

EMPA PANEL DISCUSSION – October 14, 2020
Creating Food Secure Communities: A View from Leaders in the Fight Against Hunger

Lisa Hines-Johnson, former COO of the Food Bank For New York City, will facilitate an engaging and informative discussion with **Dr. Melony Samuels**, Executive Director and Founder of The Campaign Against Hunger and **Linda Goode Bryant**, Executive Director and Founder of Project EATS - leaders with significant experience in the fight against hunger in NYC. This talk will address practices and policies critical to creating food secure communities and why understanding food justice is imperative in responding to food insecurity. While the need is great, there are ways that you can get involved and make an impact. We will discuss how to make your mark during this session.

It is impossible to speak about food security without defining and discussing food INSECURITY and food JUSTICE. Below are some questions we will discuss.

1. What is food insecurity? What does it look like in the communities that you serve? What are some of the short and long term effects of food insecurity? How are communities of color specifically impacted? How has COVID further impacted already vulnerable communities?
2. What is food justice and why is it necessary in creating food secure communities?
3. Tell us briefly about your work and the impact you've been able to achieve.
4. What are some immediate steps people can take to move us towards more food just and secure communities (proven programs and practices, effective policies etc.)

Lisa Hines-Johnson For nearly 8 ½ years, Lisa Hines-Johnson served as Chief Operating Officer of Food Bank For New York City, the city's major hunger relief organization providing approximately 63 million free meals each year to 1.5 million New Yorkers in need via a network of over 1,000 member charities including soup kitchens, pantries and schools. Lisa led the organization's food distribution, operations and anti-poverty programming areas and during her tenure played a vital role in navigating the organization through several significant events including Hurricane Sandy, a government shutdown and the COVID 19 pandemic. Prior to Food Bank, Lisa held several leadership positions within the NYC Administration for Children's Services and Columbia University's Graduate School of Business.

Lisa was born and raised in the Bronx and holds a B.S. with honors from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, where she has served as a guest lecturer for several years. She is a graduate of CORO Leadership New York and Columbia Business School's Senior Leaders Program for Nonprofit Professionals and is the former chair of the Policy Committee on NYC Hunger Resources. She was also featured in Latina Magazine as an "Aspiring Latina" and received the "Best of the Bronx" award from the Bronx Women's Business Resource Center.

Lisa and her husband, a 24 year veteran of the NYC Metropolitan Transit Authority, have three children, ages 9, 12 and 22.

Dr. Melony Samuels serves as the founder and executive director of The Campaign Against Hunger (TCAH, formerly Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger), a community based service organization in Brooklyn, NY. As the Executive Director, Dr. Samuels is responsible for daily operations, vision planning, and resource management for TCAH. Prior to founding TCAH, Dr. Samuels worked in the insurance industry and was the Chief Administrator for the Full Gospel Tabernacle of Faith church in Brooklyn, working extensively on strategic management, proposal writing, event planning, and business development. In 1998, she founded a small, traditional food pantry located in a church basement. The Campaign Against Hunger (TCAH) grew out of this effort, formally becoming a nonprofit in 2005. Today, the organization provides services to over 300,000 unique individuals each year. TCAH has since expanded beyond the SuperPantry service to include mobile pantries, which reach the South Bronx, the Rockaways and all of Brooklyn, two robust Urban Agro-Ecological Centers, a social services office, a community kitchen and nutrition education hub, and a youth and leadership development program. Dr. Samuels' philosophy is that only through strong partnerships can lasting change arise. She has lived this vision by forming and presiding over the Bed-Stuy Providers Network, a collaborative group of 18 emergency feeding programs in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community. She sat on the Strategy Council of the Food Bank of New York, the Advisory Committee of City Harvest, the Council on Hunger and Food Policy, the Steering Committee for both the Manhattan Borough President and the Politics of Food Conference, and she currently serves on the Vital Brooklyn Initiative Committee. Dr. Samuels also maintains close working relationships with the National Food Bank, Hunger Free America, and the New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCA).

Dr. Samuels and TCAH were featured in the Bill Moyers Journal report on Hunger in America and in numerous other publications including the New York Times, May 22, 2017. Dr. Samuels was honored by the Brooklyn Community Foundation with the Brooklyn Do-Gooder Award and received the Food Bank of New York's Can Do Award. She was recognized as an Everyday Hero by the NY Post and was awarded their Liberty Award. Dr. Samuels was the recipient of the 2017 Chapin Award for Excellence from WhyHunger, a national nonprofit, and TCAH was a finalist for the Spark Prize for Innovation awarded by the Brooklyn Community Foundation in December, 2017.

Dr. Samuels received her doctorate in Religious Education from the Christian Outreach Bible College and Theological Seminary in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Linda Good Bryant is the Founder and President of Project EATS, originally from Columbus, OH. She developed Project EATS while filming the 2004 Presidential Elections and developed Project EATS during the 2008 Global Food Crisis. Linda is a Guggenheim Fellow and a Peabody Award recipient. She was Founder and Director of Just Above Midtown, Inc. (JAM), a New York City non-profit artist space. Linda has a Master of Business Administration from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in

painting from Spelman College.

Linda believes art is as organic as food and life. It is a conversation anyone can enter. It is a place where we all reside. An energy that is always renewable. It is the essence of humanity. It is our promise to care and take care.