



Presents the 2023

— **GALA** —

FUNDRAISER

“Feeding the Mind, Body &
Spirit in the South Bronx”

benefiting Manna Of Life Ministries

Marina Del Rey

Friday, November 3, 2023 • 6-11 PM

1 Marina Dr, Bronx, NY 10465



The 450,000 healthcare workers of 1199SEIU are frontline caregivers in hospitals, nursing homes, homecare, clinics, pharmacies and all other areas of the healthcare industry. We are nurses, nurse aides, techs, lab workers, clerks, housekeepers, dietary workers, transporters, pharmacists, social workers, homecare workers and many other types of medical professionals.

Our mission is to stand up for quality healthcare, good jobs and social justice for all!

WE CARE FOR NEW YORK

1199SEIU
United Healthcare Workers East



Letter from the President

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Evelyn Cobian
Administrative Assistant

November 3, 2023

Dearest Volunteers, Donors, and Sponsors,

Many years ago, 28 to be precise, God placed in my heart a vision of a ministry to serve the hungry and homeless in the Bronx. Honestly, I didn't always see HIS vision completely, yet we prayed and hoped that we would have enough 'fishes and loaves' for all the families and individuals standing on our lines every day.

This year has had many challenges and triumphs and through it all the faithfulness of the volunteers and donors has been a joy to witness. With an ever-growing influx of asylum seekers and food prices sky-rocketing our pantry line has almost doubled daily. I am so grateful for the generosity of our donors and the precious time of our volunteers for overcoming the trials and being the victory this year.

Thank you all for your time, talent, and treasure for the Fundraising Gala and beyond from our grateful Clientele, Staff and Board of Directors.

In His Glorious Name, We Pray - Amen,

Sincerely,

Erbin Cobian

President/Founder
Manna of Life Ministries Inc.
ercobian@mannaoflife.org
(917) 549-8595



Manna of Life Ministries Board of Directors

Dr. Charles Esenwa, Board President
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Gala Committee Members

Mandy Rivera - Chairperson
Gladys Roman
Steve Bellavista
Evelyn Cobian
Gesselle Carradero
Tamara Srdanovic - BGNy design



Manna of Life Gala Program

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Pastor Jasmine Davila

Year in Review Slide Show

Mirna Cruz

Volunteer of the Year Presentation

David Martinez & Gladys Roman

Hunger Hero's Winner Announcement

Mandi Rivera

Volunteering Experience at Manna

Dr. Charles Esenwa

Honoree Presentation

Reverend Erbin Cobian

Honoree

Bishop Dr. Raymond Rivera

Volunteer and Community Recognition

Gladys Roman

Music and Dance

Claves Legacy / DJ Nelson

Closing Prayer



How it all began ...

There's not a single one of us who doesn't know someone who may be facing hunger. For 28 years Manna of Life Ministries has served the Bronx community by feeding the body and the spirit.

Our story began in 1995 when two brothers, Erbin Cobian and his brother Victor Andujar, were volunteers at a soup kitchen. While volunteering at the soup kitchen, Erbin saw a friend he had known during his teenage years. His name was Skippy. Skippy was dressed in rags and looked needy and neglected. Skippy came to get a meal. Erbin's heart ached with sympathy and sadness for Skippy. He was struck with so much emotion that he had to walk away before Skippy recognized him and let his brother serve him. That night, Erbin prayed to GOD for answers. He wanted to help Skippy but was not sure what to do.

The following day, Erbin, excited to see Skippy again, gave him a bag of clothes which he had packed from his own closet. Erbin then offered to drop Skippy home. Skippy asked to be dropped off at the corner of Bruckner Boulevard and Erbin insisted on dropping him off in front of his house. After driving around for a while, Skippy finally confessed that he was homeless and slept under a bridge in Hunts Point.

Erbin went home that night compelled to reduce Skippy's suffering and so he cried out to GOD once again on what to do. There were other questions too: How many more were there in Skippy's situation? How many more needed food, shelter and real love? Did GOD want to use him in this type of ministry? He was just one person; he would need help.

It turned out that God was calling him and sending help. On an early Saturday morning at a men's breakfast fellowship at Crossroads Tabernacle, in October of 1995, Erbin approached his brother Victor, Joe Ziel and a young man named John about his experience with Skippy. He expressed to them a need to do something about feeding those in need, specifically the homeless. The group began to brainstorm on how they could accomplish this.

