Meet a New Yorker You Support

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by Daniel Buckley

Recipients of the Food Bank's monthly e-newsletters may remember seeing that title in their inboxes last week. The email — which introduced supporters to a New Yorker in their borough (those who live outside the city or who we don't have that information for received a Brooklyn story) — started as I began to review the Food Bank's stock of interviews with the purpose of updating the Meet the People We Help stories on our website.

I have been working at the Food Bank For New York City for close to five years now, taking part in efforts to alleviate hunger and food poverty every week (okay, I snuck a few vacations in there, but you get the point). Still, I am completely humbled every time I make it to one of our network's food assistance programs to meet just a few of the 1.4 million people who rely on emergency food in our city.

As a Food Bank supporter, whether you have donated, volunteered or spread the word, you have made a difference to the lives of hungry New Yorkers. Since, in my experience, there has been no better way to understand the truth of that statement than to listen to one of those New Yorkers, I wanted each of our supporters to be given that opportunity.

So, let me take just one more minute of your time to introduce you to Linda, a woman I met at Broooklyn's Reaching Out food pantry:

> "This is the first food pantry I've ever come to. I lost my job about a year ago. I've been able to find occasional work, but I've been basically unemployed ever since.
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> "I found out what hunger is. It was humbling. I lost weight. And I really learned how to stretch a dollar. I'm recently divorced, so it's just been me trying to get by. My brother helps here and there with a small loan, but it's not easy for him either....
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> "This food pantry is saving my life. I come here once a week to pick up what I need. They helped me file my taxes too.
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> "The good news is I've been hired! If I'm still eligible for tax assistance I'll come back next year, but soon I'll able to afford my groceries again. I'm picking up a donation envelope on my way out today. I'm really looking forward to that first paycheck."

Meet more New Yorkers you have helped by volunteering at one of our network's food assistance programs or by visiting the Food Poverty in NYC section of our website.