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Speaker Quinn Announces Partnership with Local Supermarkets to Increase Food Stamp Participation

Marks the expansion of the Council's Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow Program

BROOKLYN – April 14, 2007 – Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Council Members de Blasio and Gonzalez along with representatives of the food industry and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), gathered at the Gowanus Pathmark in Brooklyn today to announce the latest in a series of efforts to increase participation in the food stamp program and promote good nutrition for lower income New Yorkers. The event was part of the Council's "Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow" campaign, a citywide initiative to increase food stamp enrollment among New York City's under-served communities.

Many area supermarkets have agreed to place advertisements in their circulars this month encouraging eligible shoppers to enroll in the food stamp program. Several community organizations, including United Way and Food Change, will be on hand to help customers find out if they may qualify for the program. Participating stores include Bravo Supermarkets, C-Town, D'Agostino Supermarkets, Foodtown, Key Food, King Kullen, Met Foods, Pathmark Stores, Pioneer Supermarkets, ShopRite, and Stop & Shop.

"The food stamp program is intended to make sure that no one has to go hungry. But a family or individual can't receive benefits if they don't know they qualify for the program," **said Speaker Quinn**. "We cannot sit idly by while one of our neighbors goes without food. 'Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow' is designed to increase the reach of the food stamp program. And our partnership with these supermarkets and the UFCW will help ensure that our campaign reaches New Yorkers who need it the most."

Council Members launched the "Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow" campaign last year and have focused on enrolling at risk groups of New Yorkers, such as children and seniors. This month, Council Members are partnering with representatives of the food industry and community organizations to increase outreach and focus efforts.

Council Member Bill de Blasio said, "Far too many New Yorkers struggle to feed themselves and their families every day. The Council's outreach to supermarkets will improve the health of our citizens and our entire City by helping eligible New Yorkers access food stamp benefits."

“For the last year I have been pleased to participate directly in every aspect of the “Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow” campaign, and I am most grateful to Speaker Christine Quinn for her vision in creating the program and her strong commitment to revitalizing it with these various approaches,” **said Council Member Sara Gonzalez.** “The concept of reaching out to consumers directly at the supermarkets, where their concentration is so focused on food prices and buying strategies, should further advance participation in the food stamp program.”

“For almost four years, our Food Card Access Project has been working in seven communities to expand low-income individuals and families’ access to Food Stamps,” **said United Way of New York City’s Steve Kaufman.** “To date we know that \$75 million in benefits have been accessed by over 77,000 clients, which has resulted in over \$138 million in generated economic activity for the city. Still, with an estimated 730,000 New Yorkers eligible but not yet participating in the food stamp program, we have more to do. That’s why we salute Speaker Quinn and Council Members de Blasio and Gonzalez for their leadership and for the ‘Food Today, Healthy Tomorrow’ initiative.”

“Increased Food Stamp enrollment is a goal that clearly benefits families and individuals, while at the same time adding millions of dollars to the New York City economy, benefiting our businesses, workers and neighborhoods,” **said Patricia Brodhagen, of the Food Industry Alliance.** “We applaud Speaker Quinn for making this initiative a priority of the City Council and are pleased to play an active role in achieving greater Food Stamp participation.”

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