



Getting to the Root of the Problem GRASSROOTS

The Newsletter of the Hunger Action Network of New York State

April 2005

Faces of Hunger Action Network

University Settlement is the oldest settlement house in the country, providing comprehensive social services to residents of the Lower East Side of Manhattan since 1886. The Settlement provides high quality childcare and after-school services, counseling, senior services, an arts program, credit union, and youth services. Project Home's expertise is in eviction prevention, benefits advocacy, crisis intervention, and organizing. Both families and individuals are welcome.



University Settlement / Project Home believes that a holistic wrap-around approach is the best way to ensure that individuals and families are able to gain stability and thus achieve their goals. Therefore we feel it is essential to not only deal with the very real concrete issues that each family is struggling with, but to also address those issues at a larger societal level. Our involvement

continued on page 5

Hunger Action Rallies for Jobs and Health Care

On March 29th nearly 200 concerned citizens came to Albany to tell legislators that New Yorkers need economic security now. Hunger Action Network and the Empire State Economic Security Campaign teamed up to focus on devastating cuts to welfare and healthcare in the Governor's proposed budget, creation of a legislative commission on Universal Health Care, job creation initiatives, and raising additional revenues by closing corporate tax loopholes and other progressive measures.

Buses and vans loaded up while it was still dark out in NY City, Westchester, and Rochester, among other places. In Albany, Westminster Presbyterian Church opened its doors for us. State Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) spoke to our group about the importance of our presence and advocacy in Albany.

We held a rally and held a speak-out on the steps of the Capitol where partici-

pants described their struggles to support their families in these difficult economic times and as well as the impact proposed budget cuts would have on their lives. We spent the afternoon conveying our messages to over 60 legislators.

In part due to our efforts, both full family sanctions and the proposed reduction in the Earned Income Disregard were defeated. Funding for emergency food (HPNAP) went up by \$350,000.

The Governor's proposed **Flexible Fund for Family Services** was passed. The final budget sets aside \$600 million in TANF funding, down from the \$1 billion in the Executive budget, for block grants to the counties. The counties will have discretion to spend this money as they see fit within TANF guidelines.

ES2 is concerned about the methodology to be used to determine funding allocations, the potential for inconsistency in services available in counties, weakening state oversight for TANF spending, and the failure to create a mechanism for public input into how the grants should be spent.

In This Issue of Grassroots...

Tax Reform	3
Health Care for All	4
Green Space	6
Community Food Policy	7
HANNYS Internships	9
Welfare and School	10
Jobs	11
Feast for Famine May 26	12

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Notes from the Executive Director..

It has been several years of “bare bones” budgets for many service providers in our network, despite the increase in need for these services, including skyrocketing demand for emergency food. A Baruch College School of Public Affairs survey revealed that 62% of the social services program respondents had to close programs and more than one-third had to lay off staff in the last few years.

Despite the threatened devastation to essential services for the poor including, housing and homeless services, child care, mental health counseling, Medicaid, Food Stamps, etc., elected officials at the state and federal level have chosen not to increase revenue but instead to cut taxes for wealthy corporations. No where is this more clear than at the federal level where the Bush Administration budget would result in over \$6 billion in cuts to New York through the year 2010 (For a chart outlining these cuts, go to http://www.hungeractionnys.org/leg_other.htm).

According to the Coalition on Human Needs, for half the cost of the tax cuts in 2010, the reductions in education, environmental protection, health, nutrition, and social services could be avoided. In 2010, continuing the tax cuts enacted since 2001 will cost \$53 billion, including payments for interest on the deepening debt. In that same year, the President’s budget cuts more than \$26 billion below the cost of continuing *all* the discretionary programs at current levels of service. With the funds left over from ending the tax cuts, there would be more than enough in 2010 to prevent the cuts made in the President’s budget in mandatory programs such as Medicaid and Food Stamps.

The Republican-controlled House and Senate have passed differing versions of the budget resolution, which they say they hope to reconcile in a single measure. The Food Stamp Program is among programs at great risk from potential FY 2006 Budget Resolution instructions to the Agriculture Committees to cut spending within their jurisdiction (\$5.3 billion/five years under House; \$2.8 billion /five years under Senate).

