

FUELED BY WORDS, LIFTED BY COMMUNITY

YOU'RE HELPING VICLENIA PURSUE HER DREAMS

Viclenia, a student at Westchester Community College (WCC), dreams of becoming a professor. She's already a leader on campus, serving as editor-in-chief of *The Viking News*, advocating for Latinx and queer communities, and managing a woman-owned coffee shop in White Plains.

But behind her many accomplishments is a story of resilience.

During a period of financial hardship and unstable housing, Viclenia faced the frightening possibility of going hungry.

But thanks in part to the support you provide, Viclenia could lean on WCC's on-campus food pantry for a little extra help getting by. Access to nutritious food and caring staff allowed her to focus on her studies — and not worry about where she'd get her next meal.

"Coming here has been very helpful because having resources from the food pantry became lifesaving," she says.

As a journalist, Viclenia has written about how the pantry provides not just food and hygiene items, but also dignity. "Having the doors open and having staff just be there for their students is amazing," she says.

Viclenia's experience reflects a heartbreaking reality faced by many students: Hunger can be a



Viclenia has faced hardships that easily could have derailed her education. Your generosity made sure that didn't happen.

major barrier to education. But her story is also proof that, with the right support, young people can rise above hardship to build brighter futures for themselves and their communities.

Thanks to Feeding Westchester's partnerships with colleges such as WCC — and generous friends like you — students have the resources they need to thrive. You're making our communities stronger! 🍌

*Look inside for
these stories!*

- 🍌 Letter from the COO — Page 2
- 🍌 "There's No Shame in Needing Help" — Page 2
- 🍌 You Changed Van's Life — Page 3
- 🍌 How Pace Market Addresses Hunger — Page 4

**EVERY \$1
PROVIDES
2 MEALS!**



LETTER FROM THE COO

“THERE’S NO SHAME IN NEEDING HELP”

VIVIANA FINDS POWER IN CONNECTION

Dear Friend,

Happy New Year! I want to extend my sincerest gratitude for your incredible support throughout a turbulent 2025. It warms my heart to know we have friends like you who see the growing need for food assistance in our community and step up to help our neighbors through hard times.

In this newsletter, you’ll read about Viviana, a hardworking mom who relies on Feeding Westchester and our partner Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry to make sure everyone in her full house is fed. You’ll also meet Van, a senior veteran who found support on his sobriety journey with the help of his local food pantry.

We also feature a special partner spotlight for our friends at Pace Market, who work tirelessly to address campus hunger at Pace University. With their support, students don’t have to make difficult choices between pursuing their education and having a nourishing meal to eat.

Looking ahead, we know our work will not be easy, but we’ve seen what’s possible when Westchester comes together — our donors, county leadership, local businesses, and our 175 partners working side by side to support our neighbors. The challenges are real, but so is the strength of this community.

Thank you for your support. Together, we are Feeding Westchester. Gratefully,

Tami Wilson, Chief Operating Officer

Viviana has made Dobbs Ferry her home for more than two decades. The house she shares with her husband and five of her sons hums with life and is filled with the smell of a delicious meal always cooking on the stove.

Life with growing boys means the kitchen is never closed. “They eat, and an hour later they’re hungry again,” she says with a laugh.

But Viviana’s love stretches far beyond her own doorstep. When neighbors struggle or feel lost, they turn to her for help navigating community resources. She always tells them about the Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry because, when Viviana fell on hard times herself, someone recommended the same pantry to her. “There’s no shame in needing help,” she says.

She also gives back by volunteering at the Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry. When guests there are unsure of how things work, Viviana steps in to gently guide, comfort, and reassure them. “Once they understand, the stress goes away,” she explains.

Viviana understands the hard decisions families are often forced to make. “You save the food for last because you can’t lose the roof over your head,” she says. Rising prices are making those choices even harder.

That’s why she teaches her children that kindness is not a luxury — it’s essential. Her hope is that when her family’s circumstances improve, they, too, will be able to help those in need.

You and Viviana have such giving hearts. Thank you for all you do to help our Westchester neighbors! 🍌



Viviana’s small acts of kindness build up to make a big difference in her community!

