

VOICES

HOLY APOSTLES SOUP KITCHEN

Meet Derek and Charis

The COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives dramatically over the past year. With all those changes, the Soup Kitchen has had to adapt and figure out new ways to serve our community, especially since more New Yorkers are experiencing food insecurity than ever before. That's why, **with your donations, we've expanded two major programs at the Soup Kitchen:** our "Hearty Start" meal outreach program and our new-and-improved pantry program.



Derek

In 2020, your support enabled us to hire a new Meal Outreach Specialist, Derek Walker, who wakes up at 4:30 every morning and commutes to the Soup Kitchen, where he prepares 150 breakfast sandwiches fresh from scratch. When he's

done, he loads them into a cart and hand delivers them to people living on the streets who can't make it to the Soup Kitchen for the daily meal service.

Derek, who is 60 years old and a certified cook from Queens, has his own experiences of homelessness. "I'd been homeless for 3 years," Derek told us. "I wasn't on the streets, but I wound up going into the shelter system."

Today, Derek spends much of his time delivering meals to New Yorkers who take refuge around Penn Station. He's now a familiar face to many.

"They all know me, they know my name, and they're happy when they see me. But it's not me – it's the Soup Kitchen.

Because the Soup Kitchen reaches the whole community – the whole community – and they don't discriminate."

Along with meals, Derek also brings comfort and joy to the people he reaches. "For me to say good morning to them, that makes them feel like a person. Not like they're going through something and someone is looking down on them. For me, it makes me happy. I love my job; I love what I do. This is what I was meant to do."

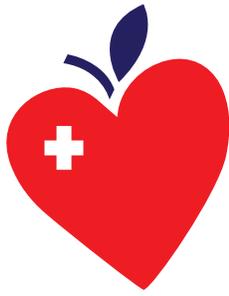
This year at Holy Apostles, reaching new people has been a priority and we're thankful to you and Derek for helping us do that. In addition to acquiring Hearty Start, we've also expanded our pantry program from one day to three days per week, providing meals for over 500 households every week.

We're reaching many new guests, like Charis, who first came to Holy Apostles in February this year. Charis explained that her family is struggling: "We struggle a lot. To pay the rent, we struggle. To pay the bills, we struggle. So that there is food to be had, that's a blessing. Really, a blessing. May God bless everybody who provides for this program."

By expanding food programs at Holy Apostles throughout the pandemic, you have made a difference in the lives of people like Charis, and the many people that Derek sees every day. **In 2021, we hope you'll continue to stand with us and ensure that no New Yorker goes hungry.**



Charis



OPERATION HOPEFULL HOLY APOSTLES SOUP KITCHEN

Do you remember how you felt a year ago? When the COVID-19 pandemic became a reality in New York City, we all confronted challenges and adapted to a new reality. This time last year, we were facing the uncertainty of whether or not we'd be able to financially survive the pandemic, and how we would continue to serve meals to our guests even as many food banks, soup kitchens, and businesses were forced to close their doors.



In response, we launched Operation HopeFULL, with the goal of helping us and our guests survive the pandemic. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of so many, not only has the Soup Kitchen been able to stay open, never missing a day of meal service, but we've also expanded our services and are serving more meals than ever before.

Since our first day of "grab-and-go" meal service last year, we've served over 1.3 million meals to our guests across our three primary meal programs. We've adapted our social services programs, so that guests continue to have access to healthcare screenings, mail pick-up, and other essential programs amid the pandemic. We also hit a major milestone last year. Since opening our doors in 1982, we've served over 10 million meals.

With your help and the funds raised through Operation HopeFULL, we never had to compromise our commitment to health and sustainability. Your donations enabled us to source fresh produce, proteins, and dairy from New York State farms, and provide our guests with nutritious

foods at a time when healthy habits couldn't be more important. By doing this, we were also able to support local farmers who otherwise would've seen their goods go to waste due to the mass closures of restaurants, hotels, and schools. We also partnered with 5 other large emergency food programs to increase our purchasing power, ensuring that your financial donations allow us to get more food at a lower cost.

Over the past year, we've partnered with many companies, other nonprofit organizations, foundations, and individuals to expand our impact and ensure that we all get through this difficult time together. And, above all, we are most grateful for you, the members of our community, and the many ways you have stepped up throughout the past year. **As a donor, you have provided meals and essential items to our guests through the Operation HopeFULL initiative. You have allowed us to expand our programs when people needed them more than ever. And most of all, you kept people nourished this year.** Thank you for lending a hand when we needed it most.



