

FIND THE LATEST NEWS UPDATED EVERY DAY AT BROOKLYNPAPER.COM

BAY News

including **KINGS COURIER & FLATBUSH LIFE**

SERVING BENSONHURST, BRIGHTON BEACH, CONEY ISLAND, GERRITSEN BEACH, KINGS HIGHWAY, MANHATTAN BEACH, MIDWOOD, & SHEEPSHEAD BAY

EDUCATION PROFILE

Combating Student Food Insecurity on Campus

As the president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC), I want nothing more than to see all KCC students succeed in their studies. With this in mind, I'm aware that there is a silent epidemic that undercuts their chances for success. It's food insecurity.

Students who experience food insecurity become distracted in the classroom with their focus drifting from the day's lesson to thoughts of where their next meal will come from or the stomach discomfort from hunger pains.

Food insecurity in higher education institutions is a problem that has been recognized for some time, especially in community colleges where a large portion of the student body includes adult learners with young children of their own. They live on a fixed incomes and their resources are limited.

It's important to know that food insecurity is not the same as hunger. According to the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT), "food insecurity is a household-level economic and so-



Kingsborough Community College's food pantry, managed by Gerald Maitre, Director of CUNY EDGE (right), meets the needs of students and members of the community.

cial condition of limited access to food, while hunger is an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity." (USDA ERS, 2014b, p. 2).

Students who are food insecure have irregular access to meals. And, when available, the meals may not be nutritious or affordable.

I'm proud that KCC is able to assist students experiencing food

insecurity through a campus-based food pantry that has served families since 2012. Initially created to meet the needs of KCC students and the community following devastation from Super Storm Sandy, today, the KCC food pantry is still an essential resource, and a part of our Single Stop Office, where student get connected to government benefits and resources like childcare, SNAP,

clothing and transportation. Last year, the food pantry served 2,818 families – mostly students.

Prior to the pantry, we broke ground on KCC's Urban Farm in 2011, in collaboration with Project EATS, a nonprofit that partnered with us to produce fresh produce that's distributed free to students and used for select KCC classes. However, after Super Storm Sandy in 2012, the nonprofit could no longer sustain the farm, so Kingsborough's Workforce Development team took over the management of the Urban Farm. Every Thursday, we provide free organic vegetables to Kingsborough students. We alternate pick up sites between the farm and the Single Stop offices, we see roughly about 40 students per week. The distributions run from June – November, during our harvest season. Last year 1,147 students attended vegetable distribution.

Whether individually or as a family unit, students experiencing food insecurity are urged to ask for assistance. Through our Single Stop office, we offer comprehensive supportive services to

ensure students have a successful college experience and are able to complete their degree. In addition to free assistance with SNAP and WIC benefits screening, students receive weekly food vouchers for cafeteria meals, free tax prep, free financial counseling and free assistance with financial aid.

KCC is not the Lone Ranger of combatting food insecurity. Many other institutions of higher learning across the country are doing what they can to help students. We know that students who don't have to worry about food pay better attention in class, are more likely to graduate, have higher self-esteem and go on to obtain career success.

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC), a 72-acre academic oasis located in beautiful Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn. Kingsborough Community College is committed to enhancing learning opportunities for the Brooklyn community. Visit www.kbcc.cuny.edu to learn about the classes, certifications and degree programs offered at KCC.

To return to the homepage, [click here](#).