In addition to cuts in the Food Stamp Program, the House Budget Resolution also includes up to \$20 billion in cuts to the Medicaid program and up to \$18.7 billion in cuts to programs under the jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee, including SSI, EITC, and a group of programs that provide critical human service funding for states - TANF, child care, foster care and adoption programs, child support enforcement, and the Social Services Block Grant. The Senate Budget Resolution, by contrast, does not include cuts outside of potential food stamp cuts. In total, the House Budget Resolution would lead to \$30-\$35 billion in cuts to low-income programs over the next five years, while the Senate Budget Resolution would lead to cuts no higher than \$2.8 billion.

Thanks to the over 200 sign-ons we received for the letter to Congress opposing budget cuts to anti-hunger programs! Our ongoing advocacy efforts are crucial to protecting the funding for and structure of federal nutrition programs. We urge you to call your member of the House of Representatives and urge them to: 1) Say NO to Budget Reconciliation; 2) Say NO to reopening the Farm Bill and oppose budget cuts to the Food Stamp, Community Food and Nutrition Program, and other nutrition programs.

Bich Ha Pham



Grassroots is published four times a year by the Hunger Action Network of New York State.

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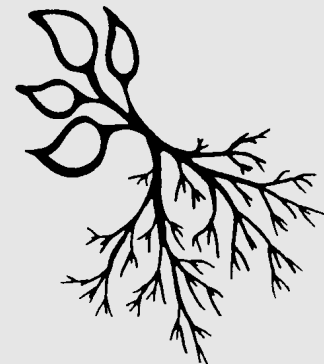
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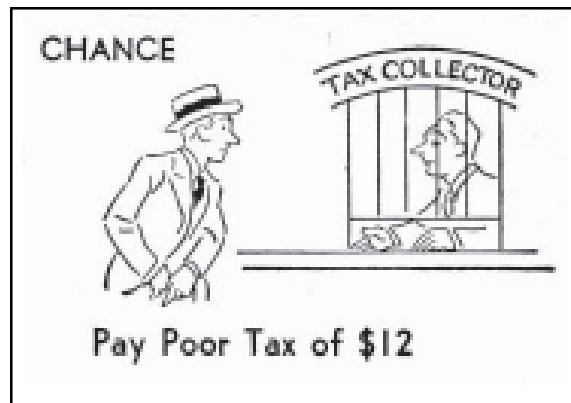
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NY Stills Taxes the Poor to Pay for Cuts for the Rich

Among the numerous problems with the recently adopted state budget was the failure of the Governor or Legislature to end the practice where the poorest New Yorkers pay twice as much of their income for state and local taxes as the wealthiest. New York will continue to have a very regressive tax system.



The Governor and Legislature enacted several more tax cuts and giveaways for the well-connected. They changed the formula (e.g., single sales) on how to tax income for multi-state companies, providing more than a hundred million dollars in tax cuts to an estimated 11,000 companies. They also extended the Zone Equivalent Area Program, which while claiming to help poverty-stricken areas, has provided tax benefits to some of the NYC's most successful companies. Companies in prime commercial areas of midtown and around the state can receive up to \$3,000 tax credits for new employees.

The politicians also renewed the Empire Zones, the state's most lucrative corporate welfare program that is supposed to create jobs in inner city neighborhoods. Media and legislative reports in recent years have documented widespread misuse of public funds, including providing tax breaks to downtown law firms which merely reincorporate. A state Assembly committee charged that the program was being used to reward campaign contributors.

The program, which costs the state \$300 million a year, has encouraged sprawl

while failing to create the promised jobs in needy neighborhoods. The jobs created often come at a steep price (one Rochester company created a job paying \$10,000 and received a tax break of \$137,000).

While some additional oversight was provided, 12 new zones were created, so that every county would have one, which critics point out defeats the initial purpose. Environmental groups were pleased about proposals to restrict the use of the funds to subsidize sprawl.

The legislature cut the personal income tax for the wealthy while increasing the sales tax on working families. They ended the income tax increase agreed to two years ago on people who earn between \$100,000 and \$500,000, though they kept it on higher income households. Meanwhile, they raised more than \$450 million by reinstating the sales tax on clothing costing less than \$110. There was also an increase in the sales tax downstate to help pay for MTA funding.

The Governor also slashed the amount of state funds (8%) that must be shared with local governments, particularly cities. However, this law had been routinely ignored in recent years.

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End Hunger Now !

NY Considers Health Care for All

The New York State Legislature is considering establishing a commission to examine how the state could most effectively provide health care to all residents.

A bill seeking \$500,000 for a Legislative Commission on Health Care Coverage has been introduced by As. Richard Gottfried, Chair of the Assembly Health Committee. It has 40 co-sponsors. It mirrors a successful strategy that has been utilized in other states such as Maine, California and Maryland.