To donate, please return the enclosed reply slip with your contribution or visit www.holyapostlesnyc.org

Thank You!

At last year's virtual Farm to Tray event and during an in-person site visit, Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul expressed her gratitude for you and the community that supports Holy Apostles. "Whether you're a volunteer, a staff member, or a donor, thank you for offering a lifeline to New Yorkers struggling with hunger and hardship. You are truly the unsung heroes of this pandemic, and on behalf of all New Yorkers, I thank you."

Here are some more words of gratitude from those affected most by your incredible generosity:



"I'm trying to find a new beginning. Thank God you guys are here."
- Bernadette



"I could never afford groceries like this. I'm so grateful for the food and that it's healthy. I started cooking after coming here and I never used to cook before!"
- Luis

"I'm just really grateful that you are here every single week. I've been coming for a year and a half now, and I can't imagine surviving without this in New York. It's a miracle in the middle of Manhattan."
- Romario

"If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be here. And it isn't about the food – it's about coming here and y'all are so nice and caring for the community. It's awesome. I hope you can stay here and keep this going."
- Emily

"This place is an oasis in the desert. Eating here is a lifeline. Shelters don't have to provide sustenance. But this place is therapeutic. They lift you up here."
- Charles

"This is one of the most generous pantries – I had no idea that I would not be able to carry home everything you were giving out."
- Janis

VOICE of a volunteer

Deborah Goldstein

Deborah has been volunteering with Social Services at Holy Apostles for over 30 years. She first started coming in with her coworkers every couple of months, but since retiring eight years ago, she comes two or three times a week to help with guests' mail and packages. Having been here for so long, Deborah is missing pre-COVID operations, when guests came to sit inside and chat with her while they picked up their mail. She says that Social Services really helps guests feel recognized and seen. The pandemic has made it more difficult to offer guests the same human connection once found at Holy Apostles through indoor meals and counseling. Having continued to volunteer throughout most of the pandemic, it was clear

to Deborah that "there is a big need here regardless of what's going on."

"Mail is a critical link for the homeless population," says Deborah. Now, when Holy Apostles is unable to host guests indoors and offer services like counseling and writer's workshops, the mail service has become more important than ever. Pre-COVID, Deborah says, those social services were a safe haven for our guests. Now, "that little bit of what we had, still exists through the mail."



Bite Sized News

Giving Warmth

Thank you to everyone who helped us raise over \$37,000 for our Cold Weather fundraiser this winter. You provided hundreds of Soup Kitchen guests with winter gear that proved essential to surviving life on the streets this past winter:

- 360 winter coats
- 720 fleece-lined ski gloves
- 504 scarves
- 744 winter hats
- 288 pairs of men's underwear
- 192 pairs of sweatpants
- 696 pairs of men's thermals
- 1,100 hand warmers
- 1,280 toe warmers
- 72 small backpacks

Care2Share: Investors Bank makes it easy to support the Soup Kitchen!

Investors Bank offers an easy and free way to support the Soup Kitchen simply by doing what you are already doing. If you open or have an account with Investors Bank, they will make a quarterly donation to the Soup Kitchen on your behalf with no cost to you! Find out more by calling Jennifer Smith, Community Development Officer, at 718-330-3830, or by visiting an Investors Bank branch.



HOLY APOSTLES
Soup Kitchen

We've got a new look!

We've redesigned our logo and website. Our new website features guest quotes and stories, videos, and new information about the Soup Kitchen and our programs. Thank you to the amazing team at OTTO Brand Lab for generously donating their time and resources to create this website. Visit us at www.holyapostlesnyc.org!

Meet Our Social Services Team

Our social services team is committed to giving New Yorkers access to resources throughout the pandemic. If you or someone you know is local to the Soup Kitchen and would like to donate men's clothing, toiletries, or other items, please contact our Manager of Social Services & Partnerships by calling 646-998-6118.



Know a New Yorker in Need of Groceries?

Our pantry program is open three days a week – Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays – from 1:30pm to 2:30pm. They can find us on the Plentiful App or visit plentifulapp.com to make an appointment. Walk-ins are also accepted.



HOLY APOSTLES
Soup Kitchen

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