



Teens for Food Justice



COMMUNITY CARE
OF
BROOKLYN

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BROOKLYN STUDENTS WORK TO BRING FRESH AND HEALTHY FOOD TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

Teens for Food Justice launches new Fresh Food Box program providing affordable, locally-grown produce to food-scarce communities in Brooklyn.

BROOKLYN, NY. Teens for Food Justice (TFFJ), in partnership with Community Care of Brooklyn, has launched a new initiative to bring fresh, healthy produce to underserved communities in New York City. Through the Fresh Food Box program, food-insecure residents in Brownsville, Brooklyn will be able to purchase a week's worth of fruits and vegetables, grown by middle school students at the Brownsville Collaborative Middle School (BCMS)/TFFJ hydroponic farm for just \$14.

TFFJ's hydroponic farming program at BCMS is led by sixth through eighth grade students, who have invested extensive time in the farm through curricular day courses, after-school programming, and participation in The TFFJ Youth Staff, an initiative spearheaded by student ambassadors. The curricular day students and the TFFJ Youth Staff are responsible for aiding with daily farm operations, including planting, maintenance, harvesting and distribution of produce throughout the community and to the school cafeteria daily.

The Fresh Food Box program provides additional entrepreneurial opportunities for students and extends the reach of the program by increasing access to healthy food options for all Brownsville residents. Students will also lead cooking demonstrations, offer recipe tastings, and distribute health education materials and information to help residents incorporate these foods into their diets. Participants can collect their weekly food boxes from Brownsville Collaborative Middle School or DeWitt Clinton High School. TFFJ is accepting SNAP and EBT payments, as well as all major credit and debit cards, or cash.

Funding for the farm is made possible by Community Care of Brooklyn, a New York State-funded, Maimonides Medical Center-led network of over 1,000 health and social services organizations working together to improve health outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries in Brooklyn.

Teens for Food Justice, a nonprofit organization that works to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to healthy, affordable food through youth-led, community-based solutions, currently operates three high-capacity school-based hydroponic farms in NYC serving seven schools in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Together, these farms are expected to grow in excess of 30,000 pounds of produce annually that feed students daily at lunch and their local communities on an ongoing basis.

"Brownsville, Brooklyn faces some of the highest rates of food scarcity in New York City. These low-income communities struggle to find affordable and readily available fresh food options. Teens for Food Justice's Fresh Food Box program will provide residents with a weeks' worth of fruits and vegetables in an easy to access location. These boxes will not only provide residents with healthy food options, they will allow our TFFJ Youth Staff and Interns to continue to gain business and entrepreneurial experience. We are grateful to our partners, Maimonides Medical Center, Community Care of Brooklyn, BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers, and Brownsville Collaborative Middle School for helping to make this Fresh Food Box Program possible."

- Teens For Food Justice, CEO, Katherine Soll



“In 2016, Community Care of Brooklyn found that more than half of Brownsville and East New York residents struggle to afford or even access healthy food. We have since made it a major part of our mission to not only improve food justice in our communities, but to use food and nutrition as means to bring people together. The BCMS farm and Fresh Food Box program are evidence that these efforts, made possible by key stakeholders in health, education, politics, and social justice, are working and bringing change and better health to a historically underserved community.”

- **Community Care of Brooklyn, Executive Chair, David Cohen, MD, MSc**

“In our community, everything is processed. The hydroponic farm, for me, is for my students to have an awareness of what's possible here in Brownsville. Empowering my students with knowledge that they can have fruits and vegetables in their diet every day is amazing and the possibilities are endless.”

- **Gregory Jackson, Principal, Brownsville Collaborative Middle School**

“Brooklynites too often struggle when shopping to find fresh fruits and vegetables that are reasonably priced. It sways them from eating healthy, or needlessly takes away from their budget for other basic groceries. I applaud and thank Teens for Food Justice on addressing food insecurity, and supporting locally grown goods, through their Fresh Food Box program.”

- **State Senator Roxanne Persaud**

“Food insecurity is an issue that affects hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers every day. Even those with access to food benefit programs don't always have the option to purchase fresh produce at their local food stores. The Fresh Food Box Program will address this food insecurity issue while helping our communities live healthier lives. Thank you to Teens for Food Justice for launching this vital new program.”

- **State Assemblywoman Latrice Walker**

“Congratulations to Teens for Food Justice on their new Fresh Food Box program. TFFJ continues to be an outstanding partner and friend to Brownsville Collaborative Middle School. Their programs have uplifted the community and empowered residents to adopt healthier lives by providing fresh and nutritious food. I look forward to seeing their continued success and the benefits of their program in Brownsville.”

- **City Council Member Ben Kallos**

“The greatest barrier to eating healthy in a low-income community can be access and affordability. The Fresh Food Box program is an innovative solution to both of these issues, and its expansion is going to improve the physical and mental health of hundreds of more New Yorkers. The work of Teens for Food Justice has been integral to uniting community needs with substantive solutions, and I am grateful for their work and partnership with the Brownsville Collaborative Middle School.”

- **City Council Member Rafael Espinal**