



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Honors Food Pantries that Partnered on 13 Food Drives

PETE HARCKHAM September 2, 2022

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Peekskill, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham presented Senate Empire Awards to 10 local food pantries at a special ceremony today, which also commemorated National Food Bank Day. The food pantries partnered separately with Harckham on 13 food drives since 2020, collecting over 40,000 pounds of food for residents in their communities.

The presentation of the Empire Awards took place at the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry / United Methodist Church, with both Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinich and Sharon Seidell, board president of the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, offering welcoming remarks.

To see a video of the awards presentation, click [here](#).

Harckham noted that area food pantries and food banks had to step up their efforts since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 to address the crisis of hunger and food insecurity, feeding thousands of families weekly. When local officials mentioned the need for more food supplies to help the food pantries, hosting regular food drives seemed like a worthy response.

Last month, Harckham hosted his thirteenth food drive, this time in Peekskill. The twelve prior food drives since March 2020 took place in Sleepy Hollow, Peekskill, Mohegan Lake, Bedford, Pleasantville, Carmel, Croton-on-Hudson, Somers, Yorktown Heights, Brewster and two drives in Mount Kisco.

“When local food pantries wanted to organize food drives to try to address the issue of food insecurity, we were eager to help,” said Harckham. “These food drives showed the generosity and selflessness in our communities and the willingness of people to volunteer hours of their time on weekends to help with the hard work involved in the drives. They did the work happily and even applauded the hundreds of donors in long lines of cars who dropped off bags, boxes and crates of food. Many folks volunteered multiple times.”

Harckham added, “The food drives were collaborative efforts that showed what great things we can accomplish when we work together. The New York State Senate Empire Award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions and dedication to the growth, prosperity and betterment of the community and state. These food pantries and organizations certainly earned this award with their tireless efforts to help fight food insecurity and hunger.

“I thank all of you for partnering with us and for the work you do. So many of our neighbors are still facing food insecurity, which is why we cannot let up our fight against hunger in our communities.”

Along with the more than 40,000 pounds of food collected at the drives—enough for 33,000 meals and to feed almost 1,500 families—Harckham and the volunteers accepted more than \$12,000 in cash donations for the food pantries.

September is Hunger Action Month.

The food pantries honored were:

- Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry
- Fred's Pantry at Caring for the Hungry & Homeless of Peekskill (CHHOP)
- Community Center of Northern Westchester, Katonah

- St. Luke's Church Somers Food Pantry
- Interfaith Emergency Food Pantry of Pleasantville
- Croton-Cortlandt Food Pantry
- Neighbors Link, Mount Kisco
- Community Food Pantry of Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown
- Putnam County Community Action Program, Brewster
- First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown
- Gilead Presbyterian Church, Carmel
- Community Food Pantry at St. Mary's, Mohegan Lake

“We have made considerable efforts at significant personal sacrifice to ensure that our community is served with dignity and respect,” said Carola Otero Bracco, executive director of Neighbors Link, “and I want to extend a special thank you to Senator Peter Hareckham and this team for their incredible efforts to provide food for families in this community.”