



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 26, 2020

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****MEDIA ADVISORY****

Isaacs Center Responds to Food Insecurity Needs this Holiday Season
Estimated to double meal deliveries on Thanksgiving Day

Yorkville, New York, NY – In response to COVID-19, the Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center (Isaacs Center) is nearly doubling its typical output of meal deliveries with the expansion of Thanksgiving meals to those in the Yorkville and East Harlem communities. Traditionally, Isaacs Center holds a holiday meal in its senior center for all members to attend and celebrate together. This year, homebound seniors and food insecure families will receive a hot Thanksgiving meal, delivered safely to their doors with a friendly smile and warm greeting by Isaacs Center staff and volunteers. The center estimates that it will deliver over 1000 meals and approximately 400 turkeys for Thanksgiving Day.

There will be two Turkey distribution days leading up to the holiday. Thanksgiving meals will be prepared and packaged onsite on Thanksgiving morning to be distributed through the early afternoon. Isaacs Center will have all hands-on-deck including staff, volunteers, family, and friends with the increase in need this year. Thanksgiving Day volunteer shifts will start at 7:00am and go until about 2:00pm.

“The Isaacs Center has a long history of meeting hunger and food insecurity issues, and we see food as essential, not just to build a healthy body but to make connections between people...Thanksgiving is a really special occasion to do that and is vital in a year like this,” **said Gregory J. Morris, President and Executive Director, Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center.** “At the end of the day, this is what the Isaacs Center is built for— to provide these essential services and to be together, no matter the challenge or complexity of life in front of us.”

"This year, the need for food distribution is more important than ever. Our community in East Harlem has endured among the worst of the pandemic, and food insecurity remains one of the biggest anxieties for our working-class families. Thankfully, the dedicated efforts from community groups like Isaacs Center have worked tirelessly since Day One to make sure families have food on their tables, and I'm proud to have the opportunity to join in these efforts," **said Assembly Member Robert Rodriguez.**

"Every year around Thanksgiving we hold this event and hand out turkeys to residents in our district's NYCHA developments, it really is one of my favorite things to do as all the residents

from Stanley Isaacs to Robbins Plaza are super grateful and excited for the delivery," **said Council Member Ben Kallos**. "Food insecurity is something our City has been grappling with now more than ever before as Covid-19 has hit many communities that were already in need. These turkeys represent a helping hand to a friend and my office is glad we can help safely despite the ongoing pandemic. Thank you to New York Common Pantry for making the deliveries possible and working with us to get them done."

As Isaacs Center serves and celebrates with community members, it continues to ensure best hygienic practices are followed, as established by the Center for Disease Control.

As the COVID-19 public health crisis continues to disproportionately impact low income communities and vulnerable older adults, Isaacs Center has seen a dramatic increase in food insecurity among the approximately 6,000 people it serves. Prior to the pandemic, nearly half of the older adults served through Isaacs Center programs and services lived at or below the poverty line, with 62% of those served indicating the need to make tough financial decisions between food, rent, and other essential expenses. With new and increasing needs throughout the surrounding neighborhood, Isaacs Center is finding innovative ways of providing essential services and connecting the community. This year in addition to their substantial Thanksgiving meal delivery, Isaacs Center will hold a virtual celebration and toast to bring their members together.

The public can explore all the ways to support the Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center at isaacscenter.org/get-involved.

***** Since 1964, Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center has committed to its enduring mission to promote social and physical well-being, and encourage self-reliance and dignity throughout every stage of life. Each year, Isaacs Center engages more than 6,000 vulnerable New Yorkers through educational programs for school-aged children, supportive services and connections to educational and career pathways for at-risk young adults, and life-sustaining meals and programs for older adults.