



# THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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## **Council, Faith-Based Groups Partner to Increase Access to Healthy Food**

*- Partnership increases Council's ability to help eligible New Yorkers receive food stamps -*

HARLEM – In a major step forward for the City Council's campaign to increase access to healthy food, Speaker Christine C. Quinn today announced that faith-based organizations will join the Council's efforts to fight obesity and increase food stamp participation. The new partnership will result in increased outreach and more focused efforts to help New Yorkers access healthy food. With over one million New Yorkers utilizing emergency food programs to access food each year, the problem of hunger has reached a crisis point.

Speaker Quinn joined leaders of the Central Harlem Health Revival-- a coalition of faith-based organizations that works to improve the health of the community by reducing obesity-- anti-hunger advocates and Council Members to make today's announcement at Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem.

**Speaker Quinn** said, "The City Council is committed to reducing hunger and obesity by attacking their common root: a lack of access to nutritional food. With this new partnership, we now have the strength of the faith community and all of their good works helping New Yorkers access the food they need. Together, we are moving a step closer to making sure that more eligible New Yorkers use food stamps to access healthy food."

**Mrs. Patricia Butts**, co-chair of Central Harlem Health Revival and First Lady of Abyssinian Baptist Church, said, "We are proud to join hand in hand with the Council as we work to help all New Yorkers access healthy food. Tonight the Central Harlem Health Revival is hosting a conference on Stress and Obesity. What could be more stressful than not knowing where your next meal is coming from? The connection between hunger and obesity is too-often unrecognized, but it is a reality in our communities."

The new partnership furthers the Council's Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow campaign, an initiative to reduce hunger by increasing enrollment in the food stamp program. Council Members launched the Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow campaign last year and have focused on enrolling key groups including children and seniors. Poor food stamp participation leaves hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding unutilized.

"Expanding access to food stamps values families, rewards hard work, and expands opportunity for all New Yorkers," said **Council Member Eric Gioia**. "I'm proud to stand with Speaker Quinn and leaders from the faith-based community as we continue our fight to help feed more hungry New Yorkers."

**Council Member Inez Dickens** said, "Kudos to Speaker Christine Quinn for her aggressive grassroots initiative to reach out to all New Yorkers in an effort to educate and inform our citizens about health and nutrition. Stress and obesity are influences that can cripple families, and our work will provide much needed solutions to help our New Yorkers address the critical issues of stress and obesity. With the support of Speaker Quinn, I was able to fund this initiative and I want to thank the leaders at Abyssinian Church and the Central Harlem Health Revival for joining our cause and for all of their good work in the community."

The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, a non-partisan, non-profit think tank in New York City, has hailed the Council's Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow campaign as one of the City's best public policy initiatives of 2006.

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