

West Side Campaign Against Hunger

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By Ruthie Askenazi



As a senior at the Jewish Theological Seminary, I have been interning at the West Side Campaign Against Hunger - a Food Bank network member for more than 20 years - since September through our Fellowship in Jewish Social Entrepreneurship. I would like to share with you a little bit about my experience at the West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) as guest blogger this week!

WSCAH is a supermarket-style, client-choice food pantry that offers food and social services to those in need. Each WSCAH customer can receive a pantry bag once a month, at which time they select needed items for three days of meals for their households. Since the start of the recession, the number of households depending on WSCAH is up 30 percent. In 2009 we provided food for 790,767 meals to 87,863 people.

At WSCAH, we believe that customers should be empowered to find solutions. Our social service counselors help people find jobs, register for food stamps, get health insurance, solve credit problems and find solutions to many other challenges.

WSCAH is also invested in teaching clients to be their own advocates. Several weeks ago, WSCAH received from the Food Bank For New York City a stack of stamped postcards addressed to legislators asking them to fight funding cuts to emergency food programs. As part of my internship, I had the job of working with customers to collect signatures. In some cases I translated the postcard to Spanish to allow Hispanic clients to read what it said and decide if they wanted to provide a signature. Without any trouble, and with enthusiasm from almost everybody I spoke to, I easily gained enough signatures to send 150 postcards to legislators from WSCAH clients. We are thankful to the Food Bank for providing us with the postcards and giving us the opportunity to engage our clients in the advocacy work on their behalf.

Learn more about what we do by checking out our website: <http://wscah.org/> reading our blog: <http://wscah.wordpress.com/> or joining our fan page on facebook!