Three million New Yorkers lack health insurance. Nationwide, 45 million go without health insurance. It is estimated that the lack of insurance causes 18,000 deaths a year. It also greatly increases costs, as those without insurance wait until they are sicker to get treatment. They often use expensive emergency rooms as their primary care giver, a significant factor in the financial instability of some hospitals that serve low-income communities.

While public opinion polls show overwhelming support for providing health care to all, there are significant disagreements about how to accomplish this. The Commission would evaluate the various options for providing comprehensive, affordable, quality health coverage to all NYers while controlling costs and ensuring freedom of choice for consumers.

The commission would have two committees, one on universal publicly financed health coverage and one on expanding traditional health coverage. Publicly financed health coverage models may include a single-payer system similar to traditional Medicare, a system using multiple private carriers similar to child health plus or family health plus, so-called “pay or play” models, or other systems. The committee on expanding traditional health coverage would examine propos-

als such as pooling arrangements, mandates, subsidies, incentives, tax mechanisms, cost-shifting to consumers, limitations on benefits, and health savings accounts.

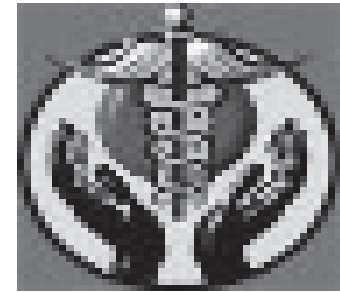
Hunger Action Network supports a single payer system. The Physicians for a National Health Program believe that by eliminating the need for thousands of different insurance companies, \$200 billion would be saved annually. Right now, as much as 30 cents per dollar goes to pay for the paperwork, bureaucracy and profit margin of the insurance companies. The huge savings would be invested in providing health care coverage to everyone, while paying for long-term care, prescription drugs and dental.

Most Medicaid Cuts Rejected

70% of Medicaid costs are for long term care for the elderly and the disabled. People are living longer – and overall health care costs have risen by more than double digits the last four years. These trends are increasing pressure on county property taxes. New York is unusual in that it requires the counties to pay for a portion of Medicaid costs in addition to the 50% federal share.

The Governor proposed billions of dollars in cuts in Medicaid and Family Health Plus, along with increased taxes on hospitals and nursing homes, in order to pay for a proposed cap on local governments’ contributions to Medicaid. The Legislature modified the cap and rejected most of the cuts, though some increased co-pays and reduced services in FHP were approved. The legislature met the Governor halfway with the tax increases.

Towards the end of the budget negotiations, the Governor announced that he had secured a \$1.5 billion Medicaid waiver from the federal government.



The big catch was that it had to be paid for through \$1.5 billion in cuts and cost containments. The legislature decided to put off any discussion of the possible waiver until later in the session.

One of the reasons Hunger Action Network is pushing for the Commission on Health Care Coverage is the need to address the overall problems in the health care system. Otherwise, each year there will be increased demands by the Governor and counties to cut “Medicaid costs” – which invariably means cutting health care services. We need to figure out other ways to control costs. We need more health care for the amount of money we are already spending. Nationally, a whopping 15.5% of the GNP is spent on health care, far more than other industrial countries.

Limited Progress on Controlling Drug Costs

The legislature did take a limited step in approving a preferred drug list for Medicaid. Drugs need to get pre-approval to be paid for by Medicaid. It is estimated that the state will save \$70 million by having drug companies provide rebates when they get on the list.

However, little progress was made on bulk purchasing of drugs. The Health Reform Program at Boston University has estimated that NYers would have

continued on p. 9

Faces...from 1

with the Empire State Economic Security (ES2) Campaign is one of the ways that we try to ensure that there is systematic change. Jennifer Vallone, Senior Housing Advocate, who has worked at University Settlement for six years, has been involved with ES2 for the last couple of years.

As founding members of ES2, University Settlement collaborated with HANNYS to create a statewide campaign to improve economic security for those most in need. University Settlement uses our work with the group to do many things. Educating elected officials about the importance of listening to their constituencies and enacting policy that benefits poor and working class household is vitally important.

Susan Kingsland, Project Home's Director points out that our presence "benefits

the legislator because they can often be disconnected from their constituencies." In addition, too often the poor and working poor do not have a voice; as Maria Muentes, a housing advocate at Project Home argues "to counter corporate interests" it is essential that we make our presence known.

