

April is National Volunteer Month

This month, we celebrate the incredible people who give their time, energy, and hearts to support Long Island Cares and our network of pantries.

From packing bags to tending gardens, delivering meals, or lending a hand at events, our volunteers make a real difference for families across Long Island.

Want to join the movement?

Volunteer today and help your neighbors thrive. Visit our website to sign up and find a role that's right for you. Every hour you give creates a lasting impact in your community.



Spring 2026

Long Island Cares, Inc. The Harry Chapin Regional Food Bank



A Lifeline for Port Washington

Roxana Sienko thought she was ready to slow down. With her kids older and more independent, she had planned to step back from full-time work and take a part-time role. But one day at **St. Peter's Alcantara in Port Washington**, while lecturing at church, everything changed. **Reverend Monsignor Robert Clerkin** asked her to help at the parish's food pantry, which is also a Member Agency of Long Island Cares.

When Roxana first stepped inside, she found a small room with limited food and about 89 families relying on it. She quickly realized the scale of the need and got to work. Over time, she expanded the pantry into three additional rooms, organized every shelf, and created a system to better serve the growing number of families.

But as the pantry grew, so did the challenges. Parishioners, who had long been the pantry's main donors, were now facing struggles of their own.

Determined to keep the pantry stocked, Roxana reached out to Stop & Shop to host a food drive. Volunteers and local students joined her, collecting and shelving donations all day.

However, in the wake of the government shutdowns, she worries about more families needing help. **"I'm scared," she admits. "They're about to cut SNAP. I know more people will need support."**

continued on page 4



A Message from our President and CEO

With spring arriving, I'm reminded of growth. Not only in nature, but in the quiet, steady way people continue to show up for one another. That spirit of compassion and community is at the heart of Long Island Cares and part of the legacy Harry Chapin built. His belief that we share responsibility for one another still guides our work today.

In this season of growth, we are embracing a simple but powerful phrase: **Building a hunger-free Long Island, together.** It reflects both our history and our future. This mission belongs to all of us. We share the work, and we share the hope.

April is National Volunteer Month, and this issue highlights the heart of Long Island Cares: our volunteers. You'll meet David and Keith, whose stories remind us that service is about more than getting things done. It is about belonging, confidence, and connection. I'm also pleased to introduce Paul Gruvman, our new Volunteer Coordinator, who is strengthening onboarding, communication, and leadership opportunities so every volunteer feels valued.

You will also read about Roxana Sienko and the remarkable growth of our partner agency, St. Peter's Alcantara pantry in Port Washington. What began serving 89 families now supports up to 600 individuals. That growth reflects both strong leadership and rising need across our region. As conversations continue about the future of SNAP and other supports, St. Peter's, along with more than 300 Member Agencies in our network, remains a steady and reliable lifeline.

Recently, The Chapin Center for Public Policy hosted a Listening Session where neighbors shared their real experiences directly with elected officials. Being in that room was powerful. It reminded me that we must listen first. The people we serve bring important insight into the barriers they face. When we make space for their voices, we help connect those experiences to the decisions that shape access to food. Listening to our community ensures our work reflects real needs and real solutions.



"When we build belonging, we build stronger communities. That is how we build a hunger-free Long Island, together."

You'll also see the impact of Rallye Motor Company's generous anniversary donation and the leadership our local businesses demonstrate when they invest in their communities. Through programs like Baxter's Pet Pantry, we continue to support the whole household, because food security means stability in every sense.

To our donors, volunteers, community partners, staff, and supporters, thank you. Your generosity, your time, and your belief in this mission make every story in these pages possible. You are part of this work.

Every story in this issue reflects resilience and shared commitment. Harry Chapin built this organization on the belief that we all have a role to play in ending hunger.

We remain **Hungry for Change**, and together, we are building a hunger-free Long Island.

