

In a Tizzy Over Taxes

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by *Ashley Goforth*

For the Food Bank, February means **tax assistance** is in high gear and heading full speed into the April 15 tax deadline. At the start of the month, the **Community Kitchen & Food Pantry of West Harlem** hosted a press conference to kick off the tax season and to remind New York City residents that many of them may be eligible for free tax-return preparation and electronic filing at **14 sites citywide** operated by the Food Bank's **Tax Assistance Program** and online through the IRS and New York State **Free File Alliance** programs. On hand to discuss the merits of the program was **Congressman Charles Rangel**; IRS Commissioner Douglas Schulman; NYC **Department of Consumer Affairs** Commissioner Jonathan Mintz; and **Human Resources Administration** Commissioner Robert Doar; Ed Black, President and CEO of the **Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA)**; and Brad Smith, President and CEO of **Intuit Inc.**

Then, on February 18, the Food Bank, **Capital One Bank** and the **Brooklyn Community Foundation** joined forces to bring attention to the program at the **Fulton Street Capital One**, where our program provides tax assistance for the northern Brooklyn community.

Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz joined Fran Freedman, LMSW, Deputy Commissioner, External Affairs NYC **Department of Consumer Affairs**; our Vice President of Agency Resources & Benefit Access Carlos Rodriguez and Capital One's Brooklyn Market President B.J. Duffy to extol the benefits of free tax assistance.

The Food Bank's Tax Assistance Program provides low-income New Yorkers with free tax preparation services as well as information on how to access the various credits they are entitled to – including the **Earned Income Tax Credit**, a key piece of the public safety net for the **working poor**. One of the largest programs of its type in the country, the Food Bank's Tax Assistance Program has completed up to 50,000 tax returns for low- to moderate-income New Yorkers annually — helping to provide as much as \$100



*Congressman Charles Rangel shows his support for strong student leadership as he chats with students trained as tax preparers from **Frederick Douglass Academy** and **Rice High School**.*



Our free tax services can constitute a significant step from food poverty toward self-sufficiency.



Food Bank Board Chair Rev. Henry Belin hosted our special

million in tax refunds.

If you think you may be eligible for EITC, use Intuit's free [EITC calculator](#) today. For a listing of the Food Bank's Tax Assistance Program sites, [click here](#).

Henry Deini hosted our special guest speakers at the kickoff event and emphasized the importance of community support for the program.