

Walking in Another Mom's Shoes

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by
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Last week
I

experienced a moment that shook me to my core. In preparation for a press conference, we arranged a table with the amount of food people can afford with the current allotment of food stamps. There was just one package of chicken. I thought to myself, *I feed my kids chicken three times a week. Imagine having only one chicken for the entire month.* Then we took away \$90 worth of those groceries -- that's how much Americans will lose each month as a result of massive food stamp cuts.

As I helped remove foods one by one from the groceries until we reached the \$90 mark, I found myself thinking about the New York City mothers who have to make these hard choices for real. With each item I took from the table, I became more and more emotional. Suddenly I was one of those mothers, and I couldn't imagine having to make such horrible choices on a regular basis. The fresh strawberries were the first item to go. Then I had to take away the clementines. Next, the peanut butter, coffee, olive oil and milk. And finally, that one chicken. By the time we'd completed the display, there was barely any fresh produce on the table. As for protein, we were left with canned beans. How is that supposed to feed a family for an entire month?

Food Bank For New York City has been on the forefront of fighting against cuts to food stamps for months, and during the press conference we released disturbing [data about the impact of the cuts](#).

With kids of my own, I know how important it is for children to have fresh vegetables and fruits, lean meats, grains and other nutritious foods. I suppose that's why I became so emotional. All I could think about were the mothers who have to decide what foods they're going to sacrifice each month and the children those sacrifices impact the most. Resources affect choices -- I know those moms

want to give their kids milk! As emotional as I became, I'm grateful that I took part in setting up the display. Seeing how much people are really losing because of food stamps cuts resonates so much more than 30-second sound bites. That food equals real meals lost, and sometimes people need to see it with their own eyes to get how big of a loss it is for the 1.9 million New Yorkers who rely on food stamps to survive.

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