University Settlement's involvement with ES2 provides Project Home with a way to integrate and organize programs across the Settlement to work collectively for solutions that affect every consumer who comes through the door, whether seeking child care, welfare benefits, or a hot meal. Project Home always has a social work intern involved in the decision making and organizing of the ES2 events. Amy Tam Lao, a student from the Hunter College School of Social Work, worked hard this year to make sure the project was a success.

Rosa Rodriguez, a long time resident of the Lower East Side and an English stu-

dent with the Settlement's Literacy program explains "I like to see so many people fighting for the good of everybody and I am glad that I was able to say how I feel about the Medicaid program. I don't think people in Albany realize how hard it is." Natasha Missick, a housing advocate with Project Home agrees, "coming with a group I feel stronger about speaking."

Juanita Morales, a senior who attends the Settlement's Senior Center, was a feisty speaker who clearly explained to elected officials why it is important to lower the cost of prescription drugs and to not cut services or health benefits to seniors. She made them listen and was proud of her work. She commented on the way home that she had been tempted to not make the trip – she wasn't feeling well and it was a long day – but she was so happy that she did. She met new people, learned new things, and gave Albany an earful about what really matters!

Grassroots Health Care Action

The **Tompkins County Health Care Task Force** is planning a walk for health care reform for the United States and New York. We will start in Kingston and walk to Jamestown. We hope to have a rally, town-meeting or just increase our contacts in the towns we come to. We are in the process of forming a rally/town-meeting in Kingston to start our walk.

The route we will take is from Kingston, to Delhi, Oneonta, Norwich, Cortland, Ithaca, Watkins Glen, Elmira, Corning, Bath, Hornell, Cuba, Olean, Salamanca, and Jamestown.

We are in the process of setting up a rally/town-meeting in Kingston NY to

start our trip. The time for action is now: with the proposal for New York to study a health care system for NY, a re-introduction of the Gotfried bill for universal health care, cuts in medicaid, the threat to prescription drugs, and of course reform for New York's very dysfunctional health care system.

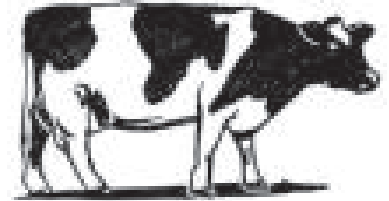
Our goal is to make our politicians accountable, we know what we want and we must generate some political will to respond to the many people going without health care coverage, food and/or medicine.

This walk will also be a tribute to Granny D and all her courage and compassion.

The **Campaign for National Health Program Now** (cnhpnw.org) is planning a series of **Congressional Town Hall** meetings in more than 40 communities across the country.

NYC is scheduled for May 14th with a Congressional Hearing at Riverside Church all day — then on May 15th we will have a Rally in front of the Veterans' Hospital with vets and members of Congress at 1:00 p.m. and a fund-raising reception following that event. Everybody is welcome to testify including people who are being hit hard by the lack of universal health care and also people who want to offer solutions.

Hunger Action Network Green Space



Start a Seed and Seedling Distribution Program

Your organization can help meet the long-term needs of low income New Yorkers by sponsoring a Seed and Seedling Distribution Program in your area. Through the program, you can distribute free vegetable seeds or seedlings to lower income individuals so that they can start a backyard garden or grow food in a container. Agencies and community organizations are in a good position to reach out to low-income New Yorkers, and starting a Seed and Seedling Distribution Program can be a way for you to help New Yorkers develop sustainable and secure sources of food.

Obtaining food through gardening is a viable option for many New Yorkers. Many people are often unaware of just how much food you can grow through vegetable gardening! Gardens provide an excellent source of fresh, affordable food, and can have the added benefit of building community and beautifying the area.

Local nurseries, farms, greenhouses and other groups often provide free seeds and seedlings. Local schools, greenhouses, or restaurants are often willing to donate containers for free. Hunger Action may also have free seeds (without shipping fee) for you to distribute to your community.

Seed and Seedling Distribution Programs can vary in size and scope based on the

needs of the clients and the resources of the provider. Even a small Seed & Seedling Distribution Program represents an important step in looking beyond short-term goals toward greater food security.

Food pantries and soup kitchens are often too overwhelmed and understaffed to coordinate a Seed and Seedling Distribution Program on their own. Your support is needed! Please contact Hun-



ger Action Network if you are interested in getting involved.

Promote Summer Meals to Prevent Childhood Hunger!

