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Charity grocery store now accepts SNAP

Ravena, N.Y. – For more than a decade struggling families in Ravena Coeymans Selkirk could count on Helping Harvest for low-cost food. Now, those families' food dollars will stretch even further because the charity-run food assistance program located in Faith Plaza accepts SNAP, credit and debit cards.

Helping Harvest serves low-income families only, but functions like a typical grocery store. Shoppers grab a cart, make their selections and head to the checkout where they pay at least 50% less than typical grocery store prices. Helping Harvest is a program of Hope Full Life Center Inc., a charity also located in Faith Plaza. The charity's mission is to provide a helping hand, not a hand out, to improve life for neighbors.

"Our members have traditionally relied on Helping Harvest to fill in the gap when they run short on SNAP benefits or need to stretch their food dollars," said Rebeca Marion Flach, executive director of Hope Full Life Center. "We believe we can make low-cost nutritious food even more accessible for struggling families by taking SNAP, credit and debit cards - all tools available to help people manage their finances."

Helping Harvest has nearly 500 active members and has served nearly 1,450 families since 2010. Many are the working poor or senior citizens. The program remained open throughout the pandemic and sent home an estimated \$200,000 worth of groceries with struggling families in 2020.

"The pandemic brought to focus the issue of food insecurity in our community and the fragility of our food supply chains in the US," said Flach. "We were proud to serve Ravena Coeymans Selkirk and the surrounding communities during the crisis and hope that our bargain prices combined with the ability to use SNAP, credit and debit cards will make it easier for our shoppers to make ends meet."

Helping Harvest carries a variety of dry goods, frozen products, dairy, meats and produce. It is open Wednesdays and Fridays 2-6 and Thursdays and Saturdays 10-2. The store is located down the mall hallway using the exterior entrance between China King and Ravena Pizza. Interested individuals and families are encouraged to stop by the store to fill out a membership application. To learn more about Helping Harvest and Hope Full Life Center visit HopeFullLifeCenter.org or call 518-756-9091.

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