



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jessica Ramos

Senator Jessica Ramos, Street Vendors Provide Nearly 700 Hot Meals to Queens Families in Need

JESSICA RAMOS May 2, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS, ACCESS TO FRESH FOOD**



East Elmhurst, NY — State Senator Jessica Ramos (D-Queens) today provided nearly 700 hot meals in partnership with Street Vendor Project to residents in Queens. The event was the second of two new weekly community food giveaway events at her Senate district office for families and individuals struggling with hunger and food insecurity in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. Hot meals cooked by local street vendors were packed in totes bags for community members to readily pick up in a safe, socially distant manner.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the serious problems of hunger and food access in many areas in Senate District 13 neighborhoods — Elmhurst, East Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Corona and parts of Woodside and Astoria — which are considered food deserts. The massive economic downturn caused by the coronavirus outbreak has caused significant job loss and reduced wages. At the same time, fewer local food pantries remain open or as fully stocked as residents fall ill with COVID-19, or take necessary health precautions.

“As we work together to overcome hunger in our community, made dramatically worse by the coronavirus pandemic, we cannot forget our local street vendors who have been hit incredibly hard by the COVID-19 shutdown,” said State Senator Jessica Ramos. “Not only are they struggling to make ends meet and provide for their families, they can play a critical role in helping those struggling with hunger and food scarcity. Our partnership with Street Vendor Project empowers these hardworking meal providers to serve those in need with hot meals made locally from some of the best pre-pandemic food spots in our community.”

“Street vendors across New York City have been hit hard by the COVID-19 shutdown, and vendors from Corona and their families have been especially impacted by the lack of government support for immigrant-run small businesses. Through this partnership with Senator Jessica Ramos, Street Vendor Project members from Corona Bertha, Mayra and Juan Antonio were able to go back to feeding their community,” said Street Vendor Project Deputy Director Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez.

Distributed meals contained rice, beans, chicken, and vegetables, with vegetarian options also available. Meals were also delivered by Senator Ramos’ volunteers to residents who are unable to leave their home. Today’s event followed Ramos’ Friday, May 1 free fresh food giveaway, in which she partnered with the Northeast Dairy Producers Association and farmers across the state to provide Queens residents with bags of New York State-sourced dairy, meat and produce.

Senator Ramos' upstate partnerships are further bolstered by working with local community-based organizations, nonprofits and centers. York Studios and Public Biking Project assisted with PPE for the event volunteers; Queens Chamber of Commerce, Sustainable United Neighborhoods, Together We Can Resource Center, Por La Gente Fund, the COVID Care Neighbor Network, Hour Children and Queens Together provided support with logistics and volunteers. Photos of the events available upon request.

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