The Summer Food Service Program provides free nutritious food to children of all income levels age eighteen and younger during the summer months. Though this program is a vital resource and it can help prevent childhood hunger throughout our state, it is grossly underutilized. The number of income eligible children who participate in SFSP drops dramatically when compared to the number of children participating in free or reduced priced School Meals. This means that thousands of low income children in our state go without enough healthy meals during the summertime!

Please encourage the children in your area to utilize SFSP to prevent childhood hunger. Though there are many open

sites for children, many people either do not know about them or are unaware of their location. For a list of all open sites in your community or for a promotional flyer, contact the Hunger Action Network or the Nutrition Consortium of NYS at 518-436-8757 ext. 16. As of July, you can call the SFSP hotline at 1-800-201-3694 for a list of local sites.

You may also want to become a SFSP site sponsor. Your sponsorship could increase the number of free sites in your area. Site sponsors are reimbursed for the cost of meals and bring federal dollars into communities. If you are interested in sponsorship, please contact Hunger Action.

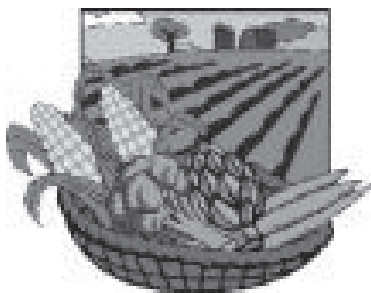
Community Food Security Policy Issues

The New York State Assembly will hold a public hearing on Community Food Security issues in Albany on Monday May 16th. The hearing is being cosponsored by the Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy, and the Health and Agriculture Committees. The hearing is open to groups and individuals who are interested in testifying on Community Food Security issues.

Community Food Security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.

Over the last decade Hunger Action has worked on a variety of community food projects that increase access to fresh wholesome food. We have promoted the use of food stamps at local Farmers Markets. We have increased low-income consumer participation in Community Supported Agriculture (with the support of Just Food), where individuals directly contract with farmers to obtain fresh produce throughout the growing season. We have promoted food buying clubs and gleaning projects.

We have also helped initiate numerous community and vegetable gardens and seed and seedling distribution programs. Lastly, we have supported innovative food projects that also provide job training and promote economic development through delivery services, second sale markets, and other methods.



Through a grant from the Jessie Noyes Smith foundation, Hunger Action is working to develop a community food policy agenda. Over the last several months, Hunger Action Network has convened a series of community meetings to identify problems and solutions related to Community Food Security.

Many low-income New Yorkers of course lack regular access to a healthy, nutritional diet due to insufficient funds. In addition, quality supermarkets are not available in many inner city neighborhoods. Access to fresh fruits and vegetables is another problem.

For some time, smaller family farms have declined in number as they struggle to find markets and compete with larger corporate farms.

Hunger Action has also obtained input from many other local, state, and national Community Food Security groups, such as the NY Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.

Some of the recommendations we have developed include: Enable food pantries to use HPNAP funds to purchase fresh fruits and veggies from local producers. Re-establish the NYS Council on Food and Nutrition Policy. Expand the NYS purchasing program for in-state fruits, vegetables, dairy and animal products to serve all state-run schools, colleges, hospitals, prisons, government agencies and other institutions. Provide support for the development of farmer cooperatives and links to retail outlets or consumers. Combine agricultural development programs with skills-training and youth employment programs, business courses, welfare-to-work and community service rehabilitation programs.



One of the key points of the upcoming Assembly hearing is whether the state should re-organize a Food Policy Council. Although the former Council was no longer active after developing its 5 Year Plan, some progress was made in achieving some of its goals and recommendations in the years since it was released.

Successful initiatives included: increased State funding for food assistance; expansion of school breakfast programs; development of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs; and, creation of the Farm-to-School program and Childhood Obesity Prevention Program.

However, there are still significant policy challenges facing the State such as continuing reliance on emergency food programs, increased diet-related diseases resulting in increased Medicaid costs, and the loss of family farms and food businesses in a State with one of the largest and most lucrative consumer markets in the world.

Hunger Action Network would like to hear from our supporters as to what issues you feel should be part of our Community Food Security agenda.

HANNYS' Online EFP Directory:

http://www.hungeractionnys.org/FP_search.php

Hunger Action Network recently launched an online Emergency Food Program Directory to help low-income people, service providers, advocates, EFPs, researchers, and others locate a food program in their community.

