



The Bronx Community Relief Effort is Launched to Address Immediate Needs of Bronx Residents during COVID-19

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In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, The Bronx community – residents, small businesses, government officials and non-profits – came together as a broad coalition to build a plan to ensure that those who needed help most received assistance.

The Bronx Community Relief Effort was born in the South Bronx immediately after the Coronavirus hit New York City. The Effort aims to raise \$10 million to support effective, on-the-ground operations that are focused on meeting the most essential needs of The Bronx community. This includes filling gaps in public financing and broader grant programs. Donations collected are distributed in real-time within the community to those in critical need.

“There was a Pandemic of Poverty in The Bronx before COVID-19 hit our borough. The Bronx Community Relief Effort will help our people recover today and rebuild into the future,” said **Assembly Member Michael Blake** (79th District, The Bronx). *“I thank the selfless leadership of my dear friend Derrick Harry Lewis in coordinating this remarkable coalition of Bronx leaders and supporters like Judy Dimon who is a longstanding advocate of The Bronx community. Having community leaders, philanthropists, the private and public sector come together for both the immediate and long-term recovery for Bronxites is absolutely critical. We must provide relief for today so that our fellow Bronxites have hope for tomorrow. We will overcome these difficult times, and while we address the immediate challenges of the moment, we will lay the foundation in our community for future success to show that we Believe in The Bronx and will continue Building A Better Bronx.”*

“The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly amplified and exposed inequity in New York City. In contributing to The Bronx Community Relief Effort, we are proud to support the community leaders who have identified effective solutions to best address the acute, urgent needs of The Bronx and just need additional resources to do it,” said **Judy Dimon**, Chair of the James and Judith K. Dimon Foundation and HERE to HERE. *“We stand by those who are out there working day and night in The Bronx to help one another -- today and tomorrow. I urge others who are able to contribute to join us in supporting this critical work.”*

Ruben Diaz Jr., Borough President of The Bronx, said: *“We know that The Bronx is disproportionately affected by the health and economic repercussions of COVID-19, and we're so inspired by everything our community is doing to help -- from frontline responders and medical workers, to grocery and restaurant workers, to neighbors helping neighbors. We thank the many community leaders and Bronx advocates who have stepped up so quickly to create The Bronx Community Relief Effort to help us raise critically needed resources. Together, we'll work to support all Bronxites both immediately and for the long term when the economy begins its recovery.”*

“Having been born and raised in The South Bronx, and experiencing firsthand the impact of philanthropy, I know how the support from outstanding nonprofits can positively change the trajectory of not just an individual's life, but the trajectory of an entire community,” said **Derrick H. Lewis**, Senior Manager at EY, who has been instrumental in organizing The Bronx Community Relief Effort and a Board member of Wildlife Conservation Society as a designee for the Speaker of the New York City Council, DreamYard, Good Call, Birthright Africa, and Ivy Hill Preparatory School. *“The Bronx Community Relief Effort will provide much needed support for The Bronx community.”*

“Only when we are unified will we be able to fully achieve equitable community development,” said **Michael Brady**, CEO, HUB/Third Avenue Business Improvement District. *“The Bronx Community Relief Effort is a multi-sector response to the COVID-19 crisis and is a framework for sustainable support to address challenges while stabilizing historically under-resourced and stigmatized neighborhoods. This is a Bronx effort for The Bronx and one in which I am proud to take part.”*

Because of the breadth of community support, The Bronx Community Relief Effort was able to immediately identify eight areas of need in The Bronx community: Food Insecurity // Small Business Relief // Distributing Microgrants // Personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline responders // Nonprofit Economic Relief // Connectivity and Technology Gaps // Equity & Justice // Housing Stability

On-the-ground operations and partnerships are already in place so the funds can be effectively deployed as follows across the eight areas of need:

- *\$2,000,000* – Food Insecurity – In partnership with World Central Kitchen, Here to Here and The Bronx Private Industry Council, deliver 50,000 meals a day
- *\$1,500,000* – Small Business Relief – In partnership with the 3rd Avenue BID and Spring Bank, distribute between 100 to 175 grants to small businesses (grants are between \$5,000 – \$25,000)

