Mutual Aid: Grassroots Food Sovereignty in New York City

About the Moderator and Panelists:

**Moderator**
Valerie Peter Chong is the Training and Staff Development Manager for CUNY CARES (Comprehensive Access to Resources and Essential Services) and has been a long-time program coordinator for the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute. Val's research and programming has been focused on food labor and good food jobs, food security, and youth food justice advocacy. They are a proud graduate of Farm School NYC’s Citywide Program.

**Guest Panelists**

Kaya Abramson is an anthropology student at Hunter College, CUNY Food Justice Leadership Fellow, and mutual aid organizer at Collective Focus Resource Hub. She founded and runs the Collective Focus political education book club, assists their Food Justice program in food distribution and grant writing, and coordinates the collective’s volunteer onboarding.

Collective Focus is a Mutual Aid that has operated a resource center on the border of Bushwick and Bedstuy since 2021. They build community resilience through free resource distribution and cultural, artistic & wellness programming and events.

Washington Square Park Mutual Aid (WSPMA) began in the wake of brutal violence and criminalization of the park’s residents by the NYPD. Determined to care for our community and counter the fearmongering of the poor and unhoused, WSPMA distributes free food, clothing, and other survival supplies to all. WSPMA’s mission is to provide survival supplies to the WSP community while building the knowledge, tools, and power for all to work for more than just survival. WSPMA aims for total liberation through political education, coalition-building, and creating a hub of power and organizing within the community.

Bushwick Ayuda Mutua (BAM) was born out of the 2020 COVID-19 crisis in response to a lack of government support and resources for the most vulnerable in our community. Bushwick Ayuda Mutua serves as a way for individuals to fight systems that seek to divide, is a deliberate and intentional community that prioritizes the marginalized, and aims to empower, prioritize, and give space to long-time residents. 100% volunteer run and community funded.

Additional Resources on Back!
On September 28th, join us for a panel discussion on the topic of mutual aid and its importance in supporting our communities during times of crisis. In recent years, mutual aid has gained momentum as a movement that promotes the idea of collective care and solidarity amongst community members. Our panel will explore the history, philosophy, and practical applications of mutual aid.

Additional Resources:

- CUNY Urban Food Policy Monitor – "Mutual Aid: Grassroots Food Sovereignty in NYC"

Books:
1. Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (And the Next) – Dean Spade
2. Hungry For Peace: how you can help end poverty and war with Food Not Bombs – Keith McHenry
3. Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice – Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

Articles and Zines:
1. Migrant community responses to the COVID-19 pandemic: Mutual aid at La Morada – Alexandra Délano Alonso and Daria Samway
3. How to start an Indigenous Mutual Aid COVID-19 Relief Project