The Emergency Food Program Directory allows you to find a food program in your area using your county or zip code. The Directory is extremely user-friendly and allows users to print out a list of programs for themselves or for distribution to community residents. The directory includes food programs outside of NYC. For a list of NYC programs in New York City, please call the Food Bank at 1-866-NYC-FOOD or go to their website at <http://www.foodbanknyc.org/go/agency-network/agency-directory/index.htm>

Grow An Extra Row

As the warm, garden friendly weather approaches we at the Hunger Action Network of NYS encourage all of New York State's gardeners to donate a portion of their harvest to local soup kitchens and food pantries. Soup kitchens and food pantries do not have nearly enough fresh vegetables. All too often they have to rely on canned vegetables which lack vital nutrients for the betterment of their consumer's health.



There are more than 900,000 New Yorkers that rely on soup kitchens and food pantries each week. The fresh produce would be a welcome and healthy change for them. Soup kitchens and food pantries see an increasing number of children and elderly each year; these are the individuals who truly need to have the benefit of a nutritious meal.

To help out all you have to do is simply grow an extra row. By providing your donation of produce you are helping increasingly overburdened soup kitchens and food pantries who in times of great demand often have to turn families away. If you have questions on where your local soup kitchens or food pantries are you may call the Hunger Action Network of NYS at 518-434-7371.

Growing a Healthy New York: Innovative Food Projects Manual

Hunger Action and SENSES have developed a manual titled "Growing a Healthy NY: Innovative Food Projects that End Hunger and Strengthen Communities." This manual features programs that promote economic development, provide job training to youth while increasing the amount of fresh food available in communities, increase participation in federal nutrition programs, and unite people with local farmers. The manual details 25 different programs from across New York State, including how community leaders and organizations started the programs and how they currently operate.

Growing a Healthy NY provides many great ideas about projects that can be duplicated in your own community and it also connects you to information resources to get you started. Hunger Action is also here to assist in project development.

You can download a copy of the manual from our website at www.hungeractionnys.org or contact Sheila to receive a free hard copy



at 518-434-7371 or by email at smccarthy@hungeractionnys.org

Health Care

...from page 3

saved \$4.6 billion in 2004 if they had been able to purchase brand name prescription drugs at federal supply schedule prices. The savings in Medicaid alone would have been more than \$1 billion.

One area of agreement is that to consolidate the number of hospitals. The Governor wanted to target the hospitals that primarily serve poor people. The legislature wants more regional oversight and coordination. A hospital restructuring commission was created.

The Assembly also passed legislation to ensure greater accountability and consumer rights for the multi-billion dollar Bad Debt and Charity program for the hospitals. Most hospitals fail to inform patients how they can get their medical bills paid for by this program.

Another critical issue is the conversion of nonprofit health insurance companies to for-profit companies. Several years ago, it was Blue Cross Blue Shield; now it is HIP in NYC. By law, the funds from the sale are supposed to go to a foundation to support similar services. The Governor instead wants to use them as one-shots to balance the state budget. The first conversion is still tied up in court. Billions of dollars are at stake.



Be A HANNYS Intern

by Rebecca Goodrich, St. Rose

Hunger Action Network of NYS is always on the lookout for interns. It is our belief that it is extraordinarily important to get the younger generation actively involved in issues involving hunger and poverty. I have been an intern at the Hunger Action Network of NYS for three months and I have found it to be incredibly educational and enlightening.

From working in the HANNYS office I have learned that over 900,000 individuals a week use food pantries or soup kitchens in New York. This is an incredibly high number, and it desperately needs to be decreased. There is no good

reason why so many New Yorkers should be hungry. Things in New York need to change and we need the public to help bring about that change.

As a college student, and a citizen of New York I feel that we are not widely exposed to issues such as hunger. It is not something that I was aware was a growing problem in our state until I began working at HANNYS. Working at HANNYS these last few months has really opened my eyes to the growing problems facing our state. I believe that it is incredibly important to educate the public on these issues. After all, hunger is not an issue that is mentioned on the nightly news.

TANF Reauthorization Update

In part because of objections to the scope of spending in the TANF bill approved by the Senate Finance Committee (S. 667, the PRIDE Bill), it is unclear when S. 667 will come to the Senate floor. In the House, a House Ways and Means Subcommittee-passed TANF bill (H.R. 240) would allow optional food stamp block grants (in five states) and new waiver authority that could under-

mine the effectiveness of the Food Stamp Program.

