

RCS NEWS

REACHING OUT COMMUNITY SERVICES..KEEPS THE GOOD GOING!



Mask and sanitizer distribution during COVID

Sen. Gounardes helps hand out PPE to Brooklyn constituents...

RCS, with the help of donations from several community partners, such as Senator Gounardes, has made big efforts in keeping the community safe and educated when it comes to the COVID-19 virus. Throughout the pandemic we have given out gloves, hand sanitizer and masks to ensure that the community keeps themselves safe. We even obtained large quantities of clear masks for the hearing impaired community through the mayor's office so that they could stay protected and connected! The ongoing connectedness of emergency management updates as well as DSS and MOPD have made accurate, timely information an easy process and it is much appreciated by our constituents. This entire ordeal has been about building partnerships with local, city and state officials as well as making community relationships and pooling resources from each of those entities to the community to meet their needs. It took a lot of creative adapting, community and Foundational support to make sure we didn't close our doors not a day but with the work of a lot of exhausted staff we have pulled through.



Workers tirelessly load vans to be delivered to those unable to visit the pantry

Mobile Food Pantry Program helps the homebound in need!

Reaching Out Community Services prides itself in having listened to the needs of its community for 30+ years. This pandemic sure did take the world by storm and Brooklyn was the second hardest hit borough in NYC. We adapted our programs and listened to our neighbors and identified a huge need that arose among those that could not leave their homes due to age, disability, quarantine, being immune compromised or any other affliction that kept them from being able to visit the pantry to obtain food. We immediately heeded this call and organized our Mobile Food Program to begin delivery to those home bound persons in need. The Mobile Food Program has been off to a running start and wildly successful! The response from the community and the partners we have collaborated with TRULY has been nothing short of extremely positive, beneficial and our expectations have been exceeded in every way possible. We immediately were able to reach out to clients on waiting lists as well as senior living, Office of Mental Health,

Safe Horizon Crime Victims Assistance Program (CVAP) and that's just naming a few of the community partners that have referred in need clients to this program. Clients have literally cried tears of joy at the ability to have fresh, healthful food that can meet dietary, allergy and religious needs brought to them at home. The community partner's feedback has been overwhelming and we only wish we could expand our zip code coverage because the requests are endless. We wanted to use this opportunity to create as much positivity as we could so we partnered with Adult Day services for the disabled community and knowing we had the opportunity here to create part time volunteer hours during a pandemic, which is amazing, we wanted to offer that opportunity to those marginalized persons that may have lost their jobs. The disabled community has so much to offer the workforce but unfortunately is often overlooked so we were able to work with people that were recently let go from their jobs and it has worked out FABULOUSLY!

VOLUNTEERISM

Helping those that Help the Community

RCS helps volunteers complete hours during pandemic

Reaching Out Community Services is blessed every year to have support for each of its programs through volunteerism. We not only take pride in teaching these volunteers about our mission and showing them the work we do day in and out but we appreciate learning from each of them what brings them here and admire their commitment to the community. This year out of an abundance of caution we were unable to have volunteers inside of the building and not only did we miss them but the community and volunteers overwhelmingly let us know they missed the work as well. RCS thought out of the box and was able to set up virtual volunteering opportunities for many and boy did it work! We had a great response, and it helped with the work load that our staff members were handling and eased some of the COVID blues our volunteers were experiencing out of boredom being homebound. Our last volunteer was able to finish her required community service credits for school and subsequently was offered a very high paying job in the Human Services field! We are very proud of her and were happy we were able to afford her the opportunity to get her externship completed.



Vaccine sign up and education outside of RCS



Commissioner Garcia and Councilman Justin Brannan stop by to say hello...

WHAT'S NEW

New Programs at RCS

RCS was steadfast this year in finding the silver lining to this pandemic and if there has been one it was that it allowed us to be extremely versatile, think out of the box, and find ways to not only be resourceful to fill community needs but also to expand and enhance what we already had in place, and we did just that in so very many ways!

We proudly kicked off our Mobile Food Pantry Program for those that are home bound, we participated in free tax prep for low income neighbors and we have also expanded our social services program to include some new services we are very proud of...

