



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
John J. Flanagan

Patch: Cuomo Brings Meals, Aid to LI Cares

JOHN J. FLANAGAN December 2, 2013

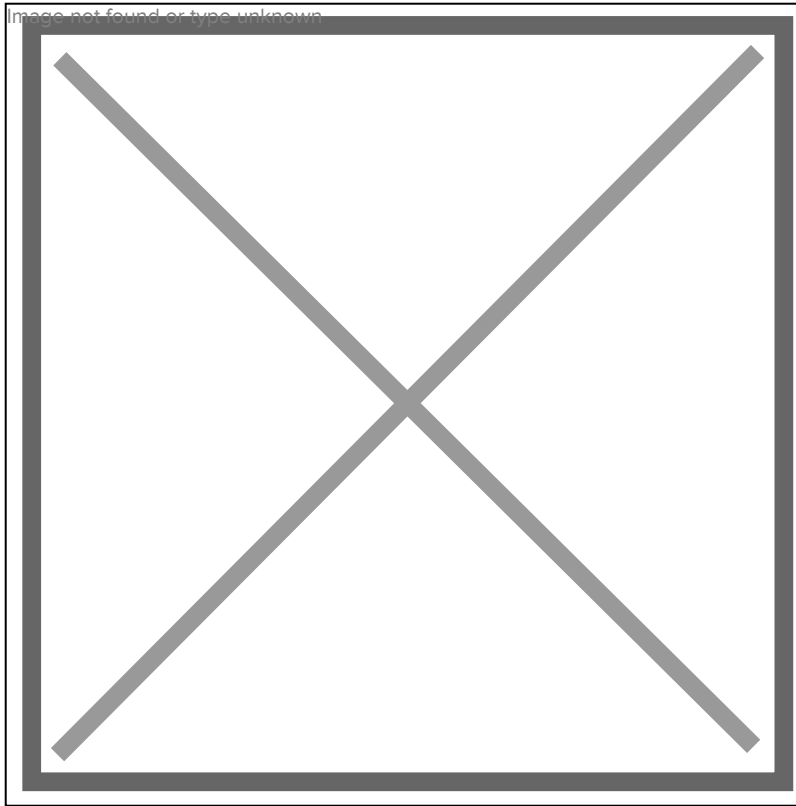
| ISSUE: **SOCIAL SERVICES**



By Pam Robinson (Editor) - November 27, 2013

Gov. Cuomo delivered Thanksgiving meals and an infusion of funds to Long Island Cares, one of a series of stops Wednesday at food banks around the state.

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He helped unload a truck crewed by National Guardsmen, with the assistance of numerous volunteers, his daughter Cara, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, State Sen. John Flanagan and Babylon Town Supervisor Rich Schaffer.

Long Island Cares/The Harry Chapin Food Bank, based in Hauppauge, will receive about \$250,000 of the extra \$4.5 million Cuomo pledged to emergency food providers because of the recent reduction in federal SNAP benefits, said Paule Pachter, executive director of the organization. He said

that while his organization is having a good year, with increased donations, local pantries, some of which LI Cares helps supply, often need more.

"Today, I was pleased to be able to lend a hand at several community centers and food pantries with my daughter Cara to deliver Thanksgiving meals to New Yorkers in need," Cuomo said. "As we continue to enjoy this holiday season, I encourage New Yorkers who can to do their part by donating or volunteering at a local food bank or soup kitchen. Together we can make the holidays a little brighter for our neighbors."

The Thanksgiving donations were provided by a partnership with Walmart, PepsiCo and FreshDirect. The meals were provided by Walmart; PepsiCo donated 2,800 beverages, including juice and other drinks, and FreshDirect provided 3,000 boxes to help with the transport and delivery of goods.

State Sen. John Flanagan, R-East Northport, said the need for food goes beyond the holidays and said he hoped people would continue to donate year round.

"It was a wonderful day, to have Gov. Cuomo visit," Pachter said. "We'll be able to feed more people. It's a very gratifying day."

He said his organization has been able to expand, including the opening of a site in Lindenhurst, while adding such programs as a kitchen to teach the preparation of healthful foods.

But, he said, "There are still gaps in the system."

LI Cares says that about 283,700 people on Long Island receive emergency food each year, or 64,900 people every week.

Cuomo's office said that overall, the number of emergency meals reported for 2013 is about 13 percent more than the same time last year, according to data provided to the State's Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program.

Recent federal cuts to the SNAP program will eliminate \$302 million of annual SNAP benefits in New York.

The \$4.5 million in grants represent a 15% increase in the state's funding to food banks and can provide approximately 2.8 million meals.

Cuomo visited several food banks Wednesday around the state, including Kennedy Memorial Park Community Room in Hempstead.

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