



**For Immediate Release  
May 21, 2020**

Contact: Maria Herrera  
917-653-9974  
mherrera@freshyouth.org

**FRESH YOUTH INITIATIVES PARTNERS WITH NONPROFIT AND  
PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS IN NYC TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY  
AMONG THEIR PROGRAM FAMILIES DUE TO COVID-19**

*FYI adds hunger relief to its family services helping hundreds  
of immigrant children and families in the Washington Heights community*

**New York, NY**, May 22, 2020 – Food insecurity induced by the unprecedented Coronavirus pandemic continues to soar among low-income neighborhoods. In response to this pressing issue [Fresh Youth Initiatives](#) (FYI), a nonprofit organization that empowers bilingual, bicultural children and teens in Washington Heights to become confident, compassionate leaders and successful learners, reached out to community partners to ensure that their program’s children and families have food on the table immediately, and to alleviate the burden in the months to come.

“The moment COVID-19 hit, FYI rolled out remote educational programs, mental health services and practical resources for its 1,400 participants in pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grades,” says Executive Director Eileen Lyons. “We immediately recognized that we needed to identify the needs of our families. The FYI staff began outreach to parents and caregivers and quickly confirmed that food insecurity was a new issue, especially for undocumented workers. We had to pivot quickly, and successfully enlisted others in the community to help us with this new challenge.”

The fastest way for FYI to mobilize the food relief effort was to partner with Washington Heights native Jose Salcedo, the founder of tech startup [Traiilo](#), an online ordering and delivery platform that allows customers to order their favorite Latin products from local Latinx owned, independent grocers. FYI contracted Traiilo in April 2020. They were immediately able to source and safely deliver 60 boxes of culturally relevant groceries to families and have continued to deliver weekly.

“When FYI approached Traiilo to partner in the food relief effort for their families our initial reaction was absolutely” says Salcedo. “As a business whose core customer is the Uptown NYC community it is our responsibility to do what we can during these unprecedented times whether it’s getting food to families or simply raising awareness about community needs.”

Fresh Youth Initiatives continues outreach to additional NYC organizations to help sustain this ongoing effort on a larger scale. FYI found a partner in the New York Common Pantry who donated grocery boxes and allowed us to increase our reach to 90 families monthly. “Creating synergies and serving our communities is critical, especially at this time,” said Stephen Grimaldi, Executive Director of NYCP, “We’re proud to partner with FYI and to get families the groceries they need, allowing them to maintain healthy eating habits during this pandemic.”

Private funding has also been key in helping FYI to meet this unexpected expense. Teachers and staff at the [Gregorio Luperon HS for Science and Mathematics](#) have raised \$9,000 to support FYI's

COVID-19 Emergency Fund. FYI runs full-day, year-round, mental health, and academic programs at this NYC public school whose student population are 100% immigrants.

FYI was also awarded emergency funding from the NYC philanthropic community to support these emergency relief efforts. FYI received grants from the NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund which is administered by the [New York Community Trust](#) and from the [Robin Hood Foundation](#) COVID-19 Relief Fund.

The Washington Heights community continues to experience disproportionately high numbers of coronavirus cases, deaths, and unemployment, leading to multiplying stressors. For additional information on how to support Fresh Youth Initiatives please visit <https://freshyouth.org/donate>.

###

### **About Fresh Youth Initiatives (FYI)**

Founded in 1993, FYI is an anchor in the Washington Heights community, providing 1,400 children in grades pre-K to 12 with year-round educational, social-emotional, arts, sports, music, and college access programs. Our mission is empowering youth who have the fewest resources to achieve their greatest potential.

Find us on social media! [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [YouTube](#) [LinkedIn](#)