

NYC Council Members Visit South Asian Food Pantry

By STAFF WRITER

On a cold and blustery Friday in New York, City Council Members Peter Koo (District 20) and Daniel Dromm (District 25) dropped in at South Asian Food Pantry run by the South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS).

Councilmen Koo and Dromm interacted with community members lined up to get food, and also got a first-hand account of the entire operation, as they joined SACSS staff and volunteers in distributing the food.

The South Asian Food Pantry opened its doors in July 2016, giving out food to about 25 to 30 clients every week. Today it has grown to serve over 5,970 individuals annually, with 350 families getting food every week.

Because the pantry serves mostly South Asians, it has chosen to serve healthy vegetarian food which would be acceptable to the religious beliefs of clients who tend to be Hindus, Jains and Muslim clients. The pantry also allows clients the freedom to choose their own food which they can use to make meals matching their personal dietary preferences. It is open every Friday from 10:30 to 2:00 PM.

This program serves low-income and underserved



NYC Councilman Peter Koo hands out apple juice and oil to community members at the South Asian Food Pantry, Dec. 13, 2019.

South Asian and other immigrants in NYC – with particular emphasis on the borough of Queens. Many pantry recipients are immigrants isolated in their homes or communities, have low education levels, and high unemployment rates – all of which intensifies their poverty and risk for poor nutrition, SACSS said in a press release.

Sudha Acharya, executive director of SACSS, thanked

the council members for their continued support to the pantry and to the organization.

During the visit, Councilman Koo noted that SACSS is one of the “most successful, inclusive and much-needed social service organization” in Queens. Council Member Dromm, thanked the volunteers and staff for their commitment and dedication in ensuring that community members received vital food services.

The South Asian Council for Social Services was founded in 2000 in response to what founders and organizers saw were critical issues and barriers to social services faced by New York City’s fastest growing South Asian community.

Over the years, SACSS has adapted to the changing needs of the communities it serves and address related social, educational, economic, and cultural challenges facing them, addressing areas such as healthcare access, public benefits supports, food security, senior services, job readiness, civic engagement and case management.

More than 13,000 individuals are assisted yearly by a staff who can speak over 14 different languages to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of the diverse communities assisted by SACSS.