It began with providing food for the hungry twice a week but they quickly realized that it wasn't enough. They decided to include Saturdays in hopes to reach more of the 'lost' and reveal God's love for them, and so, the Saturday runs began. Erbin and John would go out on mobile runs with juices and sandwiches to feed the homeless of Hunts point. They followed God's guidance and prayed that their effort would have a positive impact on the people they reached. Their calling to help the 'lost' urged them to do more and GOD provided someone who informed them of a place under a bridge where many homeless resided. They visited the place and met a woman living there named Gloria who told them they called their home the 'black hole'.

Erbin, Victor, Joe and John never thought this simple act of love and faith into action would propel into a ministry that would touch thousands of people in need and also be a valuable community resource. As need grows and word spreads, we thank GOD for his continued blessings in helping us serve and develop relationships with those who believe in our vision to feed the spirit and eliminate hunger throughout the Bronx.



Our Timeline

- 1995** • Ministry was born as a response to the pressing human need of hunger and of “Love’.
- 38 turkey dinners were shared with the community (precursor to our “Adopt A Family” campaign).
- 1998** • Manna of Life Ministries becomes officially incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit.
- First Toy Drive organized.
- 1999** • First Coat Drive organized.
- 2000** • First fundraising Gala to support the vision.
- 2003** • Received our first Grant from United Way that allowed Manna to open our food pantry at Crossroads Tabernacle
- 2005** • Manna begins shelter outreach to families and children providing toys, clothes and other essential needs.
- 2007** • Manna begins to distribute pantry bags of Thanksgiving meals complete with turkeys and all the fixings to impoverished families, in addition to pantry staples.
- 2008** • Manna started distributing toys to the Bronx schools in need.
- 2010** • “Adopt A Family” campaign begins.
- 2015** • Divine Light Church enters in an agreement with Manna of Life Ministries which allows Manna to use the church to run a pantry and a soup kitchen.
- 2021** • Jardin De Esperanza (Garden of Hope) was inaugurated. The garden has become more than just a garden but a symbol of “hope and beauty” in the community.
- 2023** • We held many events that brought our Bronx community together: Adopt-a-Family, holiday toy drive, annual coat drive, Easter celebration, Garden of Hope planting, monthly cooking demonstrations with Chef ili, Mother’s Day celebration, Father’s Day celebration, Garden of Hope Event, BronxCare Health System mobile health unit visit, Back to School backpack giveaways, and more.



Honoree Bio

Bishop Raymond Rivera

“Faith and Justice Walk Together”

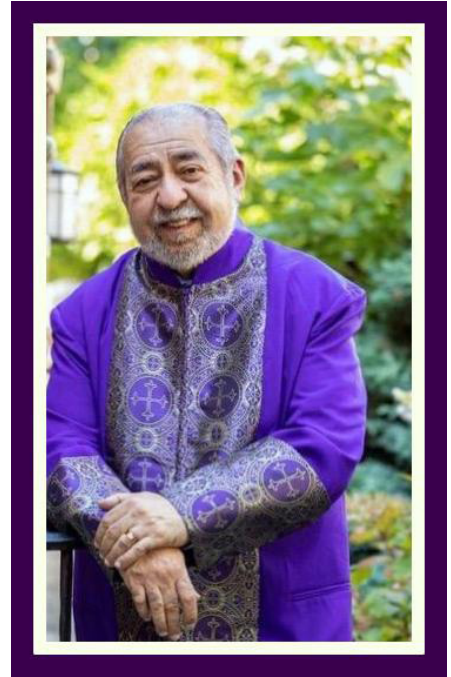
Since the age of 19, Bishop Raymond Rivera has been serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as a pastor, preacher, denominational executive, organization founder, community builder, social justice advocate, bishop, and founder and overseer of churches and ministries. Throughout this time, he has preached, taught, and modeled Christ-centered holistic ministry, particularly in an urban context. His theological framework is *Ministering in a Situation of Captivity™*, based on the Old Testament lessons of the people of Israel.

His program methodology is centered on the Latino Pastoral Action Center’s (LPAC’s) **Four Principles of Holistic Ministry™**: *Liberation, Healing, Community, and Transformation*. Ultimately, he strives to strengthen the **Four Pillars of Community Life™**: *Families, Schools, Community-Based Organizations, and Churches*.