Either a block grant or “superwaiver” would begin to undo the fundamental entitlement structure of the Food Stamp Program. Advocates recently met with Senator Clinton to express concerns about the harmful provisions in the House bill: increased work requirements

and participation rates, reduced access to education and job training, reduced time for barrier removal activities, full family sanctions and used of scarce TANF funds for marriage promotion initiatives. Hunger Action’s remains firm in our opposition to any TANF bill provisions that would result in a worst law and would further restrict access to education, training and rehabilitative services.

State
FOR NYC*: SINGLE PEOPLE WITHOUT CHILDREN
DO YOU WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL?
Now Your School Hours Can Count as Work!!!

What types of education and training can I count?

High school and GED, Basic literacy, ESL. And 2-year college can now be counted fully towards your work requirement: Internships and work-study programs are considered different from school. These count as part of your work requirement. You can go to school and participate in an internship or work-study program.

How Do I Know What Programs I Can Enroll In?

The City keeps a list of hundreds of GED, ESOL, literacy, and 2-year college programs that you may be able to go to. This list is called "HRA Master List of Approved Training Programs." You can ask your worker to see the list or view it on line at: <http://a069-webapps1.nyc.gov/atp/search.cfm>. HRA will evaluate the appropriateness of the education and training program that you choose based on your employability plan.

How Many Hours of School Can I Count?

You are generally required to participate in work activities for 35 hours each week. Of these 35 hours, you can count all of the hours that you spend in education and training as your work activity for a lifetime limit of 12 months. After 12 months, you can count up to 15 hours for as long as you are receiving public assistance.

Will I Have to Participate in Another Activity Too?

Probably. This will depend on (a) whether all of your 35 required hours are spent in education or training, and (b) whether you have reached your 12-month lifetime limit on counting all hours of education and training. If you are 19 or younger, and have not finished high school or a GED program, school will be your only activity. You will not be assigned to another activity. If an additional work activity is required, you will be assigned to another agency-approved work activity for the hours that you are not enrolled in school or training. These activities can include a paid job, WEP, on-the-job training, community service, job search or job readiness, and childcare for people participating in community service. You can also be enrolled in both school or training and a workstudy or internship in satisfaction of the work requirement.

What Do I Have To Do To Stay Enrolled?

You must maintain a GPA of C (2.0) or better in order to be allowed to stay enrolled. After either a semester of school or 6 months of participation in your school or training program, whichever comes first, you will have a meeting with HRA to see if you have maintained a C average.

What is the Process at the Centers for Enrolling in School?

A worker will do an "assessment" interview before "assigning" you to any work activity. The worker must ask you about your education and work background. You should tell your worker if you want to go to school or participate in a training program – this is called your "preference". The worker may refer you to another center – Training Assessment Group, or "TAG." The TAG worker will ask you questions to see if school makes sense for you. If you tell the worker that you want to go to school and she does not allow you to go to school, she must say why. The worker is also supposed to fill out an "Employability Plan," which lists your work assignments. If your plan does not include your school preference, your worker must write down why.

Tell the worker if you are already enrolled in school or a training program. The worker will make sure that the program has been approved by HRA, and is on their Master List of Approved Programs. If it isn't on the list, the worker will evaluate it to see if it can become approved. If you are enrolled, even if the specific program has not been approved, the worker cannot assign you to any other activity that might interfere with class attendance. This includes not scheduling activities at times & locations that interfere with their ability to go to school or to get to additional work assignments.

Can I Get Car Fare During School? Yes! The city should pay for carfare during the time that you are in a program that is not approved by HRA, or if you are sanctioned.

Contact Welfare Law Center 212-633-6967 or Urban Justice Center at 646-602-5647.

* The state law gives counties the option to take advantage of this new law. Ask your DSS offices if they will implement this option. If they refuse, call Hunger Action for assistance (212) 741-8192, ext 1# or 4#.

Develop a Job Vacancy Survey (JVS) for NYS:

NYS and local governments should fund the development of a Job Vacancy Survey (JVS) to provide regular, accurate, objective and timely information on the number and types of job vacancies, and the level of skill training employers need in local areas across the state. This will enable state and local governments to better tailor their various job training and welfare-to-work programs. A bill is being introduced in the Assembly.

Government Funding for Construction Projects Should Target Low-income Job creation

Hunger Action supports setting targets for job creation for low-income residents through the Rebuild and Renew New York Transportation Bond Act of \$2.9 billion, the multi-year funding for transportation capital plans, and the \$250 million capital fund for public and private colleges.

