



Laurie M Tisch
ILLUMINATION FUND

FIRING IMAGINATION | SPARKING OPPORTUNITY | STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY



Healthy Food & Community Change

THE SITUATION

There are vast disparities in diet-related diseases across New York neighborhoods, where residents often have few options to buy healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Approximately 3 million New Yorkers live in low-income areas described as “food deserts.” Additionally, these communities have high rates of “food insecurity” – the federal government’s measure for hunger and food access. New York’s poorest neighborhoods are also its least healthy in terms of diet-related diseases.

The issues are complex, and there’s no magic bullet. Solutions should consider integrated strategies that work across all sectors of society. Healthy food is not just a matter of health – it creates economic opportunity, supports child development and builds strong communities.

WHAT’S NEXT: HEALTHY FOOD & COMMUNITY CHANGE INITIATIVE

The Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund is proud to launch its Healthy Food & Community Change initiative with a commitment of \$15 million over five years to healthy food initiatives across New York City – making it one of the largest donors addressing these problems in New York City. The Illumination Fund will support novel strategies to expand availability of healthy foods and promote healthy choices.

The Illumination Fund will target programs in high-need neighborhoods, creating hubs of activities and community engagement. Programs will be in collaboration with community-based organizations, citywide organizations, public agencies, and academic institutions. The Illumination Fund is setting out to inspire healthier communities in NYC through:

- **Teachers College, Columbia University:** A flagship component of the initiative is the establishment of the **Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy** at Teachers College, Columbia University. The new Center will provide cutting-edge research, policy evaluation and training for the next generation of nutrition professionals.
- **Neighborhood-based Strategies:** The Illumination Fund will support community food projects in underserved neighborhoods, including City Harvest, LISC, community development corporations, NYC Green Cart partners and others.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** The Illumination Fund will support creative public-private partnerships that improve access to and education about healthy foods in New York City, with organizations such as Wholesome Wave, New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, New York City Coalition Against Hunger and Share Our Strength.
- **Good Neighbor grants:** The Illumination Fund will provide grants for impactful programs in the area of hunger/food security and nutrition education, including Wellness in the Schools and the United Way of NYC.

This commitment reflects the Illumination Fund’s principles of using philanthropy and public-private partnerships to empower community change, and demonstrates Laurie Tisch’s commitment to improving the well-being and quality of life of New Yorkers.

“We believe that progress will come from empowering communities in New York to identify their own areas of need and providing the tools to implement change. The new Healthy Food and Community Change initiative aims to inspire healthier communities through partnership and community engagement.”

LAURIE M. TISCH, PRESIDENT,
LAURIE M. TISCH ILLUMINATION FUND

WHAT WE’VE DONE

Since its inception, the Illumination Fund has supported novel strategies to expand availability of healthy foods and promote healthy choices through systemic change and partnerships with deep-reaching community-based institutions. The foundation’s support of healthy food programs in New York began in 2008 with a partnership with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to launch the NYC Green Cart Initiative. Today, there are approximately 500 street vendors selling fresh produce in neighborhoods that previously had limited access to healthy foods, creating hundreds of jobs and setting a new national standard for health promotion and economic opportunity that is being adapted in other cities.