- *\$1,500,000* – Distributing Microgrants – In partnership with CUNY, the 3rd Avenue BID and Spring Bank, distribute \$250 - \$750 micro-grants to over 2,000 individuals in crisis
- *\$1,000,000* – Personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline responders – In partnership with Montefiore, St Barnabas Hospitals and NYC Health in Hospitals, distribute over 200,000 masks, visors, gloves and other protective gear to our health care workers
- *\$1,000,000* – Nonprofit Economic Relief – In partnership with Hostos Center for Bronx Nonprofits, distribute between 50 to 75 grants to not for profits (grants are between \$5,000 – \$50,000)
- *\$1,000,000* – Connectivity and Technology Gaps – In partnership with Here to Here, DreamYard, Per Scholas, Knowledge House and others, provide 1,000 chrome books and hot spots, and establish a community help desk and a tech support hub
- *\$1,000,000* – Equity & Justice – In partnership with legal aid groups (such as Bronx Defenders, Legal Aid Society and others), ensure that 2,000 Bronxites are supported through their criminal, civil, child welfare, and immigration cases during the New York stay at home order
- *\$1,000,000* – Housing Stability – In partnership with Bronx based Housing Organizations (such as Nos Quedamos, WHEDCo, New Settlement, Phipps Neighborhoods, and others), ensure that social work, financial, and health supports are available to 2,500 Bronxites during the New York stay at home order

Prior to this formal announcement, \$4 million has already been raised and is being used now to fund food support, microgrants to CUNY students and technology support and hardware for Bronx students.

Join The Bronx community members, advocates and individuals who have come together when The Bronx needed it most to form **The Bronx Community Relief Effort** to provide immediate, mid-term, and long-term resources to vulnerable Bronx residents who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information on The Bronx Community Relief Effort and to donate, please visit TheBronx.org. If you would like to donate via check, please write a check to The DreamYard Project Inc.. DreamYard is serving as the fiscal sponsor for The Bronx Community Relief Effort. Please put in the memo of the check that your donation is intended for The Bronx Community Relief Effort. Please mail all checks to:

DreamYard
1085 Washington Avenue Bronx, N.Y. 10456

All donations collected by The Bronx Community Relief Effort are distributed rapidly within the community to address critical needs.

A wide range of community leaders are taking part in this important Bronx Emergency Relief Effort (in alphabetical order by last name):

Alfredo Angueira, Owner of Beatstro, says, *“This pandemic has hit all businesses hard, especially the restaurant and hospitality industry. Being able to keep our employees working while giving back to our first responders with this partnership allows us to help fight back against this pandemic hand in hand.”*

State Senator Alessandra Biaggi, *“The health of The Bronx was in crisis before the COVID-19 outbreak, and is at even greater risk now. The Bronx Community Relief Effort will help to ensure that our vulnerable communities have access to the resources they need to not only survive this pandemic, but to also build our borough's long-term resiliency to come out of it on the other side. I am grateful to the organizers and volunteers who have contributed to the funds thus far, and look forward to working together to make this initiative a success.”*

Phoebe C. Boyer, President and CEO, Children’s Aid Society, *“We are proud to support the launch of The Bronx Community Relief Effort to address essential needs during this crisis and to strengthen the infrastructure required to prepare for its long-term impact. We know through our Bronx Impact work how important it is to convene a wide range of local stakeholders from the very beginning to ensure sustainability over time. In addition to the many services we provide directly to Bronxites, we are committed to offering our recently developed online search and referral platform, [my.BronxImpact.org](https://my.bronximpact.org), as a way to connect the resource seekers and providers that The Bronx Community Relief Effort will support. We look forward to being part of this critically important initiative.”*

John Calvelli, Executive Vice President of the Wildlife Conservation Society, which manages four zoos and an aquarium across New York City, including The Bronx Zoo, *“I am personally honored to support the launch of The Bronx Community Relief Effort. It is strongly needed and will bring vital relief to thousands of families during these very difficult days.”*

Jessica Clemente, President & CEO, We Stay/Nos Quedamos, Inc, *“We are building a mechanism that supports community self-sufficiency, empowerment and elevation—leading from within The Bronx for The Bronx!”*

Eddie Cuesta, National Executive Director, Dominicanos USA, *“COVID-19 has become an increasingly growing health threat in our communities of The Bronx. I wholeheartedly support the launching of The Bronx Community Relief Effort. It is crucial that we ensure our communities of The Bronx remain safe and are given adequate support during these times.”*

Jason Duchin & Tim Lord, Co-Founders & Co-Executive Director, DreamYard Project, *“This initiative is an affirmation of the spirit and determination of the people of The Bronx to care for and nurture our community not only in this hour of need but for generations to come.”*

Assembly Member Nathalia Fernandez, *“It is shown that residents of The Bronx are more likely to be disproportionately affected by this pandemic. Our constituents need immediate aid, from food to economic assistance to small business support. And it makes it more stressful when one needs to seek multiple outlets for relief. The Bronx Community Relief Effort will go a long way in providing such assistance, now and in the future. I am thankful and proud to see it established. We will get through this crisis as a community, and then reevaluate what must be done to prevent our communities from being disproportionately affected.”*

