

Through the Eyes of a Volunteer

Posted At : June 11, 2009 9:49 AM | Posted By : Temp

Related Categories: Food Bank Friends, Volunteering

By O'Neill Hutchinson

It's 3:15 pm on a Monday afternoon and I'm strolling into the Food Bank's **Community Kitchen** in West Harlem, where I **volunteer** three days a week. I stop for a moment to look at the menu. It's chicken day: curried chicken with rice and broccoli, fresh baked bread, apples, salad and juice.



When I notice the date, I do a double take. My mind races a bit, I check

again, and it's the second to last week of the month. This is about the time every month when our lines really grow, as many New Yorkers struggle to stretch their budgets till the end of the month. At about 4 pm it's going to get crazy in here, and I have to mentally I prepare myself.

A favorite pastime of some of the clients is to compare the plates to see which is bigger. They're pretty much all the same but when you're turning to a **soup kitchen** because you can't afford a full month's worth of groceries, a small difference can feel really big.

The absolute best part for me is when the clients finish eating and they walk by the serving table to say "Thank you, that hit the spot," or "My compliments to the chef." Or looking over the table and seeing the smile on their faces while they eat...that's something I take with me. It brings satisfaction knowing it's a job well done.