



## New York City Food Policy Center AT HUNTER COLLEGE

Promoting smart, fair food policy for New York

### CAMPAIGN FOR HEALTHY FOOD IN EAST HARLEM

The goal of the five-year *Campaign for Healthy Food in East Harlem* is to mobilize human and other resources inside and outside East Harlem in order to make measurable progress in reducing food insecurity and diet-related diseases and creating a food system that promotes sustainable economic growth within East Harlem. The convener for the Campaign is the New York City Food Policy Center, an interdisciplinary, intersectoral food “think and do” tank located in the CUNY School of Public Health based at Hunter’s East Harlem campus. The Center invites groups based or working in East Harlem around food related programs to join us to create a *Campaign for Healthy Food in East Harlem* and to learn about and share knowledge of the many food efforts in the community and food and food policy in East Harlem.

Diana Johnson, Director of Community Projects has worked over the past several months to launch the five-year Campaign, supported in its first two years by the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund. After conducting a thorough analysis of needs assessments previously conducted in East Harlem, Diana has developed and continued to build a strong foundation of collaboration with East Harlem community leaders and service providers, opening the door for funding possibilities and programmatic opportunities.

The success of the Campaign will depend on finding new ways to support and coordinate the many promising but sometimes isolated efforts to improve food in East Harlem.

#### SOME OF OUR ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

##### **Assessing the impact of closing the Pathmark on 125<sup>th</sup> Street**

In April 2014, a major real estate developer, Extell Development, purchased the land currently occupied by a Pathmark at Lexington Avenue and 125th Street and is expected to tear down the store for a new middle and upper income residential building. Faculty and students at the New York City Food Policy Center at Hunter College and the CUNY School of Public Health at 119th Avenue have embarked on research, including a Health Impact Assessment, to better understand how Pathmark’s closing will affect food choices in East Harlem. As this project moves forward, we will engage with East Harlem stakeholders to develop strategies to ensure that healthy and affordable food access is not compromised.

**The Research Action Workshop on Food Environments in East Harlem**, an innovative university community collaboration, brought together students of all levels, local advocates, and nonprofit organizations, connecting Hunter College and the CUNY School of Public Health with the East Harlem community. Professors Nicholas Freudenberg and Jan Poppendieck led the class in an exploration of five aspects of East Harlem’s food environments: retail food, school food, food benefits and poverty, gentrification and food, and food advertising that targets Latinos. Student project reports and a bibliography of reading materials will soon be available on the Center website, and it is anticipated that the course will be offered again in spring 2015. Several students are continuing their projects, working closely with Center staff and supported by community partners, taking action on the interventions they have developed.

##### **Improving Food Choices for Residents of Public Housing in East Harlem**

In partnership with several local community development and family service providers, the Center is exploring new ways to make healthier food more available to people living in East Harlem’s public housing. To reduce high levels of food insecurity and diet-related disease among this population, we will work with others to expand access to farmers markets and retail outlets selling healthy food, reduce the promotion of unhealthy food and counteract the harmful impact on food availability and affordability of East Harlem’s rapid gentrification.

If you or your organization is interested in discussing this issue, or if you have any information you’d like to share, please contact [info@nycfoodpolicy.org](mailto:info@nycfoodpolicy.org)