RCS now offers online Adult Learning Classes, ESL, Basic ED & HS Diploma. We have Job Training courses for Home Health Aid and Personal Care Aid, with job placement after completion of the course. We have a referral department for health insurance sign up, all phases of counseling (this has been approved to be done virtually), immigration legal assistance, and housing assistance. Our Social Services Department is also open for both virtual and in person SNAP application processing. We are very proud of being able to bring additional services during a time of need.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Free Tax Prep at RCS

Reaching Out Community Services has tried to maintain as many community services as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. While financial hardship and creating independence have been at the top of the list in the needs people have, during this year it has become even more paramount that in-need persons receive as many resources as possible so to that end RCS made as many efforts as we could to assist. The free tax prep program has been offered to any low-income constituent in need of preparing taxes. We have had hundreds of neighbors show up to utilize this service and were even able to offer a virtual version of this service we have not been able to do in years past that helped so many home bound persons.

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ADVOCACY

Partnerships that Nurture the Community

Having reliable, trustworthy, safe places to turn is important. Knowing the staff in those places are accessible and compassionate is as equally important. Here at RCS we pride ourselves on being a safe haven for our neighbors regardless of their needs. We operate with a daily mission to inspire self-reliance and empower the community in a dignified manner. It seems as though while much social unrest has occurred there is a side of COVID that has brought out the sense of community that we have seen after disasters such as Hurricane Sandy and 9-11. We feel the love the community has for one another, neighbors wanting to help where they can, local businesses that are barely holding asking “*what can I do to help?*” it’s inspiring and keeps us going knowing we are truly all in this together and gives us that sense of responsibility to the community we serve to create a network they can rely on to continue best serving their needs.

This pandemic put us in a unique position to have access to Foundations, philanthropists, hospitals and organizations we had never known. Some found us, some we were introduced to, others we met on Zoom calls we attended keeping up on the ever changing guidelines. To say we have been fortunate is an understatement, blessed is maybe a better word, not only have we been able to make these connections at this time which have allowed us to take on thousands of extra individuals and families so devastatingly affected by the pandemic but through this years’ time we have created true relationships that have allowed these supporters to get to know, appreciate and believe in the work we do. Opportunities like this allow for ongoing support so that we may continue to do the important work we accomplish every day and give us the bandwidth to bring important programming and resources to the community to target their needs.

RCS has partnered with many local organizations to ensure the safety of its constituents. We have a referral system with Crime Victims Assistance Program (CVAP) to help those who are victims of a crime and we work closely with the chapter in each local precinct on this project. Referrals work both ways, us helping clients get help from CVAP and us providing crime victims in need of our services with pantry food, legal referrals, housing services and maybe most importantly the Domestic Violence and addiction counseling services, we are able to connect victims with.

	Food Insecurity rate	Food-Insecure Population (rounded)	Meal Gap
Bronx	16.1%	229,800	41,207,200
Brooklyn	18.8%	488,560	87,607,300
Manhattan	13.9%	226,420	40,601,100
Queens	11.5%	264,440	47,418,700
Staten Island	9.4%	44,500	7,979,600
New York City	14.9%	1,253,720	224,813,900

Table 1. Source: Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. *Map the Meal Gap 2017: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level*. Feeding America, 2017.

Brooklyn struggles with the largest food gap of all the boroughs in trying provide food to those in need

CITY COUNCIL

RCS tackles the Brooklyn Meal Gap

Councilman Justin Brannan gives his all to help the community

The borough of Brooklyn has THE highest meal gap and food insecure population of all five boroughs. Approximately, 90 thousand of those insecure are children. Reaching Out Community Services currently has upward of 11 thousand clients comprised of individuals and families registered for its food pantry services. Even with the pandemic and large closures of many local neighborhood pantries we knew we were an essential service for so many. The socio-economic impact the virus had on Brooklyn especially, being the second hardest hit, made it that much more important for us to adapt our services and function as efficiently as possible. With the extremely generous help of Councilman Justin Brannan and his continuous and unrelenting support we have kept our heads above water and our doors open. Keeping the GOOD GOING so the community can get back on its feet and we can continue to provide nutritious sustenance to those in need.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Keeping Everyone Connected

Federal CDC Eviction Moratorium Extended Through June 30, 2021

Tenants and occupants who submit a completed Hardship Declaration to their landlord and/or the Housing Court cannot be evicted from a primary residence pursuant to a pending eviction case, and the landlord may not file a new case to evict until at least May 1, 2021. Tenants and occupants can proactively complete a Hardship Declaration and return it to the landlord whether or not there is an eviction case pending against them.