Debbian Fletcher-Blake, Chief Executive Officer, VIP Community Services, *“The Bronx lags far behind other NYC boroughs in achieving acceptable social, financial and health outcomes. The coronavirus pandemic has overshadowed these issues, but its effects are not different- with the borough taking the lead in the number of people infected and affected by COVID 19. Many safety net providers serving The Bronx communities were forced to close their doors and others are struggling to provide services. Absent these providers, The Bronx will be decimated. With The Bronx Community Relief Effort and strategic thinking, The Bronx will thrive in the post coronavirus period.”*

Jasmine Garcia, General Manager of Bricks & Hops Beer Garden, says, *“With so much uncertainty, restaurants have been searching for ways to help and stay afloat. HERE to HERE and World Central Kitchen have not only given our first responders a lifeline, they have given us one, too.”*

Rosa Garcia, Owner of Mott Haven Bar and Grill, added, *“Mott Haven Bar and Grill is honored and grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate with World Central Kitchen and The Bronx Community Relief Effort to provide a meal to those in need during these times of crisis.”*

Demetris Giannoulis, CEO, Spring Bank, *“Spring Bank is proud to stand together with our fellow Bronx businesses and leaders to be here for the communities we serve, now when they need us most. The initiatives we’re putting in place will have a real impact for people and businesses who need additional support to get through this time.”*

Rosemary Ordonez-Jenkins, Interim Executive Director/CEO, Phipps Neighborhoods. Phipps Neighborhoods has been serving the needs of Bronx residents by helping them rise above poverty for over forty years. *"We are pleased to be a part of The Bronx Community Relief Effort, a beacon of light ignited by this crisis to more diligently coordinate resources to meet the immediate needs in the communities we serve."*

Junior Martinez, Owner of Bronx Drafthouse, agreed, *"This has been a hard time for everyone, especially here in New York. We cannot be more thankful than to be able to help feed first responders, rehire our employees and show that South Bronx Small Businesses are here to stay."*

Nate Mook, CEO, World Central Kitchen, *"Since 2010, World Central Kitchen has been providing fresh meals to people affected by disasters both natural and man-made. We use the power of food to heal and strengthen communities in times of crisis and beyond, and we know that a plate of food is so much more than just a meal. We believe our work in The Bronx, and across New York City, is a reminder to the community that someone cares about them and that tomorrow will be better."*

Eileen Newman, Executive Director, Hostos Center for Bronx Nonprofits, *"This is the time for all of us to come together to provide resources to the people working so hard in and for the people of our community. I am happy to be a part of this initiative and this great team."*

Justine Olderman, Executive Director, Bronx Defenders, *"We're proud to support the launch of The Bronx Community Relief Effort, initiatives that could not have come soon enough. The low-income people we serve will bear the brunt of this unprecedented public health and economic crisis unless we act swiftly and decisively to ensure every Bronxite has the support they need."*

Carmen Rivera, Chief Vocational & Community Affairs Officer, VIP Community Services, *"There is a tremendous need for Bronx Community Relief Effort. The Bronx is by far a community in need at many levels. The meals to our vulnerable community has been a Godsend and lifesaving to many people depending on food pantries, and soup kitchens and the like. We all know those sites like many others are closed, but yet continue to provide food to the hungry through The Bronx Community Relief Effort. Our community based organizations do not have enough resources to support all the needs. Thank you Assembly Member Michael Blake, World Central Kitchen and all the partners and volunteers for your charity and love to others."*

Davon Russell, President, WHEDco, *"The enhanced coordination of resources to The Bronx's many community anchors is critical during and in the aftermath of this crisis," said Davon Russell. "WHEDco is proud to partner with The Bronx Community Relief Effort and its members to collectively meet the needs of our neighbors and strengthen our community."*

Bukola Shonuga, Founder Director, Welcome to America (W2A), *“Congratulations on this worthy initiative and thank you for the privilege to add the African Immigrant’s voice. Community lead effort is critical especially in times of crisis such as the nightmare of COVID-19. Community lead efforts help to streamline immediate delivery of services to the community by members of that community who are best equipped to do so in an emergency.”*

Abby Jo Sigal, Founding CEO, HERE to HERE: *“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to join with so many inspiring Bronx leaders and organizations to bring vital resources to local people, families, and businesses at this critical time and as we rebuild for a better, more inclusive future.”*

Edward Summers, Executive Director, The Bronx Private Industry Council (PIC), Powered by HERE to HERE: *“We’ve already seen The Bronx business community stepping up in a big way to bring much-needed aid to our borough through this exceptionally challenging period. We’re all in this together, and the Fund will be a vital way to connect businesses looking to help with the people, organizations, and fellow businesses who need our support.”*

Aarti Tandon, CEO, Citizen Eight: *“I am honored to be a part of this extraordinary effort to build an equitable and inclusive Bronx - an effort that is not only addressing the historic challenges being exacerbated by the current crisis but will work towards building a strong and sustainable foundation to ensure a prosperous future for The Bronx community.”*

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