



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' Youth Advisory Council Participates in "Day of Service" at Feeding Westchester

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS December 13, 2024

| ISSUE: **YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Students selected the project as a way to give back and address food insecurity in the community.

(Elmsford, NY) – Members of New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' Youth Advisory Council (YAC) participated in a "Day of Service" Saturday. The project began with a weeklong clothing and food drive. YAC members placed donation boxes at schools, community centers, churches and other locations. The youth then delivered the food donations to Feeding Westchester, where they helped sort and pack fresh produce for families in need, while clothing donations will go to the Sharing Shelf Westchester's clothing bank for children.

This "Day of Service" is part of Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins' broader initiative to inspire civic engagement and empower young people to make meaningful contributions to their communities. The YAC members chose to dedicate their yearly service project to collecting and donating food and clothing to local organizations.

"I am so proud of the young people on my Youth Advisory Council for stepping up and taking an active role in addressing food insecurity in our community," said **Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins**. "Their energy, commitment, and willingness to roll up their sleeves and get

to work demonstrate how much they care about their neighbors. It's meaningful to see the next generation embrace civic engagement and community service."

The Youth Advisory Council group collected 266 pounds (equivalent to 222 meals) of donated food that will go directly to neighbors in need, according to Feeding Westchester. On Saturday, the group toured the Feeding Westchester facility in Elmsford, and packed nearly 500 bags of apples and potatoes sourced using Nourish NY, a \$54.3 million state-funding initiative to reroute surplus produce to organizations which combat food insecurity. This local produce will be distributed through Feeding Westchester's FUHD program (Feeding United Home Deliveries).

This year, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins allocated \$100,000 to Feeding Westchester as part of \$120 million in state funding for food and nutrition programs across New York, a statewide increase of \$29.6 million which reinforces her commitment to tackling hunger and ensuring all New Yorkers have access to nutritious meals.

At Saturday's event, the youth engaged in a discussion with Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Feeding Westchester staff, talking about the real-world impact of legislation and funding and gaining valuable insights into the ongoing fight against food insecurity.

"I had a wonderful time at Feeding Westchester as a member of Senator Stewart-Cousins' Youth Advisory Council," **said YAC member Jillian Maher.** "It was inspiring to learn about the vital role food banks play in supporting communities across Westchester and to actively contribute by helping package fresh produce for those in need."

Feeding Westchester partners with nearly 300 programs and organizations to distribute food and resources to more than 229,000 individuals each month, based out of their facility at 200 Clearbrook Road in Elmsford.