With gratitude,


Katherine M. Fritz

President & CEO, Long Island Cares, Inc. – The Harry Chapin Regional Food Bank

Inclusive Volunteering



David's Story

David is 29, and if you meet him at Long Island Cares, you'll quickly understand why he's impossible to forget. Each week, he arrives ready to help, taking on tasks with care and focus. For David, being part of the team isn't just about showing up; it's about responsibility, independence, and feeling valued.

"Being paid isn't really a motivator for him. What matters is the status of being part of the staff. It makes him feel wanted and valued." — David's Mom, Linda

David has down syndrome, and while he does have some limitations, his strengths shine through, especially when he's given meaningful work. He thrives with structure and organization, particularly repetitive tasks that others might consider mundane. The satisfaction doesn't come from a paycheck, but from being counted on.

His involvement with Long Island Cares is part of a much fuller life shaped by opportunity and support. Through **New York State's Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)**, David participates in activities that reflect his interests and goals. He takes classes, stays active, and builds social connections in ways that work best for him. **"The program is completely individualized,"** Linda says. **"It really allows him to be part of the community in a meaningful way."**

David first connected with Long Island Cares in 2021, but his family's relationship with the organization began long before that. **"Some family members started this thing called Timmy's Ton,"** Linda recalls. **"They would buy whatever food they could get a really good deal on, with the goal of raising a ton of food to donate to Long Island Cares."** What started as a simple idea grew into something much bigger, eventually resulting in two and a half tons of donated food.

Today, David volunteers weekly at the **Long Island Cares' Bethpage Pantry**, helping sort, organize, and pack food for neighbors in need. Outside of Long Island Cares, he continues to stay busy and engaged. David

helps out at Patrizia's Restaurant, has held summer jobs at the Salt Shack, and competes in Special Olympics powerlifting and swimming. He also takes Zumba, hip hop, and kickboxing classes, and donates blood regularly.

"That started a whole domino effect," Linda says.

"Other people with disabilities saw he could do it and thought, 'I can do it too.'"

Through every shift, class, and connection, David continues to grow into his independence while giving back to the community around him. His mom also praises the supportive, inclusive environment at Long Island Cares, noting, **"It's a safe environment... he can be here independently, and that's really important."**

Keith's Story

When Patricia first began volunteering at Long Island Cares' Bethpage Pantry with her son Keith, she was searching for something steady.

"I had recently retired and was feeling unsettled and without a purpose," she shares. **"I was hoping to find an opportunity in the community which Keith and I could do together."**

At the time, Keith didn't have much to fill his days. Patricia wanted him to feel capable — to know he could do something important and valued. Volunteering together offered that opportunity.

From the very beginning, they felt welcomed.

"From the start, the experience at Long Island Cares has been wonderful," Patricia says. **"The staff and other volunteers have all been so friendly and accepting. They treat Keith as a part of the team and are sensitive to what he can and cannot do."**

continued on page 4

A Lifeline for Port Washington continued from cover



food. **Moments like that remind her why she keeps going, even when the need feels overwhelming.**

Thanks to her dedication and perseverance, Roxana has transformed the pantry from a single room serving 89 families into a fully organized operation reaching up to 600 people. What started as a small effort has grown into a lifeline for her community, highlighting the importance of the partnership between Long Island Cares and its Member Agencies. Together, they transform a single room into a place where neighbors in need can find reliable access to food and support. 🌱

**Help us sustain our Food Pantries and Member Agencies.
Donate \$10 to provide 6 meals.**



Inclusive Volunteering continued from page 3

For Patricia and Keith, one interaction in particular stood out.

John, a disabled veteran who picks up food weekly from Long Island Cares to bring to the **Nassau County Veterans Service Agency**, immediately greeted Keith by name during their first encounter.

It was a simple gesture, but a meaningful one. In that moment, Keith wasn't just helping — **he was seen. He was recognized for what he was doing** and made to feel that he belonged.

That sense of belonging has made all the difference.