Hardship Declaration forms are available to download on the New York State Courts website at <http://nycourts.gov/EEFPA>.

COVID-19 Vaccination Updates

Immediate Appointments are available for New Yorkers age 75 and up. To ensure ease of access for our oldest New York City residents who may have challenges using the telephonic or online vaccine scheduler, the City now offers immediate appointments to New Yorkers aged 75 or older. In addition, one individual who is otherwise eligible for the vaccine may escort that 75+ New Yorker and also receive an immediate appointment. Starting Monday, April 12th, the site will expand eligibility to all New Yorkers 16+ and can be accessed through VaccineFinder.nyc.gov or 877-VAX-4NYC



Community education and information is a part of everyday services at RCS



The Expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC): What New York Families Need to Know

1. What is the Child Tax Credit?



The Child Tax Credit is a benefit that helps families afford the everyday expenses of raising children. The [American Rescue Plan](#), signed into law in March, significantly expands the federal Child Tax Credit for one year and will deliver direct cash payments to many New York families with children. **To receive the Credit, it is extremely important that families file their 2020 tax returns by May 17th – even if they have no income or have never filed taxes before.**

2. How does the American Rescue Plan expand the Child Tax Credit?

The American Rescue Plan temporarily expands the Child Tax Credit in three main ways:

- i. **INCREASES THE CREDIT'S VALUE AND EXPANDS ELIGIBILITY TO 17-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN**
 - Children under 6 will receive a **\$3,600** per child maximum benefit
 - Children ages 6 to 17 will receive a **\$3,000** per child maximum benefit
- ii. **MAKES THE CREDIT FULLY AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN IN THE LOWEST INCOME FAMILIES**
 - The maximum benefit is available from **\$0 in earnings** up through \$112,500 (unmarried filer) or \$150,000 (married filer)
- iii. **PAYS THE CREDIT OUT IN REGULAR INSTALLMENTS**
 - Families will receive half of the Credit in periodic payments starting in July 2021, and the remainder when they file their 2021 tax return (Spring 2022)
 - Children under 6 will receive **\$300 per child per month**
 - Children ages 6 to 17 will receive **\$250 per child per month**



POTENTIAL PAYMENT SCHEDULES

IF MONTHLY	IF PERIODICALLY
July 2021 (First payment)	July 2021 (First payment)
August 2021	
September 2021	
October 2021	October 2021
November 2021	
December 2021 (Last payment received in 2021)	December 2021 (Last payment received in 2021)
April 2022 (Completion of 2021 payment)	April 2022 (Completion of 2021 payment)

815 2nd Avenue, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10017 p (212) 697-2323 www.cdfny.org



3. Must individuals be employed to receive this Child Tax Credit?

No! Under the American Rescue Plan, the benefit is available to families with no income.

4. Does the Child Tax Credit impact eligibility for other benefits?

No! The Child Tax Credit does not impact eligibility for other federally-funded benefit programs, such as SNAP or Medicaid. Tax credits do not count as earned income.

5. Who can claim a child for purposes of receiving the Child Tax Credit?

Under current law, a child must live with the person claiming the Credit for at least six months of the year and be a child, grandchild, sibling, niece, or nephew of the tax filer. Children whose primary caregivers are more distant relatives or family friends are denied the benefit, as are children who do not spend at least six months in a single household, such as may be the case with children who move between homes of family members.

6. What if a child has split custody?

If a child has split custody, the parent with primary custody will receive the Child Tax Credit. The child must live with the caregiver for at least six months of the year. If a child splits time equally between two parents, the one with a higher annual adjusted gross income (AGI) may claim the child. The IRS will likely administer advanced payments to the parent claiming the child on their 2020 tax return.

7. Does this impact eligibility for the Empire State Child Credit (ESCC)?

The expanded Child Tax Credit does not impact eligibility for the Empire State Child Credit. Full-year New York residents with children ages 4 to 17 will still receive either 33 percent of the federal Child Tax Credit or \$100 per child, whichever is greater (as long as a family's annual income does not exceed \$75,000 for a single filer, \$110,000 for married filers filing jointly or \$55,000 for married filers filing separately.)



DON'T WAIT! To maximize your family's likelihood of receiving the Child Tax Credit, file your taxes *by May 17th*.

