



Manna of Life Ministries

30th Anniversary

BENEFIT

Saturday, October 25, 2025

Marina Del Rey, Bronx

JOURNAL

**THREE DECADES OF LASTING HOPE
IN THE BRONX**



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

October 25, 2025

Dear Manna Family and Friends,

As President of Manna of Life Ministries, it is my profound honor to welcome you to this Benefit celebration—a joyful milestone marking **30 years of hope, compassion, and divine provision** in the Bronx. What began in 1995 with a handful of devoted souls handing out sandwiches has blossomed into a lifeline for generations, sustained solely by the generosity of strangers who trusted our mission before they ever saw it.

These 30 years have taught me that **God always comes in at the 11th hour**. I've also learned this: God has my back, this organization's back, and we are His children. Through every challenge, from pandemics to funding cliffs, He has never abandoned us.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare our community's vulnerability. Lines stretched farther than ever as neighbors sought food, while homebound seniors and quarantined families faced isolation. Thanks to our heroic staff and volunteers (who refused to close our doors even during lockdowns), we delivered nourishment to those who couldn't reach us. Government aid provided temporary relief, but when it ended, our commitment did not.

In **2024**, with just **three staff members** and a core of over **15 dedicated volunteers**, we distributed more than **\$2 million worth of food to 152,000 Bronx residents** — representing roughly 10% of the borough's population. This extraordinary efficiency is a testament to 30 years of responsible stewardship and the community trust you've helped us build.

”
**30 years - that's a long time, and
God always comes in at the 11th hour.**

The need persists, and our work intensifies as we head into the season that tests every family's resilience. Next month, our Adopt-A-Family campaign will support hundreds of Bronx families who need extra assistance during the holidays. Then comes the joy of our Christmas and Three Kings Day toy distributions: watching children's faces light up reminds us why we do this work. These programs stretch our resources, but they also stretch our hearts and deepen our impact in ways that food programs alone cannot.

I invite you to join our mission as **a monthly donor**, ensuring Manna's food pantry remains open, its stoves stay warm, and its doors are welcoming to all, regardless of religion, gender, or circumstance. Your recurring gift is the steady stream that outlasts even the substantial momentary downpours.



To our faithful donors, sponsors, staff, volunteers, ministry partners, and visionary Board: you are why we exist. Strangers who gave before they knew us. Volunteers who serve before dawn. Partners who amplify our reach. For 30 years, you have been God's hands and feet in the Bronx.

”
**Your recurring gift is the steady stream that outlasts
even the substantial momentary downpours.**

This Saturday, October 25, 2025, as we gather at Marina del Rey for our 30th Anniversary Benefit, we honor the past, celebrate the present, and trust God for the future. Thank you for witnessing the miracle of a community that refused to let hunger win, and the divine promise that sustains us still.

With deep gratitude,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Erbin Cobian'.

Rev. Erbin Cobian
President/CEO, Manna of Life Ministries





2025 MANNA OF LIFE BENEFIT GALA PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Giovanna Aguilar
Steve Bellavista
Mirna Cruz
Tomasita Santiago
Millie Santiago
Jake Miaczynski
Tamara Srdanovic
Adam Pasqua
Gladys Roman
Mike Roman
Marc Thompson
David Martinez**

BOARD MEMBERS

**Erbin Cobian
Millie Hernandez
Candido Gonzalez
Melissa Figueroa
Steve Bellavista
Millie Santiago
Michael Roman
Marc Thompson
Jake Miaczynski
Adam Pasqua
Giovanna Aguilar**

ADMINISTRATION

**Erbin Cobian
Millie Hernandez
Mirna Cruz
Evelyn Cobian**



BENEFIT PROGRAM

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Reverend Dr. Gregory Anton McCants

Manna of Life Video

Reverend Dr. Gregory Anton McCants

Volunteers of the Year and Certificate of Merit Presentation

David Martinez & Gladys Roman

Jose Collazo Award

Reverend Erbin Cobian

Community Collaboration Recognition

Erbin Cobian, Evelyn Cobian, and Gladys Roman

Honoree Presentation

Reverend Erbin Cobian & Mirna Cruz

Bronx Borough President Proclamation

Reverend Dr. Gregory Anton McCants

Pledge Request

Reverend Erbin Cobian

Gift Basket and Raffle

Tomasita Santiago

Music and Dance

Band: Clave Legacy

Closing Prayer

Evelyn Cobian



HOW IT ALL BEGAN ...

There's not a single one of us who doesn't know someone who may be facing hunger. For 30 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.
- 2023**
 - Started providing safe housing and wraparound services through Bronx Shelter Initiative.
- 2024**
 - With just three staff members and a core of over 15 dedicated volunteers, we distributed more than \$2 million worth of food to 152,000 Bronx residents — representing roughly 10% of the borough’s population.



WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR 2024/25 PARTNERS:

1199 SEIU United Healthcare

42nd Precinct Community Affairs

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

American Heart Association

Band of Brothers Ministry

Bard High School - Bronx NY

Bev's Charity Crafting Neighborhood

Bronx Borough President's Office

Bronx Care Health System

**Bronx Health Reach -
Institute for Family Health**

Bronx Shore Kiwanis

buildOn

Calvary Christian Church

Carlos Menendez

CFC - Community Food Connection

Chef ili and Karina

Christ Community Church

Circle of Christ Church

Crossroads Tabernacle

Divine Light Church

Elements Church

Hispanic Federation

Kidd City - Bronx NY

Life Together Fellowship

Michelle Caruso - Cabrera

Mission Travel

Montefiore Hospital

National Philanthropic Trust

New York Botanical Garden

New York City Council

New York City Department of Health

NYPD Explorers

Priority One

The Bible Church of Christ

The Glory Girls Foundation, Inc

The Peoples Money - City of New York

Throggs Neck Community Church

Toys for Tots

Trinity Baptist Church

United Way NYC

World Vision



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Hispanic Federation

Food Bank NYC

United Way

World Vision

Amazon

Starbucks

NYC – HRA & NYC – DHS

NYC Mayor's Office of Contracts

NYC Community Food Connection

The Institute for Family Health

Montefiore Einstein Medical Center

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

NYC Civic Engagement Commission (CEC)

World Central Kitchen

Federal FEMA and Emergency
Food Shelter Program



HONOREE: FOOD BANK FOR NEW YORK CITY



Food Bank For New York City is the city's primary hunger-relief organization, working to end hunger and food insecurity by securing, transporting, and distributing food through a network of over 800 community partners across the five boroughs. Founded in 1983, the organization has distributed billions of pounds of culturally relevant food through partners such as schools, churches, and community pantries, with the mission to empower every New Yorker to achieve food security.



Accepting an award on behalf of Food Bank for New York City:

Zanita Tisdale, EMPA

Vice President of Agency and Organizational Impact

Zanita is a national award winning program designer and recognized Food Policy Expert by City University of New York in the prestigious 40 under 40. With over 16 years of experience she works to drive solutions for social issues. As the Vice President of Agency and Organizational Impact she employs proprietary frameworks, strategic relationship building and innovative program design to create positive social change for vulnerable communities. She is passionate about fostering collective impact and ensuring upward economic mobility to level the playing field for all. She currently lead the strategi framework for social impact initiatives to over 800 nonprofits.



HONOREE: WORLD VISION



Accepting an award on behalf of World Vision:

SANDRA AGUILA-ROSA

SITE MANAGER | US PROGRAMS | TRANSFORMATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

World Vision has 75 years of working with communities, donors, partners, and governments to create opportunities for better futures for vulnerable children, even in the toughest places. The Storehouse in the Bronx serves the greater New York area with donated products like clothing, household goods, and school supplies, to over 200 school and nonprofit partners. Hundreds of thousands of children and adults have benefitted from the millions of dollars of products that have come through the building.

World Vision's partnership with Manna of Life goes back to 2003. Through the years we have seen Manna grow into a full-throttle organization that is committed to serving the people in their community who need it. World Vision has identified Manna of Life as a vital partner in the Bronx, and we have utilized them as a high-capacity partner. We have given them pallets of food, diapers, clothing, and household good that they can distribute to their neighborhood. We were also thrilled to volunteer our time one of their distributions last year, helping hand out food on a very cold morning. Even when things don't go as planned — like when the lift gate on our box truck failed right after making a delivery to them and we had to leave it there for several days until it could get fixed — we know that Manna will do whatever they can to make it work and to solve the problem together.



HONOREE BIO

Charles C. Esenwa, MD, MS

Charles C. Esenwa, MD, MS, is a medical school educator at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and stroke neurologist at Montefiore Moses Campus. His research interest is in stroke prevention strategies in high-risk individuals. He is the co-founder of SMARTS health, a digital health company focused on providing accessible blood pressure management services to all – particularly those who are at high risk.

Dr. Esenwa grew up NYC. After receiving his Bachelor of Science in Microbiology from Penn State University, Dr. Esenwa worked for a pharmaceutical company as a scientist before coming back to NY to attend SUNY Downstate College of Medicine in 2006. He completed his medical internship and neurology residency at Columbia Presbyterian in 2015. In 2017, he earned his Master of Science in neuroepidemiology from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and has been a faculty at Montefiore since then.