Bishop Rivera has been a teacher, a keynote speaker, and a lecturer at seminaries and universities, such as Union Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Alliance Theological Seminary, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Yale. He has received many honors and awards for his community, activism, and ministerial work, among them two honorary doctoral degrees. He served as a voice to former New York State Governor Cuomo and the New York City Mayor’s Clergy Advisory Committee. Currently he is Board Chairman of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC), and Co-Convener of the MICAH Faith Table, NYC (an interfaith social justice organization.)

Bishop Rivera is the author of a book entitled *“Liberty to the Captives: Our Call to Minister in a Captive World,”* published by Eerdmans Publishing. Several seminaries use his book in urban ministry and practical theology programs. The book will be available in Spanish in 2022. He is currently working on a second book. He spends most of his time preparing the next and future generations to carry out his vision of holistic ministry and social justice engagement.

Bishop Rivera lives in the Bronx with his wife, Dr. Marilyn Calo with their blended family, they have five children, Esteban, Susana, Joel, Stacy, and Adam, and seven grandchildren. His children and grandchildren participate in ministry. His daughter Reverend Susana Rivera León is charting his legacy and following him with the holistic approach to community-based ministry as the Senior Pastor at Sanctuary Church.







The BronxCare Health System Family
is proud to support

Manna of Life Ministries
at it's *Gala Celebration*
**"Feeding the Mind, Body & Spirit in
the South Bronx"**

Serving the homeless and destitute and empowering
them to reverse their current situation.

We also congratulate the **Honorees**

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“Manna of Life feeds the hungry--not only their bodies, but also their souls.

It is an honor to volunteer alongside an amazing group of hardworking New Yorkers who care so much about our community.

Manna of Life ---a true Bronx treasure!”

**Michelle
CARUSO-
CABRERA**



Circle of Christ Church proudly supports and acknowledges the community contributions and efforts made by
Manna of Life Ministries

May God continue to guide and lead you in this journey of service.

To God be the Glory.

*“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will reward them for what they have done.”*

Proverbs 19:17 (NIV)

Rev. Dr. Luis F. Ramos Jr.

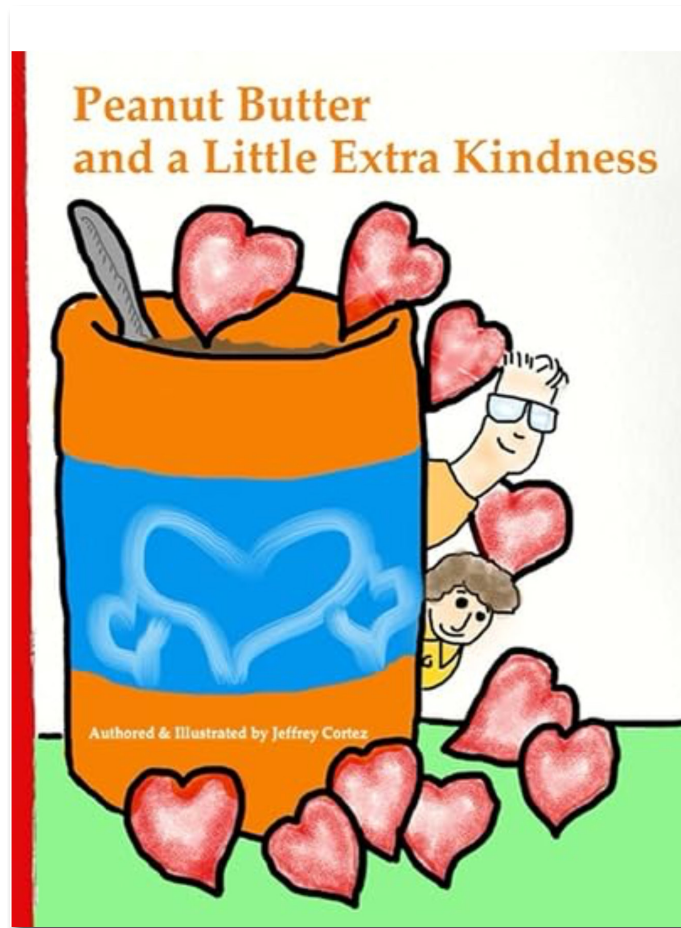
Lead Pastor



Many thanks to
Pastor Jeff Cortez

who wrote and illustrated a children's book based on the beginnings of Manna of Life and then
donated all proceeds to the Ministry!

