

# 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.

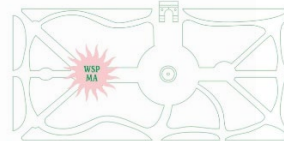


**Collective Focus** is a Mutual Aid that has operated a resource center on the border of Bushwick and Bedstuy since 2021. They build community resilience through free resource distribution and cultural, artistic & wellness programming and events.

Washington Square Park  
**MUTUAL AID**

Every Friday, 5-9pm  
West of the fountain

FREE FOOD, WATER, SANITARY ITEMS,  
CLOTHES, SHOES AND GOOD VIBES.



**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.

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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](#)”
- Spade, D. (2020). *Mutual aid: Building Solidarity during this crisis (and the next)*. Verso.
- Kropotkin, P., & Bonzo, N. O. (2021). *Mutual aid: An illuminated factor of evolution*. PM Press.
- Indigenous Mutual Aid, & Indigenous Action. (2020). *Zine: How to start an indigenous mutual aid covid-19 relief project*. Indigenous Mutual Aid. <https://www.indigenousmutualaid.org/mutual-aid-101-organizing-guide/>
- Nowell, C. (2020, September 26). *In the Navajo Nation, anarchism has indigenous roots*. The Nation. <https://www.thenation.com/article/activism/anarchism-navajo-aid/>
- Adereth, M. (2020, June 14). *The United States has a long history of mutual aid organizing*. Jacobin. <https://jacobin.com/2020/06/mutual-aid-united-states-unions>
- Nolt. (1998). Formal Mutual Aid Structures among American Mennonites and Brethren: Assimilation and Reconstructed Ethnicity. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 17(3), 71–86.
- Potorti. (2017). “Feeding the Revolution”: the Black Panther Party, Hunger, and Community Survival. *Journal of African American Studies* (New Brunswick, N.J.), 21(1), 85–110. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-017-9345-9>
- Pope, R.J., Flanagan, S.T. Revolution for Breakfast: Intersections of Activism, Service, and Violence in the Black Panther Party’s Community Service Programs. *Soc Just Res* 26, 445–470 (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-013-0197-8>
- Churchill, W. (2014). To disrupt, discredit, and destroy: the FBI’s secret war against the Black Panther Party. In K. Cleaver & G. Katsiaficas (Eds.), *Liberation, imagination, and the Black Panther Party: a new look at the Black Panthers and their legacy* (pp.78–117). New York: Routledge.
- McHenry, Keith. 2012. *Hungry For Peace: how you can help end poverty and war with Food Not Bombs*. Tuscon: See Sharp Press.
- Parson, S. (2014). Breaking bread, sharing soup, and smashing the state: Food not bombs and anarchist critiques of the neoliberal charity state. *Theory in Action*, 7(4), 33-51. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3798/tia.1937-0237.14026>
- Mould, O., Cole, J., Badger, A. & Brown, P. (2022) Solidarity, not charity: Learning the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic to reconceptualise the radicality of mutual aid. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 47, 866–879. Available from: <https://doi-org.ccnyc-proxy1.libccny.cuny.edu/10.1111/tran.12553>

### 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
2. [Solidarity, not charity: Learning the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic to reconceptualise the radicality of mutual aid](#) – Oli Mould, Jennifer Cole, Adam Badger, and Philip Brown
3. [How to start an Indigenous Mutual Aid COVID-19 Relief Project](#)