Hunger Action urges the Governor and Legislature to include provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) accompanying such funding that would target job creation in the following ways:

- Local hiring agreements that 15-30% of the hours worked go to local community residents
- For the trades related jobs, establish and fund 10 week pre-apprenticeship training program to provide classroom and hands-on training needed to enter into union apprenticeship programs Funding also includes a stipend equal to the minimum wage for last 7 weeks of paid on-the-job training.
- For the non-trades related construction jobs, establish and fund short-term training (jobs include: project secretary, office support, personnel, human resources, certified payroll, drafting assistant, office engineer, engineer aide, EEO compliance and outreach, and security).
- Funding and support for the pre-apprenticeship program, non-trades short-term training and other support services such as child care, case management, etc. can come from existing government programs such as welfare-to-work funds and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds, as well as foundation support.

Fund Renewable Energy Technology

The Apollo Project: calls for a national commitment that mobilizes resources to achieve energy independence. The project is based on the recognition that clean energy can be the next great engine of jobs and growth--that mobilizing public and private investment in clean energy technologies such as solar and wind power, energy conservation and efficiency, and high efficiency American-made cars, will create a new generation of over 3 million high wage manufacturing, construction and industrial machinery jobs.

Governor Pataki is proposing to reduce climate change in the northeast by curtailing carbon emissions through a program of tradable permits. These permits should be auctioned off and part of the proceeds invested in renewable energy and energy conservation programs.

Job Creation and Affordable Housing Development and Preservation:

Hunger Action supports a \$1 billion affordable housing bond for NYS. National statistics show that a \$5 billion investment in housing would initially create more than 180,000 jobs. Moreover, when leveraged (an average of \$9 from private, non-profit, and other governmental sources for every \$1 spent by the Housing Trust Fund), an investment of \$5 billion results in 1.8 million new jobs and \$50 billion in wages.

Invest in Microenterprise Development:

There are approximately 1.5 million microenterprises operating throughout the state. These microenterprises employ approximately 19 percent of the state's entire workforce. A cost benefit analysis revealed conservatively that NYS received \$2 in personal income and sales tax for every \$1 invested in the program.

Reform of Corporate Subsidy and Economic Development Programs:

New York must reform its multi-billion economic development program to hold corporate recipients accountable for actually delivering upon their promised job creation – or the funds must be recouped.

Feast for Famine Thurs. May 26 at The Egg

Hunger Action Network will hold its 15th Annual Feast for Famine on Thursday, May 26th from 5:30 to 8:00 PM at the Egg in the Empire State Plaza, Albany.

Feast for Famine has become one of the premiere food events in the Capital District. The benefit is a food and beverage tasting to raise support on behalf of the 40,000 individuals who use food pantries locally each month. Participants are able to enjoy food prepared by some of the Capital Region's best chefs, accompanied by teas, microbrews, coffee and a silent auction.

Some of the participating restaurants, coffeehouses, food places and microbreweries include Bayou Café, Bongiorno's, Capital City Roasters, Cascade Mountain Winery and Restaurant, Dakota, Debbie's Kitchen, DeJohn's, Divinitea, El Loco, El Mariachi, Finger Lakes Premium Wine Co., Gingerman, Justins, Miss Albany Diner, My Linh, Magnolias on the Park, Malt River Brewing Co., Nettle, Meadow Farm, Olde Saratoga Brewing Company, Palmer House, Rockhill Bakehouse, and Shades of Green

The event is co-sponsored by Albany Public School Teachers Association, NYS Defenders Association, PEF, CSEA, NYS Nurses Association, Metroland, and Times Union

The suggested tax-deductible donation is \$40 per person. Hunger Action Network of the New York State, founded in 1982, is a statewide membership organization of direct food providers, advocates and other individuals whose goal is to end hunger and its root causes, including poverty, in New York State.

HUNGER ACTION NETWORK OF NEW YORK STATE MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Yes, I want to help end the root causes of hunger by becoming a member:

- \$30 Individual \$5(low/fixed income) \$35small organization
 \$60 mediumorganization \$120 large organization

Please send me information about volunteer opportunities

Name _____ Organization _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Phone (day) _____ (eve.) _____ (FAX) _____ (E-Mail) _____

Please return to Hunger Action Network of NYS, 260 W. 36th St., #504, NY NY 10018

**Hunger Action Network
OF NEW YORK STATE**

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Albany NY 12210

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