Purchase one for your child and bring a 'little extra kindness' back home!



Summary of Peanut Butter and a Little Extra Kindness - There were two boys that once in their lives suffered hunger. One day they were eating lunch. They each decided to share their half of their sandwich with someone they saw in need. They realized as they delivered the sandwich to the grateful person, that there were more people in need. When they got home they looked around the kitchen to see what extra things they had to share. Family, friends, and neighbors contributed from their spare possessions, time, and talents. The peanut butter sandwich became an abundant beginning of kindness. Illustrations in the story slowly progress from black, white and gray line drawings to fully colorized ones symbolizing the wonder of collective kindness.

This book "Peanut Butter and a Little Extra Kindness" is now available for online purchase on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [BarnesandNoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com)

The author's royalties for this book will be donated to a Bronx-based nonprofit organization Manna of Life that has been serving our communities .



Summary of Grandma's Scribble Powers - Summary of Grandma's Scribble Powers- Sofia told her grandmother that she was feeling frustrated and bored. Grandma tore a brown paper bag and began to scribble on it. The granddaughter began to learn how to use her imagination for fun and for problem-solving. No fancy and expensive tools needed. The story was inspired by the author's own memories of how his own 'abuela' would tear brown paper bags in order to entertain and teach me. An activity I now share with my own grandchildren and they with you readers. This book was created with my grandkids and their mom, my eldest, as models and assistant illustrators. We hope you enjoy it and go forth throughout your community and world with fun packed imagination and creative problem solving. This book "Grandma's Scribble Powers" is now available for online purchase on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [BarnesandNoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com)



*Thank you to all of the amazing volunteers for a job well done.
Your kindness and commitment are appreciated.*

*A special thanks to the volunteers who never stopped
serving during Covid. You are an inspiration to all!*

*"All Labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance
and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."*

- Dr. Martin Luther King

Manna Family Forever!!

- Gladys Roman -



Latino
Pastoral Action
Center



CONGRATULATIONS!

Manna Of Life Ministries

*Thank You for faithfully serving others through your ministry
and food services for all communities.*



**A special thank you to
Montefiore and Montefiore/Einstein
for sponsorship!**

**We are beyond grateful
for this contribution and partnership
as we strive towards
making a positive impact together!**

Montefiore



Montefiore



**Thank you
to all our amazing supporters
who have purchased a table
for our much-awaited gala!**

**We can't wait to share
this unforgettable night of elegance and goodwill
with each and every one of you.**

Pastor Jeff and Mary Cortez

Life Together Fellowship

United Chaplains

Dr. Charles Esenwa

Gladys Roman

**Steve Bellavista –
Uland Lodge #735 & Retired Members of NYPD**

163rd Street Improvement Council

Pete Pioli



**We want to thank everyone involved
with Gala 2023,
our Manna of Life Staff, Volunteers,
Partners, and Sponsors!**

**Special thanks to those
that contributed their time to
professionally support
our 2023 Gala:**

**Henry O - Photographer
Sonia Vazquez - Floral Design
Clave's Legacy - Band
Pastor Jasmine Davila
DJ - Nelson**

The Gala Committee:

**Mandy Rivera - Chairperson
Gladys Roman
Steve Bellavista
Evelyn Cobian
Gesselle Carradero
Tamara Srdanovic - BGNV design**



Our Impact

October 2022

4,691

PEOPLE SERVED

October 2023

11,753

PEOPLE SERVED

150% increase!

November 2022 - October 2023

108,807

PEOPLE SERVED IN LAST 12 MONTHS



We need your support!