Since starting at Long Island Cares, Patricia has watched her son grow.

"Keith has become more self-confident and more comfortable interacting with others," she says.

What began as a way to fill time has become something much deeper, a shared purpose and a community where Keith's contributions matter.

For Patricia, finding a place where her son feels valued isn't something she takes lightly.

At Long Island Cares, Keith's mom found exactly what she had hoped for: an opportunity to give back together, and a team that makes space for everyone to contribute in their own way.



Above: Patricia and Keith Lupski being interviewed by John Dias of CBS News.



Right: Keith with his new friend, John Scalesi.





public service as an Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn before working as a trial attorney in insurance defense. He later obtained his real estate broker's license, but ultimately realized he wanted his professional life to better reflect the work he found most meaningful. For the past four and a half years, he dedicated himself to volunteering to address food insecurity, a path that naturally led him to Long Island Cares.

As Volunteer Coordinator, Paul believes volunteers are essential to fulfilling the organization's mission. **"Volunteers are the heart of what we do," he says. "They show up with generosity, humility, and a shared belief that everyone deserves access to food and dignity."**

Paul is excited to continue working closely with volunteers and creating an experience that feels welcoming, organized, and meaningful. One of his goals is to strengthen onboarding, training, and communication so

volunteers feel prepared, valued, and connected. He also hopes to create more opportunities for volunteers interested in ongoing or leadership roles.

"I'm looking forward to building a volunteer experience that feels welcoming, organized, and meaningful" Paul shares. "Clear communication, thoughtful onboarding, and opportunities to grow; those things help volunteers feel confident and connected."

We are excited to welcome Paul to the Long Island Cares team and look forward to the impact he will make alongside our dedicated volunteers. 🌱

**Interested in becoming a volunteer?
Learn more today.**



Welcoming Paul Gruvman, Our New Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, and supporting them is at the center of **Paul Gruvman's** work as Long Island Cares' new **Volunteer Coordinator**. Having volunteered with Long Island Cares and Island Harvest, Paul steps into this role with a strong understanding of the impact volunteers make across our community.

Paul has long been drawn to work that brings people together to support others. In recent years, volunteering became a constant part of his life, keeping him connected to his community and focused on what truly matters. Through his time at food banks, he saw firsthand how a single act of service can provide dignity and relief to neighbors facing food insecurity.

Before joining Long Island Cares, Paul spent more than 30 years as an attorney, beginning his career in

No Pet Left Behind

When Camila lost her job last year due to company-wide layoffs, she struggled financially while caring for her cat and dog, who bring comfort and companionship to her family. **"They treat our pets like their siblings. We've all been together through so much. They are more than pets. They are family,"** she says. Thanks to Long Island Cares' Baxter's Pet Pantry, Camila never had to make the heartbreaking choice between feeding her family and keeping her beloved pets.

Help keep pets with their families.





“With the need for food assistance greater now than ever, Rallye Motor Company is dedicated to leveraging our resources to support the incredible work of People Loving People in Manhasset,” said Lisa Bluestein, Rallye’s Marketing Manager. “By collecting donations across all four of our dealerships and filling one of our Sprinter vans with nearly \$7,000 in food donations, we’ve turned a community-wide effort into

a direct delivery of hope for families right here on Long Island.”

The mission of People Loving People is simple but powerful: to love, encourage, and help others.

“We serve more than 550 families through our three pantries,” said Adriana Kennedy, Executive Director of People Loving People. “We are deeply grateful to Rallye and Long Island Cares. Your partnership makes this work not only

Driving Hunger Relief

In Westbury and Roslyn, where luxury storefronts and manicured streets are common, a quieter reality exists. For some families living in these neighborhoods, putting food on the table remains a weekly challenge.

Juliana Terian, President & CEO of Rallye Motor Company, understands that need exists everywhere, even in communities that may not appear to struggle on the surface. That awareness continues to drive Rallye Motor Company’s commitment to supporting Long Island Cares’ food pantries and hunger relief efforts across long island.

