

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****
2020

AUGUST 20,

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***CM CHIN & BP BREWER CELEBRATE
MILESTONE IN LES FOOD PANTRIES'
FIGHT AGAINST FOOD INSECURITY***

*Almost 1 million pounds of fresh produce and groceries
delivered door-to-door since March between two groups*

*Pols also announce funding for community center for Vision
Urbana to grow food access efforts*



LOWER EAST SIDE – Today, Council Member Margaret S. Chin and Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer stood with local nonprofits Vision Urbana and UA3 to celebrate the groups' collective efforts to provide relief to thousands of families in Lower Manhattan facing

food insecurity. Since March, almost 1 million pounds of fresh produce and groceries – over 600,000 pounds by Vision Urbana and 300,000 pounds by UA3 – have been delivered door-to-door to residents of NYCHA developments, section 8 subsidized housing, and hard-to-access tenement buildings throughout the Lower East Side and Chinatown.

The Seward Park Extension courtyard, where the groups held today's Summer Pantry Healthfest, has also been identified as the home of a future community center for Vision Urbana, a grassroots community based organization that has operated a food pantry since 2018 at the site, and also provides free digital literacy and wellness programming for youth and seniors. At the beginning of the pandemic, Vision Urbana pioneered the concept for the home delivered pantry, which has to date organized over 31,000 deliveries to seniors and families from the 64-66 Essex Street pantry location. Throughout the years, Vision Urbana has primarily depended on scattered locations to conduct its robust programming. With \$700,000 in total discretionary funding secured – \$600,000 allocated by Council Member Chin and \$100,000 allocated by Borough President Brewer – the organization now has an opportunity to set its roots and grow within the community it has diligently served for years.

“Our community groups have risen to the challenge to create innovative programs to accomplish the impossible. We need to celebrate the heart, leadership, and tireless work they put in to serve families in need, not just today – but everyday,” said **Council Member Chin**. “Since March, Vision Urbana and UA3 together have delivered almost 1 million pounds of fresh produce so that families don't go hungry. I am proud to have played a role in securing the investments needed for a community center in NYCHA so that Vision Urbana can continue its service and help even more families. The work is not over. Let's keep this momentum going.”

“During this unprecedented health and economic crisis, New Yorkers are looking to their neighborhood nonprofits to help support them in their fight against food insecurity,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “I am proud to invest in our grassroots nonprofits like Vision Urbana which will now have a permanent home to continue their stellar service feeding the local community.”

"Vision Urbana never stopped serving and feeding our community all through the worst days of this Covid-19 pandemic," said **Eric Diaz, Vision Urbana Executive Director**. "There are still very tough days ahead and the need for food is actually growing. So we, as an organization, and collectively with the amazing UA3 and all our amazing volunteers, are committed to continue our hard work to feed our people, and also be counted."

“Just because it's free food doesn't mean it has to be bad food. I'm proud that UA3 has been able to not only run the successful Community First Food Pantry with Council Member Chin to give farm fresh, culturally competent produce for free to Lower East Side residents, but also with directly with small businesses to deliver hot meals to our healthcare first responders. The work of UA3 is powered by the collaboration and compassion of our partners, volunteers, and fellow New Yorkers, and we're only just beginning,” said **Don Hong, UA3 President**.

"We are extremely pleased that Vision Urbana will finally have a newly renovated, permanent space for its offices and programs, right in the heart of our beloved LES neighborhood,"

says **Rev. Dr. Marc Rivera, Vision Urbana Chairperson.** "We are thankful for the solid support of Councilwoman Chin and Borough President Brewer, our champions, for believing in us, and providing the funding that will make our dream come true."

"The humanitarian work of these vital nonprofits is providing nutritious food to New Yorkers at a time of great need," said **Frances A. Resheske, senior vice president, Corporate Affairs, for Con Edison,** which sponsored the event. "Con Edison is proud to play a role in helping to provide relief to families who are struggling through the COVID-19 crisis."



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