***"Manna of Life feeds the
Hungry – not only their bodies,
but also their souls.
It is an honor to support
an amazing group of
hardworking New Yorkers
who care so much about
our community.***

***Manna of Life — a true
Bronx treasure!"***

**Michelle
CARUSO-
CABRERA**



BronxCare

HEALTH SYSTEM

The BronxCare Health System Family
is proud to support
Manna of Life Ministries

Montefiore Einstein

*Congratulations Erbin and Evelyn Cobian
on 30 years of serving the Bronx community
with love, compassion and kindness.*

*Thank you to all of the volunteers
who donated their time throughout the years
to make the world a better place.*

Thank you, Lord, for 30 years of blessings.

- Gladys Roman -

In loving memory of Zaida Martinez,
a devoted wife, beloved mother,
proud grandmother, and a woman of
unwavering faith who loved God with
all her heart. Her life was a reflection of
grace, compassion, and selfless love.

Our sponsorship donation is made in
her honor to carry forward the values
she lived by and the light she brought
into the lives of so many. May her
legacy of faith and kindness continue
to inspire others.

**Joe Martinez and
Dr. Joseph Dominick Martinez**





Richter
Restrepo_{PLLC}

RICHTER RESTREPO, PLLC
is proud to support
Manna of Life Ministries



WE CARE FOR NEW YORK

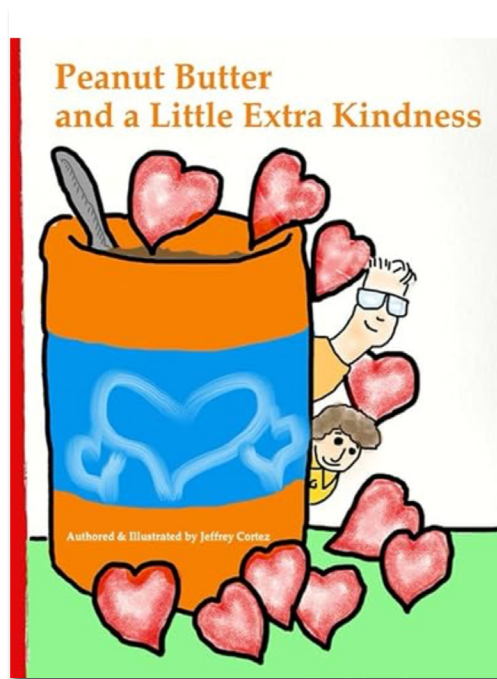
1199SEIU
United Healthcare Workers East

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).

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.

Special thanks to Facebook group

'Bev's Charity Crafting Neighborhood'!

This small but powerful group of helpers have done much over the years in supporting Manna of Life ministries. They knit, crochet, sew, support and give with open hearts and hands. Every week, Papa Hernandez delivers homemade items for all seasons to toiletries that are desperately needed. Bev Johnson Qualheim, group founder and our very own, Millie Hernandez, is the group co-admin. At a recent back to school Manna outreach, Barb Como, Dana Jonsgaard and Lynne Hannon partnered with Mama Hernandez and sent 82 knapsacks and tons of school supplies in support of the event! Many thanks for your generosity, prayers and enthusiasm for the Manna of Life Community!

facebook.com/groups/BevsCountryCottage



God Bless Our Pastors

Thank you, Pastors for teaching us, mentoring us, leading us, and serving your congregation. It is truly appreciated. Thank you for guiding us, giving of your time, energy, and heart to help your flock in their spiritual growth. We at Manna of Life are truly grateful to all the Pastors, Ministers, and Clergy members who have come into our paths.

Happy Pastor Appreciation!



Special thanks

to those that contributed their time in a loving effort to professionally support the Manna of Life Ministries 30th Anniversary Benefit!

