

Our Emily

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By *Jesse Taylor*

Emily is **in her 80s** and reminds me of my grandmother. While she is independent, I can see that she finds it difficult to carry the heavy, meal tray to her seat at the **Community Kitchen**, where I work. So I, or a **volunteer**, do it for her. Last night, Emily smiled and thanked me about a half dozen times. I just smiled back, grateful to be able to help.

Emily sometimes brings her **six-year-old** granddaughter to our **soup kitchen** to eat with her, and she's told me on more than one occasion how grateful she is that the Food Bank For New York City is here for her during this period of her life. Living on a fixed income of Social Security and a small pension, it's difficult for her to meet her budget every month and without our soup kitchen, she says she wouldn't be able to eat.

No one aspires to be impoverished and rely upon soup kitchen meals for day-to-day survival, let alone work their whole life to then find themselves on a **food pantry** line — but with the economy the way it is, there are more senior faces in the Community Kitchen's dining room than ever before. So many Emilys with nowhere to turn but the Food Bank's **network** of soup kitchens, senior programs and food pantries.

But for our Emily there is good news. Recently came to the Community Kitchen — this time **to be enrolled** in the **Food Stamp Program** (now known as SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). And, while I'll miss her visits, it's great to know that once she begins receiving food stamps, we won't be seeing much of Emily in the Community Kitchen anymore.