



****For Immediate Release****

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Senator Benjamin Distributes 500 Gallons of Hand Sanitizer and 45k Masks to NYCHA Residents

Supplies provided by NYS and distributed in conjunction with NYCHA Tenant Presidents, Bethel Gospel Assembly, and Saint John the Divine

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(Manhattan, NY) To fight racial disparities in COVID-19, Senator Benjamin (Harlem, D) partnered with community and faith-based organizations to distribute New York State hand sanitizer and masks to NYCHA tenants across northern Manhattan.

“NYCHA is ground zero for the conversation we are having about racial and economic disparities in COVID-19. I represent the largest number of NYCHA developments in the Senate, so I know first hand that our neighbors in public housing need help to keep their families healthy,” **said Senator Benjamin**. “I want to thank Governor Cuomo for providing us with the resources to give NYCHA tenants the tools they need to keep themselves healthy and safe. It is that sort of direct investment in the community that we need in times like this. I am very grateful for Bishop Brown of Bethel Gospel Assembly and Dean Daniel of Saint John the Divine who provided critical support to the effort.”

In total, Benjamin’s effort directly delivered roughly 500 gallons of hand sanitizer and 45,000 masks, and coordinated the drop of these vital supplies at 47 different locations in Northern Manhattan. Benjamin and his team worked closely with tenant leaders to ensure the supplies were delivered.



Senator Benjamin's Volunteers with Tenant Leaders outside a NYCHA Development dropping off Supplies.

“More than 50,000 people live in the NYCHA developments I represent as Manhattan North District Council Chair, and many of those people are struggling right now,” **said Ethel Velez, TA President of Johnson Houses and Manhattan North District Council Chair.** “The supplies that Senator Benjamin’s team delivered are a good start in our fight to ensure the community has what they need to fight this virus.”

“We are told that the best way to fight this virus is to wash our hands and to cover our faces, but the supplies to make that possible aren’t making it to our community” **said Wayne Breamfield, TA President of Drew Hamilton Houses.** “These supplies are going to make a world of difference to countless families that I know. It might seem like a little thing, but a mask could be the difference between sickness and health. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.”

For help in storing and transporting the supplies, Benjamin’s team turned to two local churches deeply involved in ministering to the community during COVID-19. Bethel Gospel Assembly provided a hub of operations for three days, and the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine provided transportation.

"As a church, we were honored to play a part in getting these much needed supplies to our neighbors. Partnership in initiatives like these are critical to addressing the growing needs of the community,” **said Bishop Carlton T. Brown, Senior Pastor, Bethel Gospel Assembly.** “We

look forward to continuing to support great efforts like this which bring hope and healing during this time of crisis."

"The Cathedral was very glad to offer Senator Benjamin our help to transport and distribute these much-needed supplies," said the **Right Reverend Clifton Daniel III, Dean of the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine**. "We're thankful to the senator and his staff for organizing these emergency donations, and to all the heroes in our neighborhood for everything they're doing to support our community."



The initiative coincides with Benjamin's program to deliver roughly 3,500 meals to several high need NYCHA developments in northern Manhattan over the course of two weeks. Benjamin has also helped secure meals for front line medical staff at Harlem Hospital and Metropolitan Hospital, and a donation of \$50,000 to Harlem Hospital from Fairstead for the purchase of needed medical supplies.

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