Clave Legacy
clavelegacy.com

Top Notch Event Planning
topnotchnewyork.com

Quantum Healing & Wellness
quantumhealingandwellnesspma.com

BGNY Design
bgnydesign.com



AWARDS

Honoree
Dr Charles Esenwa

Honoree
World Vision – Sandra Aguilar

Honoree
Food Bank NYC - Zanita Tisdale

Jose Collazo Award
Presented to wife Maria Collazo

Volunteer of the Year
Molly Mungroo

Volunteer of the Year
Nelson Santiago

Volunteer of the Year
John Espinosa

30-Year Service Award
Millie Santiago



2025 BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENTS' CERTIFICATE OF MERIT AWARDEES

Carmen Alvarez

Alondra Amador

Blanca Cabrera

Jerry Cruz

Mirna Cruz

Hector De Valle

Steve Escobar

John Espinosa

Bethany Glidden – Priority One Ministry

Ray Gonzalez

Police Officer Dili Jefferson

David Martinez

Joseph Martinez

Brad Merritt

Jake Miaczynski

Al Miranda

Molly Mungroo

Carmen Rivas

Gladys Roman

Millie Santiago

Nelson Santiago

Pastor Ralph Santiago

Ramonita Santiago

Timothy Santiago

Tomasita Santiago

Dharma Singh

Naomi Singh

Maddy Tirado

Bonnie Westbury– Priority One Ministry

Lydia Villanueva













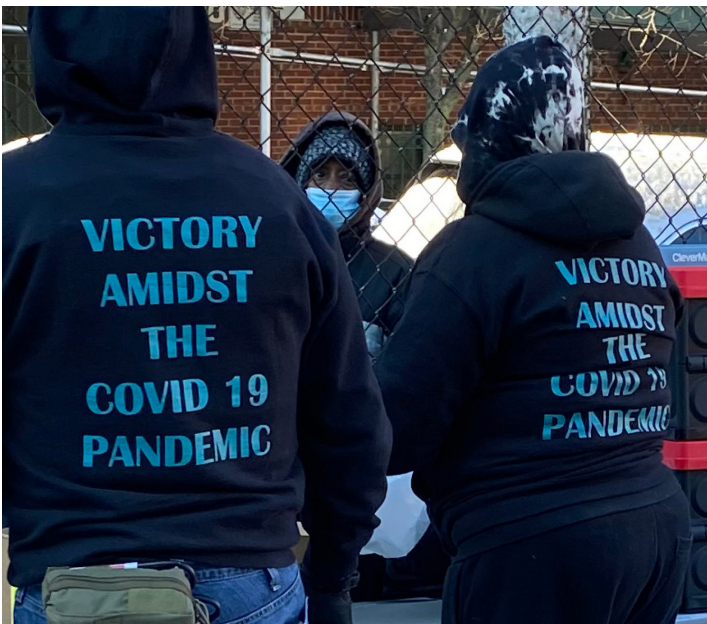


















IN MEMORIAM



On May 12, 2025, we lost a beloved member of our Manna of Life family and the Bronx community. Jose Collazo passed away at 64, after facing cancer with the same quiet strength that defined his life of service. As a founding member of our organization, board member, and spiritual leader, Jose touched countless lives with his genuine care and dedication.

Throughout his two decades of service with the NYPD (1984-2005), Jose worked tirelessly to build bridges between police and young people in the Bronx. He started as a rookie in the 30th Precinct, retired from the 41st Precinct, and found his true calling in Community Affairs. His work with SPECDA and DARE programs helped countless students avoid the dangers of drug abuse. Jose's role with the Police Athletic League (PAL) Liaison Unit created lasting connections between officers and neighborhood youth. Following their father's example of service, his son joined the force and became a detective, and his daughter a nurse.

When New York faced its darkest day on September 11, 2001, Jose joined fellow first responders in the search and recovery efforts at Ground Zero, showing the same selfless courage that marked his entire career.

At Manna of Life, Jose brought the same dedication he showed as an officer. A devoted member of Crossroads Tabernacle Church and its Board of Trustees, he lived his faith through service across multiple community organizations. Whether offering spiritual guidance, volunteering at outreach events, or serving on the board, he approached every task with humility and his characteristic warm smile. Those who worked alongside him remember his humor and ability to lift spirits, even during challenging times.

Jose's quiet strength came from his deep faith and belief in people's potential. He saw hope where others saw obstacles, particularly in the young people he mentored. His work was never about recognition but making life better for his beloved Bronx community, one person at a time.

He leaves behind his wife Maria, his daughter Melisa, son Jose, stepsons Manny and Willie, and fourteen grandchildren who brought immeasurable joy to his life. While our hearts ache with his loss, we find comfort knowing his legacy lives on through his family and the countless lives he touched.

Honoring Jose means continuing his work: serving others, believing in the power of community, and facing challenges with faith and courage. His light continues to shine through all those he inspired.

Rest in peace, dear friend. The Bronx is better because you called it home.



MANNA'S 2024 ANNUAL IMPACT

2 MILLION+

POUNDS OF FOOD

**Distributed throughout
the Bronx community**

152,000+

PEOPLE FED

**Providing essential
nutrition to those in need**



MANNA'S WEEKLY IMPACT



Received &
distributed

21,000 pounds
of food



900 families
served



23 pounds of food
per family



KEEP AN EYE OPEN FOR MANNA OF LIFE'S UPCOMING EVENTS

Adopt-a-Family Campaign
Feed a family for Thanksgiving!
In 2024, we fed 363 families

Christmas Toy Drive
Bring a smile to a child's face
by donating a new toy.

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

SAVE THE DATE
Manna of Life Ministries
First Annual Golf Outing Fundraiser
Monday, Sept 14th, 2026



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

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.



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