Ways to help:



VOLUNTEER



DONATE



PARTNER WITH US

<https://mannaoflife.org/ways-to-help>







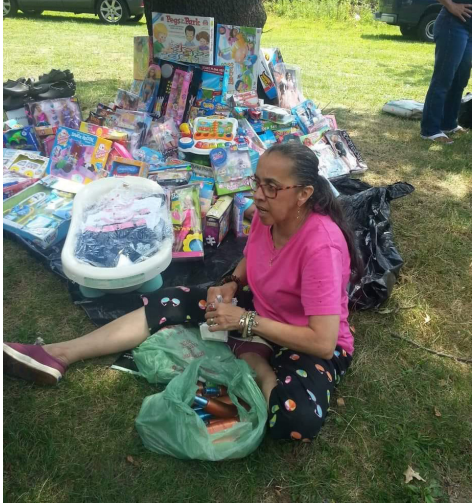






In Memoriam

Mildred Morrero



*Rest in Peace
Our Faithful Volunteer
and Friend*





In Memoriam

Elder Margaret McCants



*Margaret McCants was a woman of prayer,
compassion, and kindness.*

Rest in Peace, Margaret!





Ruben Diaz Jr.

President of the Borough of
The Bronx

Presents this

Proclamation

Whereas:

Since its founding, the Manna of Life Ministries has been a spiritual pillar, not only in The Bronx but, in fact, the entire City of New York, that exemplifies the highest traditions and values of our society, and;

Whereas: *Manna of Life Ministries' goal is to help our New York City residents, bringing enlightenment to our great borough; committed to fulfilling the spiritual needs of and providing counsel to those in need of salvation, and;*

Whereas: *Manna of Life Ministries' has become an important and historical part of New York City and The Bronx, fully committed to encouraging neighborhood harmony and family unity through its ministry, and;*

Whereas: *Manna of Life Ministries has provided counseling to those in need of spiritual salvation and succor to the less privileged through the preaching of the word of God, over the years, filling our Bronx residents with inspiration while setting a positive example to our next generation of local community and religious leaders, and;*

Now therefore *I, for these reasons and more, on behalf of the more than 1.4 million residents, I, Ruben Diaz Jr., President of the Borough of The Bronx, I salute Manna of Life Ministries.*

October 20, 2019



Ruben Diaz Jr.
Ruben Diaz Jr.



OFFICE OF THE
PUBLIC ADVOCATE
NEW YORK CITY



Proclamation

Whereas

a great city is only as great as those individuals and organizations who perform exemplary service on behalf of their community; and

Whereas, Manna of Life Ministries, Inc. is a vital and valuable nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the homeless and destitute. Its work has saved and improved countless lives across the Bronx, New York, and beyond; and

Whereas, Manna of Life Ministries, Inc. assists in meeting the needs of disenfranchised members of the community by feeding, clothing, educating and empowering. It offers services including traditional and mobile Soup Kitchens and Food Pantries, a Homeless Shelter Outreach program, a Life Skills Program and a Community Referral Program; and

Whereas, Manna of Life Ministries, Inc. seeks to expand its services and continue to be a catalyst impacting the lives of the hungry, homeless and poor. The organization strives to reflect God's love and is committed to helping transition those in need from homelessness to housing; and

Whereas, Manna of Life Ministries, Inc. demonstrates compassion, professionalism, and a commitment to excellence, it has been a critical resource for those most in need of support in our City,

Be it Resolved that I, Public Advocate for the City of New York, Letitia James, recognize Manna of Life Ministries, Inc. as an organization worthy of our highest respect and esteem; and may it further be

Proclaimed, that today, October 6th, 2018 is a day to honor Manna of Life Ministries, Inc. and to celebrate its many achievements.



Letitia James, Public Advocate for the City of New York



**Keep an eye open for Manna of Life's
upcoming events:**

**Adopt-a-Family Campaign -
feed a family for Thanksgiving!
In 2022, we fed 300 families**

**Christmas Toy Drive -
bring a smile to a child's face
by donating a new toy.**

**Chef Ili Cooking Demonstrations -
Join us on our monthly
cooking demonstrations
using nutritional and
inexpensive food products**

Our Mission

Manna Of Life Ministries, Inc. is a not-for-profit faith-based program dedicated to serving the homeless and destitute.

Our goal is to address their immediate hunger needs and ultimately, to empower them to reverse their current situation.



Our Vision

Our Vision is to expand our services and continue to be a catalyst by impacting the lives of the hungry, homeless and poor.

This will be realized by making available nutritional and emotional support as well as other necessities that will facilitate their transition from homelessness into housing.

We reflect God's love towards those we serve.
We are committed to pursuing a vision for the ministry
God has called us to do.

Thank you for celebrating with us!

Please visit our website to stay up to date on the latest in Manna's work

SCAN ME



<https://MannaOfLife.org>

@MannaOfLife