To locate an IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site near you, visit irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep or receive free online assistance at getyourrefund.org TODAY!

For more FAQs, check out [Understanding the Expanded Child Tax Credit](#)

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Updated April 26, 2021

Essential Workers and First Responders

Empire Pandemic Response Reimbursement Fund

Through the Empire Pandemic Response Reimbursement Fund, \$26.6 million is available to support essential workers and first responders in New York by providing reimbursement for out-of-pocket childcare, transportation, lodging and other qualifying expenses that enabled workers to perform their duties during the COVID crisis. Qualifying applicants include first responders, health care, and many multi-industry workers, and up to \$1,000 is available per household. Families who earn up to 500 percent of the federal poverty level – or \$125,470 for a family of four -- are eligible to apply for the funds to cover expenses.

Applications are open from April 16 through June 15, 2021. <https://pandemicfundny.smapply.org/>



CARE SKILLS TRAINING SCHOOL

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We invite you to take our Personal Care Aid/Home Health Aid programs.

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In Partnership With
Reaching-Out Community Services



THE ALLIANCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

LINKAGE TO INSURANCE

Our dedicated team at Alliance can help New Yorkers enroll in health insurance through the New York State of Health Marketplace.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Individuals who are:

- New York State residents
- 19-64 years old
- Self-Employed
- Immigrants
- Families/Children/Pregnant Women

WHAT'S COVERED?

- Free preventive care
- Inpatient care
- Outpatient services
- Maternity and newborn care
- Emergency services
- Lab and imaging
- Prescription drugs
- Mental health and substance use disorder services
- Wellness and chronic disease management services


Alliance Locations

Midtown Central 64 W. 35th St., NY, NY	Keith Haring (Harlem) 315 East 104th St., NY, NY	CASA (Washington Heights) 2036 Amsterdam Ave., NY, NY
Pelham Grand (Bronx) 1870 Pelham Pkwy, NY, NY	LESHRC (Lower East Side) 35 East Broadway, NY, NY	LLOC (East Village) 150 1st Ave., NY, NY




For more information, contact the main office at (212) 645-0875 or:

Marcia Deer (646) 418-8568	Shanaleigh Mejia (917) 699-3318	James Rivera (917) 882-1368	Diamond Walters (646) 771-6870
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 **The Alliance for Positive Change**



Children's Mobile Crisis Team Rapid Response Crisis Care

VNSNY's Children's Mobile Crisis Team (CMCT) provides rapid response crisis care for children, teens and their families who need:

- Crisis assessment
- Crisis stabilization
- Prevention planning
- Caregiver support

The VNSNY Crisis Team consists of licensed clinical staff with advanced degrees in counseling as well as family advocates.

Rapid response is available 24/7

CMCT is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide rapid responses and crisis management for children and adolescents in active crisis situations. A team will:

- Respond within two hours of receiving a crisis referral
- Provide crisis de-escalation
- Conduct a psychosocial assessment
- Initiate prevention planning
- Collaborate with existing services
- Coach caregivers on how to manage situations and prevent future crisis situations

Initial contact is done with NYC WELL by telephone and follow-up visits are conducted in the home.

**Do you have a child or are you a family in need of our services?
Speak to a crisis counselor right now at NYC WELL: 1-888-692-9355**

Spring has Sprung and so have the Veggies

STRAIGHT FROM THE FARM! Reaching Out seasonally receives produce from Cranberry Hall Farm through the United Way Produce Link, this allows us to literally bring farm to table for our neighbors! We of course still receive and purchase produce throughout the seasons from City Harvest and the Food Bank of NY. Reaching Out Community Services is committed to bringing nutritious food sustenance to its clients. We make every effort to educate our clients about the importance of healthful food consumption and do this through classes given by Board certified nutritionists in conjunction

with the Food Bank of NY, we also hand out Farmers Market Recipes and fruit & veggie picking tip cards provided by NYC Dept. of Health. RCS is partnered with the NYC Health Department Eat Well Health Bucks Program, this program allows us to give out coupons to clients they are able to use at local farmers markets, thereby encouraging the purchase and consumption of fresh produce while helping to make the affordability and access easier to the in-need population

BIG BANNER WITH TITLE GOES HERE



REACHING OUT COMMUNITY SERVICES

Keeping the Good Going...