



East Harlem elected officials, developers, restaurants and community leaders provide meals

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Manhattan, NY Borough president Gale Brewer, City Council member Diana Ayala, NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan, L+M Development Partners, Jonathan Rose Cos., Union Settlement and Acacia Network jointly unveiled a new initiative through which over a dozen East Harlem restaurants – all of which are struggling to survive in the current COVID-19 outbreak – are providing at least 360 meals per day to workers at Metropolitan Hospital.

A total of 20 local restaurants and delis will be participating, providing 180 lunches and 180 dinners to the front-line health care workers at Metropolitan Hospital on a rotating basis. The meal will be provided seven days per week until the crisis subsides.

This initiative was started when Ron Moelis (L+M Development) and Jonathan Rose (Rose Cos.) reached out to borough president Brewer and CC member Ayala, offering \$100,000 in funding to cover urgent needs in the area. After discussions with NYC Health + Hospitals, the elected officials learned that Metropolitan Hospital in East Harlem needed food for its hundreds of employees working round-the-clock to care for the waves of COVID-19 patients.

Borough president Brewer then turned to Union Settlement, one of the oldest and largest social service providers in East Harlem, whose staff members were already working with the many local businesses suffering from the impact of the COVID-19 shutdowns. Many of the area's restaurants have been forced to shut their doors, and others are barely surviving through minimal take-out and delivery sales. Union Settlement agreed to serve as a conduit for the funding, and started reaching out to the restaurants to find those able to fill the orders, while simultaneously working with Metropolitan Hospital's staff to coordinate a schedule of deliveries. Acacia Network agreed to contribute an additional \$15,000 in funding, increasing the total donations to \$115,000.

The initiative launched on Monday, April 13th, and will result in the delivery of hundreds of much-needed meals to Metropolitan Hospital's frontline health care workers every day, seven days per week, until the crisis subsides.

“When I learned that there was a need for meals for the health care workers at Metropolitan Hospital during this crisis, I knew that I had to do something about it,” said Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer. “Thanks to funding from L+M Development and Jonathan Rose Companies, and the local expertise of Union Settlement, we are now able to provide hundreds of meals to these workers every day.”

“In these difficult times, it is clear that we all have to work together, and this is a perfect example of that happening here in East Harlem,” said City Council Member Diana Ayala. “Our corporate partners, an anchor nonprofit organization, a premier hospital and multiple restaurants are all working together to bring much-needed relief to our dedicated health care heroes. With so much suffering happening, it is great to be part of such a positive effort.”

“L+M Development Partners is committed to supporting the communities where we work and proud to provide funding for this initiative,” said Ron Moelis, L+M’s CEO and founding partner. “We care deeply about East Harlem, and saw this as a critical opportunity to assist the dedicated hospital workers who are working so hard to keep everyone safe, while at the same time the helping local East Harlem businesses that are struggling to survive.”

“We will never be able to fully thank our health care workers for their heroic efforts in this crisis, but we can and should try to do everything we can to make it easier for them to do their jobs,” said Jonathan F.P. Rose, founder and CEO of Jonathan Rose Companies. “The fact that we can do so, while also helping over a dozen struggling East Harlem restaurants, makes this entire effort particularly satisfying, and I am grateful to be part of it.”

“The COVID-19 outbreak has had a devastating impact here in East Harlem,” said David Nocenti, Executive Director of Union Settlement. “Not only does the disease have a disproportionate impact on the largely Latino and African American residents in this community, but thousands of community members have lost their jobs, and hundreds of local businesses have been forced to close temporarily, and perhaps permanently. Union Settlement is proud to be part of this initiative, which helps local businesses stay open, while at the same time providing much-needed meals to our health care heroes at Metropolitan Hospital.”

“Metropolitan’s employees have shown great dedication and teamwork during this pandemic,” said Christopher Roker, CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan. “We are grateful for this outpouring of support from our local community and beyond. Having these hundreds of additional meals delivered directly to the hospital every day will allow staff on the front lines to focus on providing vital medical care to our COVID-19 patients.”

“The COVID-19 public health and economic crisis has challenged our communities in a way we never could have imagined,” said Raul Russi, President and CEO of Acacia Network. “The people of New York City, especially our Latino and African American communities, continue to suffer the greatest blows during this pandemic. As a primarily Latino organization, Acacia stands ready to support initiatives that seek to help those in the front lines – particularly essential workers. We commend the leaders of East Harlem and our partners, as we believe that food is a right, not a privilege. During these trying times and beyond, we stand in solidarity with our partners and fellow organizations in the nonprofit sector.”

“We have lived in East Harlem for 15 years and have had a restaurant in the neighborhood for the last 5 years, and when COVID-19 hit our community, our business was deeply affected,” said Leo

Lauer, owner of East Harlem Bottling Co. “When we heard about the effort to help feed the frontline heroes at the Metropolitan Hospital, we were so grateful to be a part of it, because it is helping immensely the small businesses in the neighborhood who are really struggling during this time.”

Additional donations to this initiative are welcome, and interested donors can reach out to Susan Puder, Union Settlement’s Director of Development and Communications, at spuder@unionsettlement.org.

Below is a list of the East Harlem restaurants that are part of this initiative, and will be preparing and delivering meals to the Metropolitan Hospital workers:

Amor Cubano
Armonie Italian Bistro
Bistro Casa Azul
Cake Burger
Cassava House
Dave’s Marketplace
Dear Mama Cafe
East Harlem Bottling Co.
Healthy Choice Deli
Hot Jalapeño
La Avenida Restaurant
La Fonda Boricua
Mocha Cafe
Mojo Desserts
Pabade Bakery
Sabor Borinqueñ
Sapoara Grill
Sisters Cuisine
Super Nice NYC
TastingsNYC

Union Settlement is an on-the-ground resource for East Harlem residents of all ages, and a passionate advocate for the needs of underserved communities. Established in 1895, Union Settlement provides a broad array of education, wellness and community-building programs to over 10,000 East Harlem residents each year, including early childhood education, afterschool and summer youth programs, college preparation, job readiness, English language classes, behavioral health counseling, small business assistance, senior centers, Meals on Wheels and more.

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