



Kingsbridge Heights Community Center in the Bronx signed up for the donateNYC food portal.

HOWARD SIMMONS

New Link in the food chain

DonateNYC connects grocery stores and eateries with community groups

BY LISA L. COLANGELO
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Throwing out good food may be a sin, but sometimes finding a place to donate it requires the patience of a saint.

A new city-run web portal is designed to connect restaurants, grocery stores and other commercial food establishments with nonprofits and other groups that help feed New Yorkers in need.

Officials hope the new effort will make it easier for food-related businesses to donate while building long-term partnerships with community organizations.

"There are a lot of supermarkets out there constantly throwing away food that could have gone into the hands of hungry New Yorkers," said City Councilman Rafael Espinal Jr., a Democrat from Brooklyn who sponsored the bill that created the portal. "There's no real clear connection to do that. This might in-

centivize people. The ease of it is what's attractive."

Matching food with need

Restaurants, caterers and other businesses with leftover or surplus food can register with the portal on the website, nwsdyli/donatenyc, which is run by the city's Department of Sanitation. Groups interested in receiving the donations also register, detailing their specific needs and the kinds of goods they can use.

An algorithm matches them up, based on criteria and then location.

"We do not want recipients getting donations that don't work for them," said Eszter Csicsai, senior manager for reuse and donations at the city Department of Sanitation. "There are some that serve groups with certain dietary needs."

The donations range from prepared food to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as pack-

aged and canned goods.

Csicsai noted some of the larger food rescue organizations have minimum weight donation requirements and ask for a fee. Neighborhood supermarkets, bakeries and other shops may have smaller amounts of food but can't find a place to take them or don't know how to reach out.

"Maybe there is a donation that is a handful of bagels," she said. "There might be someone right around the corner who needs that."

Once a match is made, the recipient has 30 minutes to accept or decline the donation.

Food safety standards

Donors must meet safety standards with handling and packaging the food. Any food that includes controlled or illegal substances, comes from residential sources and is held or transported outside of safe food temperatures will not be accepted, officials said.

The donateNYC site features information on how to give away and acquire items New Yorkers are trying to dispose of



After a busy weekend, some of the food remaining at Kingsbridge

in an environmentally friendly way. It also includes events and guides such as "Zero Waste Dorm Move-out." The food portal was quietly added in early March as part of a so-called "soft launch." It is only for commercial businesses, but the site has other options for individuals looking to donate food.

So far about 75 organizations and businesses have registered on the portal. Csicsai said she believes that number will continue to grow and the agency is in the process of sending out thousands of informational postcards about the portal to groups around the city.

The Kingsbridge Heights Community Center was eager to sign up as a recipient. The Bronx nonprofit provides an array of youth and family services including hot meals and a food pantry to local residents.

"This is a great opportunity to make partnerships in the neighborhood," said William Littleton, KHCC's director of development. "We serve 400 meals a day and 76 percent of our participants live below the poverty line."

Officials said the recipients can be schools, government agencies and other organizations as well as nonprofits.

"It's been nice to see people thinking outside the box," said Csicsai. "We want to foster these hyperlocal donation connections."

Environmental impact, too

Joel Berg of Hunger Free America said the program will be positive if it's properly implemented but might have more of an impact helping the environment than reducing hunger. His group released a report last

Homes where church stood

Catholic Church launches new housing initiative

BY ALLEGRA HOBBS
Special to amNewYork

The Catholic Church announced plans Monday to develop between 1,500 and 2,000 units of below-market-rate housing in New York City over the next decade as it celebrated a new housing complex in Morrisania.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan formally unveiled St. Augustine Terrace, at 1180 Fulton Ave. in the Bronx, by clanging a replica of a bell that had accompanied the church that previously stood on the property. The original, worn bell sat nearby.

The site's transformation into apartments for 112 low-income families is emblematic of the push by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York to significantly ramp up its contributions, which Dolan noted are part of the church's duty to care for the poor. The city is currently suffering an affordability crisis.

"For us in the church, this is a no-brainer," Dolan said as he presided over the unveiling.



Cardinal Dolan at St. Augustine Terrace, with 112 low-income apartments, on the former site of a church.

"It's a duty — it's something we are obliged to do."

The archdiocese has developed over 2,000 units of housing in the city since the 1970s, but is looking now to dramatically increase that output. It may even surpass 2,000 units in 10 years "if the land-zoning gods are nice to us," said Kevin Sullivan, executive director of Catholic Charities of the archdiocese.

In addition to St. Augustine Terrace, the church has four projects underway in the Bronx and one planned in Manhattan, at Grand Street Guild.

Each of those developments, which will collectively include 1,145 units, is in either the design or early construction phase.

St. Augustine Terrace's units, which are rented out through the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development's lottery, include a \$718-a-month studio available to a couple making between \$27,085 and \$38,200 a year, to a \$1,004-a-month three-bedroom unit available for families earning between \$37,749 and \$42,950 a year. The building will use 35 units as

supportive homes for adults with serious mental illness.

"These are homes for New Yorkers who may otherwise have to leave the city, live in unsafe conditions, or go into the shelter system," said Molly Park, HPD's deputy commissioner for development, who noted the importance of landowners like the Catholic Church pitching in as the city runs low on land to develop on.

"We depend on creative uses of sites like this one to continue to grow the development of affordable housing in New York City," Park said.



HOWARD SIMMONS

Heights Community Center.

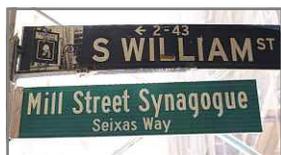
year showing hunger and food insecurity impact over 1 million New York City residents.

"The only way to seriously reduce hunger in New York City is to create jobs, increase wages, expand the availability of government safety programs" such as SNAP, WIC and school breakfasts, and reduce the cost of living, he said in an email.

While the portal is designed to find good homes for good food, it will also help produce less trash. The city has set an ambitious goal of sending zero waste to landfills by 2030.

According to the Department of Sanitation, food-related organizations send more than 650,000 tons of usable food to landfills every year.

"I think they hit a home run with this one," said Espinal. "We are getting food to hungry New Yorkers and reducing waste."



City's first temple

A sign renaming a section of South William Street the Mill Street Synagogue/Seixas Way is partly unveiled in a lower Manhattan ceremony. It was the city's first Jewish temple. Rabbi Gershom Mendes Seixas, was a Revolutionary War leader.



CHARLES ECKERT

WINDOW WASHER KILLED BY BRICKS

A 53-year-old window washer was killed Monday when bricks fell on top of his head on the east side of Manhattan, police said.

The unidentified man was washing windows on the sixth floor of 311 E. 50th St., near Second Avenue, at about 11:30 a.m. when the bricks came tumbling down, according to the NYPD.

He was hit in the head, police said, and taken to an area hospital where he was pronounced dead.

It wasn't immediately clear how long he had been working at that location.

— ALISON FOX