



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**APPROXIMATELY 259,000 LONG ISLANDERS
SEEK EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE EACH YEAR**

Long Island, NY – March 23, 2006 – According to the largest, most comprehensive study ever conducted on domestic hunger, an estimated 259,000 Long Island residents — including nearly 93,000 children and 39,000 seniors – are hungry. The study, *Hunger in America 2006*, was commissioned by America's Second Harvest (A2H) Network – The Nation's Food Bank Network.

Island Harvest, Long Island's Source Authority on Food Rescue, and Long Island Cares—The Harry Chapin Food Bank are the two Long Island members of A2H. Together, the organizations serve approximately 787 emergency food programs and other community-based non-profit programs. The quadrennial study was based on 52,000 face-to-face interviews with people seeking emergency food assistance and more than 30,000 agency surveys nationwide in 2005.

More than two out of every five people who seek help from emergency food programs on Long Island must choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage, and more than one out of four must choose between food and medicine or medical care.

The face of hunger on Long Island is as diverse as its population. About 37 percent of emergency food program clients are non-Hispanic white; 32 percent are non-Hispanic black; 23 percent are Hispanic, and the rest are from other racial or ethnic groups. More than one third (36 percent) are children under 18; 54 percent are women; and 15 percent are senior citizens (65 or older). Only 4 percent are homeless. The study also found that nearly half (47 percent) of the Long Islanders that rely on emergency food programs live in households where at least one adult is employed.

“Island Harvest confronts real-life hunger in our communities every day,” said Randi Shubin Dresner, CEO and President, Island Harvest. “It is tragic that in one of the wealthiest regions of the nation, even working people are relying on emergency food assistance. Hunger is an epidemic that is within our power to solve.”

“Harry Chapin said that suffering from hunger is the ultimate insult. Long Island's nearly 260,000 hungry – 93,000 of them children – need our help. Working with 787 agencies, many of them staffed with volunteers, Long Island Cares is dedicated to preventing hunger on Long Island” said Lynn Needelman, Executive Director, Long Island Cares.

Island Harvest and Long Island Cares accept private donations as well as corporate grants to sustain their hunger relief programs. Additional support is needed to meet the escalating need identified in *Hunger in America 2006*. For information about making a contribution and to learn more about how to help fight hunger on Long Island, visit www.islandharvest.org and www.licares.org. For a copy of the complete *Hunger in America 2006* study, please visit www.hungerinamerica.org.

About Island Harvest

Island Harvest, Long Island's Source Authority on Food Rescue, serves as the bridge between those who have surplus food and those who need it, supplying hundreds of community-based nonprofit organizations on Long Island with critical food support to help stem the advancing tide of hunger in our communities. Island Harvest has rescued 32 million pounds of food, supplementing more than 28 million meals, since its inception in 1992. In support of its mission to end hunger and reduce food waste on Long Island, the organization is actively involved in educational and hunger awareness programs to inform the public about the insidious but often unrecognized problem of hunger here, in one of the wealthiest regions of the country, and how individuals, businesses, schools and commercial food establishments can make a difference. Island Harvest is a member of America's Second Harvest. For more information about Island Harvest, visit www.islandharvest.org or call (516) 294-8528.

About Long Island Cares

The Mission of Long Island Cares, a member of America's Second Harvest, is to bring together all available resources for the benefit of the hungry on Long Island. Long Island Cares, The Harry Chapin Food Bank provides emergency food where and when it is needed. They serve as a critical link in getting food to over 600 community based agencies including food pantries, kids' cafes, soup kitchens, senior centers, day care centers and homeless shelters in both Nassau and Suffolk Counties. In addition, they sponsor programs that help families achieve self-sufficiency and educate the general public about the causes and consequences of hunger on Long Island.

Long Island Cares relies on the generosity and strong support of the individuals, corporations and foundations that make up our community. They are deeply grateful to the many who join with them and support their commitment to strengthen and secure the future of our community by providing a healthier and more meaningful life to those in need. For more information about Long Island Cares visit www.licares.org or call (631) 582-FOOD.

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