



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

New Yorkers Answer President-elect Obama's Call for a National Day of Service in Memory of Dr. Martin Luther King: Elected officials and volunteers in all five boroughs take a "day on, not a day off" as hunger in New York continues to soar

LIZ KRUEGER January 18, 2009

From January 17th-19th, 2009, the New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCA) sponsored its 6th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Anti-Hunger "Serve-a-Thon" event, a three-day event featuring volunteer opportunities at food pantries and soup kitchens throughout New York City.

The Dr. King Day Serve-a-Thon is a part of President-elect Barack Obama's "Renew America Together: A Call to Service" in honor of Dr. King's legacy. More information about nationwide service events can be found on-line at <http://www.pic2009.org/>.

During the events, volunteers performed a wide variety of tasks, including: preparing and serving hot meals, cleaning and painting facilities, and conducting food stamp and Earned Income Tax Credit outreach at over thirty sites in all five boroughs.

The Serve-a-Thon honored Dr. King's other dream of ending poverty by encouraging volunteers to get involved with anti-hunger advocacy in 2009. During the campaign, President-elect Obama pledged to end child hunger by 2015 as a down payment on ending all domestic hunger.

Said Joel Berg, executive director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, "Dr. King called for making service to others a centerpiece of American life, saying 'Everybody can be great because anybody can serve.' The Obama inauguration is perfectly honoring that legacy by marking Dr. King's birthday as a national day of community service.

Continued Berg, "If we truly want to honor Dr King's full legacy, and if President Obama wants to start building his own in a practical and immensely meaningful way, the time for new action against poverty is now."

Elected officials joined the volunteers at Neighbors Together in Brooklyn (on Saturday) and at Broadway Community, Inc. in Manhattan (on Monday) both to engage in direct service and to draw attention to the soaring level of hunger in New York City and the need for government action to help the over 1.3 million New Yorkers who are forced to go to food pantries and soup kitchens each year.

Senator Liz Krueger said, "25 years ago, I helped to start the NYC FoodBank and Chaired the Board of the NYC Coalition Against Hunger. We thought it would take less than a decade to end hunger in America through improved government programs for the poor. We have yet to fulfill the promises of the War on Poverty and the Great Society programs that Martin Luther King and others fought so hard to begin. Today, one day before the Inauguration of President Barack Obama, it is fitting that we remember the teachings of Martin Luther King and renew our commitment to ending hunger and ensuring that in these troubled economic times it is more important than ever for government to help those who are most in need."

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCA) represents the more than 1,200 nonprofit soup kitchens and food pantries in New York City and the more than 1.3 million low-income New Yorkers who are forced to use them. The Coalition works to meet the immediate food needs of low-income New Yorkers and enact innovative solutions to help them move "beyond the soup kitchen" to self-sufficiency.