Rallye Motor Company recently donated \$6,700 worth of food to People Loving People, a Long Island Cares’ Member Agency that operates pantries in Manhasset, Westbury, and Oyster Bay.

The amount is symbolic—representing 67 years in business—a tradition Rallye began with Long Island Cares during their 65th anniversary and continues as they mark 67 years of supporting the local community. This donation helps ensure pantry shelves remain stocked for the more than 550 families the organization serves.



possible, but sustainable. Because of your generosity, families are not just fed. They are seen, cared for, and loved. Thank you for standing with us and helping make a lasting difference in our community.”

Rallye Motor Company has long been a dedicated partner of Long Island Cares, consistently stepping up to support Member Agencies across the network, including Bethany Food Pantry and NOSH. Their ongoing commitment ensures that local pantries have the resources they need to meet rising demand.

Their donation provided 4,221 meals to neighbors facing food insecurity. More than a number, it represents families who will have dinner on the table this week and the reassurance that their community stands behind them. Through partnerships like this, Rallye Motor Company continues to demonstrate that hunger relief is not just about responding to need—it’s about showing up, consistently, for the people who live and work right here on Long Island. 🌱

From Lived Experience ...to Legislative Action

On Friday, January 23rd, **The Chapin Center for Public Policy** hosted a first-of-its-kind event in our **Center for Community Engagement**. This event, titled **"A Listening Session to Empower those with Lived Experience,"** brought together elected officials and their staff, community leaders, Long Island Cares staff, and five neighbors that we serve at our pantries or through our mobile distribution programs.

The event was centered around hearing their lived experience with food insecurity and what brought them to Long Island Cares. This intimate gathering allowed for an open and honest conversation about the realities behind food insecurity on Long Island. Their stories highlighted the many factors that can impact food accessibility, such as traumatic life events, health issues, housing costs, wages, transportation, and access to benefits.

After hearing from our neighbors, the conversation shifted to the audience, where we heard from pantry leaders and elected officials' offices about the barriers to food accessibility in their communities. We ended the event with an open question and answer portion.

While food banks play a critical role in meeting immediate needs, ending hunger requires systemic change. Long Island Cares is focused on advocating for policies that provide immediate access to healthy and affordable food, while also promoting policies that address the structural root causes of hunger in our communities. We need cross-sectoral help as we push to create a hunger-free Long Island.

Long Island Cares wants to position itself as the bridge between community and elected officials. In the long term, we aim to create a coalition of advocates who feel comfortable and empowered speaking directly to elected officials and advocating for anti-hunger policies alongside us. By connecting folks who have lived hunger experience with leadership, the voices of those most affected by food insecurity will aid in directly shaping the policies meant to serve them.

As we continue to host similar events that empower our neighbors, we are beginning to build a coalition of advocates. If you are interested in staying up to date on these efforts and getting involved, **please contact Ciara O'Brien, Government Relations and Advocacy Manager** at Cobrien@licares.org. 🌱

**Learn more about our
advocacy program.**





10 Davids Drive, Hauppauge, NY 11788-2039

www.licares.org | 631.582.FOOD (3663)

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Permit No 28
Brentwood, NY
11717



To know is to care. To care is to act.
To act is to make a difference.

— Harry Chapin Founder, Long Island Cares, Inc.

Stay connected!



Become a Corporate Hero

Long Island businesses have long played an important role in strengthening our community. By partnering with Long Island Cares, your company demonstrates a clear commitment to social responsibility and investing in the well-being of Long Islanders facing food insecurity.

Through corporate giving, employee engagement, and community initiatives, your support helps ensure that more neighbors have access to the food and resources they need.

To learn how your company can become a Corporate Hero, contact Kaylin Wasilchuk, Corporate Philanthropy Manager at kwasilchuk@licares.org.



Thank you to all of our Corporate Heroes!