VAN'S LIFE IS FOREVER CHANGED, THANKS TO YOU

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS VAN FOCUS ON HIS TRUE PASSION: CREATING ART!

Van is a man of many talents. At 73, he's proud to call himself an artist and a musician — roles that have brought purpose and joy to his life.

"Once you become an artist, you're not just yourself anymore," he says. "You're creating something bigger than you. As long as I'm creating, I don't worry about what I don't have."

But there was a time when Van felt like he didn't have much hope.

"I had a drug problem, and I was homeless," he says. "I was driving a taxi and using most of my money to buy drugs."

It took courage to seek out assistance. Thankfully, he did.

Now Van is celebrating more than 16 years of sobriety. He's also secured stable housing and consistent work, and he continues to find support within his community.

He's come such a long way, but when his monthly pay wasn't covering all his expenses, he decided it was time to look for help once again. That's when a neighbor recommended that he visit his local food pantry.

"I know I can go there as a veteran and find what I need," he says. "I don't take more than what I need."



Your compassion ensures that veterans like Van have one less worry.

He receives fresh food, pantry staples, and additional resources for veterans in the community, ensuring access to essentials with care and grace.

Without the burden of hunger slowing him down, he can channel his energy into something more positive — like his art!

"I'm not just Van anymore," he says. "I'm an artist. I'm a musician. That means something. When I look back at what I've accomplished, I thank God that I have a new life."

Your gifts provide more than food. Friends like you offer hope, comfort, and stability to neighbors in need like Van. 🍊

Van's story is representative of the people we serve.

FOR AN EVENING IN GOOD TASTE ON APRIL 16, 2026

On April 16, 2026, Westchester's finest chefs and beverage experts will join forces to support Feeding Westchester. Guests can look forward to indulging in an unforgettable night of exceptional food, quality wine, craft beers, specialty cocktails, and a silent auction while connecting with other supporters of Feeding Westchester.

This highly anticipated evening will bring together 600 guests and feature dozens of restaurants and beverage purveyors as we try to outdo last year's event, which raised more than \$554,000 for our neighbors in need.

All proceeds from the event will stay in our community, helping to provide healthy, nourishing food to those who are experiencing food insecurity. **To learn more, visit FeedingWestchester.org/aeigt.**



SEE YOUR IMPACT

September 2024–August 2025



Neighbor visits,
monthly average

235,000



Child visits, *monthly average*,
through pantries, deliveries,
and school programs

80,000



Pounds of fresh
produce distributed

8.1 MILLION



Number of
meals distributed

17 MILLION



Retail recovery
(pounds recovered)

5.1 MILLION

ADDRESSING CAMPUS HUNGER: THE CREATION OF PACE MARKET

PACE MARKET HAS GROWN INTO A COMMUNITY STAPLE

On a cold January morning at Pace University, Wen — the Assistant Director of Residential Life — quietly watches pallets of food disappear from shelves, hour by hour. These aren't commodities; they're lifelines for students who arrived on campus unsure how they would eat that day.

Wen launched Pace Market three years ago. It's a pantry reimagined as an open, judgment-free "market" instead of a typical food bank. She named it deliberately so no one feels ashamed for getting a little extra help.

"There's a stigma to why a college would need a food pantry ... but people hit hard times," she says. "People are food insecure one day, and they're not the next — it's a spectrum."

What started as an effort to ease student hunger has become a foundation of support in the broader Pace community. Wen notices how some students stop by when they've skipped lunch, and others gather groceries for weeks in advance.

She puts it simply: "Outside of just the number impact, I just really appreciate how the pantry has slowly become part of the community."

Wen still pauses in wonder when a thousand-pound pallet vanishes in an hour. "It's crazy to see how fast this food went," she says. "Not only did people need it, but they wanted it."

Because of Wen — and generous friends like you who give — fewer Pace community members will ever have to ask, "Will I eat today?" 🍌



MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT **WITH A MATCHED GIFT**

Many employers offer matching-gift programs to encourage their employees to support charitable causes such as hunger relief. An employer may match your gift or volunteer time dollar for dollar — and sometimes by much more.

All you need to do is use our online donation form, and you'll be asked to search for your company during the checkout process.

Please visit feedingwestchester.org/matchinggifts to learn more.