 2,446 clothing items, and 1,331 toiletries were dropped off this week at local food banks, on-campus food pantries, and shelters across the state. Statewide donations totals are on pace to hit 10,000 items.

“Overall it was an awesome experience going around Brooklyn and meeting people willing to give back. We’re really proud of everyone,” shared Michaela Brathwaite, a Health and Nutrition Sciences major at Brooklyn College and an intern with NYPIRG.

Food and housing insecurity are pervasive problems in New York. Over 2.5 million New Yorkers consider themselves food insecure, which means they do not have consistent access to affordable and nutritious food. According to a recent report by Advocates for Children of New York, 1 in 10 public k-12 students in NYC have experienced homelessness.

When it comes to food assistance, there is a significant gap between who needs food assistance, and who receives it. Only 1.8 million New Yorkers are enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and one out of every five New Yorkers turn to food charities in order to feed themselves. Not to mention, it is becoming harder to access healthy foods with new federal regulations prohibiting use of SNAP benefits at farmer’s markets.

In light of this, students working with NYPIRG collected goods which were donated to various community pantries such as Our Lady of Refuge Church in Brooklyn and the Syracuse Samaritan Center in Syracuse.

Additionally, these drives were able to support food pantries on college campuses eager to restock their shelves. A recent survey of college students found that 48% of respondents experienced food insecurity. NYPIRG has heard from students that have had to make the difficult financial decision between purchasing food for themselves and their families and paying for a textbook.

This year, donated food went to on-campus food pantries at Bronx Community College, Queens College, College of State Island, City College of New York, and Brooklyn College.

Last spring, Governor Cuomo mandated that all State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) schools have food pantries or stigma-free food access for students by the end of this academic semester. NYPIRG's donations ensured these campus food pantries remained fully stocked heading into the holiday season and finals. Additionally, the Borough of Manhattan Community College received bags filled with children's clothing to support low income student parents who utilize the on campus child care center there.

“These annual Trick-or-Eat local drives are an important opportunity to provide immediate relief to the growing population of food and housing insecure New York students and families,” said Emily Skydel, NYPIRG Hunger and Homelessness Coordinator.

NYPIRG is a not-for-profit, student-directed advocacy organization, training students and other New Yorkers to be leaders in environmental, consumer, and public health policies since 1973. NYPIRG has chapters at college campuses across the state. www.nypirgstudents.org.

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