

# Wyandanch

Community Advisory Board

## In This Newsletter

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## Spring Events

*Seed Library at the Wyandanch Public Library, through the end of May*

*Girls Inc. of Long Island, Summer Program Registration*

*Youth Entrepreneur Mentorship Program, starts May 20th*

*Wyandanch Day, June 10.*

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## Seed Libraries for Food Justice

*Article & Photos: Tara Lauther, Long Island University, Wyandanch CAB  
Graphic: Geydi Ventura Diaz, Wyandanch Memorial HS, Wyandanch CAB*

**I**n the heart of Long Island, Wyandanch is a beacon of hope and resilience in the fight for food security - every child and adult should have access to healthy and affordable foods. This spring, the Wyandanch Public Library joined that fight. Tahira Ahmad, the Youth Services Librarian, launched the Seed Library on April 1, 2023.

According to the Wyandanch Public Library, "A seed library is a place where community members can get seeds for free or for a nominal fee and is run for the public benefit. Many seed libraries are open in public libraries and community centers." Tahira Ahmad says the Wyandanch Library is much more than "just books." **The purpose of the seed library is to bring the community together.**

Seed libraries are a great tool for educating the community about healthy eating and integrating healthy habits into daily life.

**Each Wyandanch family can choose a maximum of 4 packets of seeds each time they visit the library.** They will be asked to fill out a

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required form to get their seeds. A binder is available with information about the best time to plant the seeds and care instructions for each plant.

Before she worked at Wyandanch Public Library, Tahria Ahmad was the head of youth services at Elmont Public Library. That is where she first learned about seed libraries. When starting the seed library in Wyandanch, Ahmad got in touch with her colleagues at the Elmont Public Library. She only expected to get about 500 seeds. With the help of multiple partnerships, including the generous donation of seed packets from Cassidy Kirch of Island Harvest, the Wyandanch Public Library received about **3,000 seeds** to add to its library. **Ahmad emphasizes that “collaboration betters a community”.**

*A look inside the Seed Library at Wyandanch Public Library.*



Island Harvest is an important community partner. As the largest hunger relief organization on Long Island, it is making a significant impact in combating food insecurity. With over 300 partner agencies, they collect and distribute food, and rescue edible items that would otherwise go to waste. **Annually, they move approximately 14 million pounds of food and provide meals for around 300,000 people.** Cassidy Kirch, who focuses on food production, spearheads the Giving Gardens program, which includes seed libraries.

Seed libraries play a vital role in Island Harvest's efforts. Cassidy collects donations and materials from the community for gardening and distributes them to various community gardens, schools, houses of worship, shelters, and more. These organizations grow food for their communities, some even have food pantries on-site. Any surplus produce is donated back to Island Harvest's distribution warehouse.

Island Harvest focuses solely on Long Island, encompassing Suffolk and Nassau counties. However, it is crucial to recognize that food insecurity is often misunderstood or overlooked on Long Island. **Pre-pandemic statistics revealed that approximately one in ten Long Islanders faced food insecurity. Rising food prices today have created new food insecurities, just as COVID support services have ended.**

*65,000 children on Long Island suffer from food insecurity. This is 29.4% of the 221,000 Long Islanders who are estimated to be food insecure.*



Source: Long Island Cares, 2022

Seed libraries in the United States play a crucial role in promoting sustainable agriculture and preserving seed diversity. There are more than 450 seed libraries globally, with most of them located in the United States (Peekhaus, 2018). According to the University of Chicago Press Journals, seed libraries demonstrate a shift away from a focus on physical elements of the library and towards people and the community. **By providing access to seeds and educational resources, seed libraries empower individuals and communities to actively participate in creating a more sustainable and resilient food system.**

People want to know what's in their food. The library and its partners want the community to be aware of how accessible healthy eating can be. This community seed bank is a great way for users to begin a home garden, grow a plant for the first time, and access non-GMO seeds. The program will run until the end of May and the library encourages anyone who is interested to partake in the seed bank. The Wyandanch Library also provides resources for financial aid, medical assistance, legal advice, and free museum passes for families. **By coming together as a community, Wyandanch can help alleviate hunger and ensure a more secure future for young Long Islanders.**

A special thank you to:

Tahira Ahmad,  
Wyandanch Public Library

Cassidy Kirch,  
Island Harvest

#togetherfortotalwellness



*References*

Dean, H. (2018). A Place for Seed Libraries in Higher Education: Setting the stage for new outreach and Engagement Initiatives. *Journal of New Librarianship*, 3(2), 262–275. <https://doi.org/10.21173/newlibs/5/14>

*Our Impact.* (2022). Long Island Cares. Retrieved from <https://www.licares.org/who-we-are/impact/>

Peekhaus, W. (2018). Seed libraries: Sowing the seeds for community and Public Library Resilience. *The Library Quarterly*, 88(3), 271–285. <https://doi.org/10.1086/697706>

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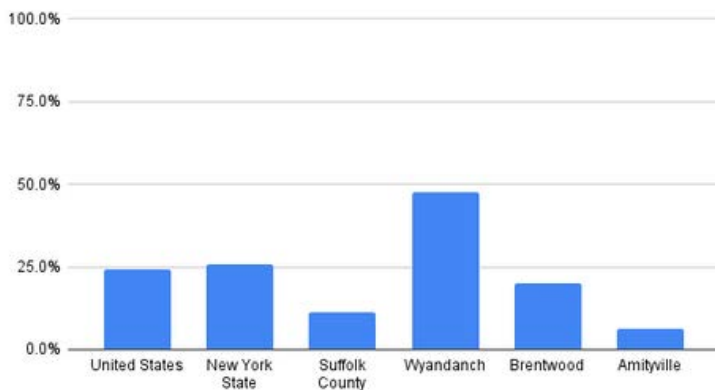
# FOOD SECURITY

By Benjamin Lee and Zachary Lee,  
Wyandanch CAB

## Wyandanch, New York



Percentage of Households Which Received Economic/Nutritional Aid in 2021



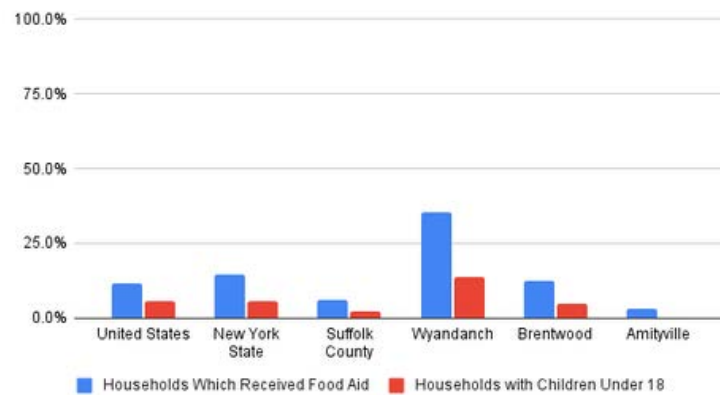
About **Half** of Wyandanch Households Receive Aid<sup>1</sup>

48% of households in Wyandanch receive food or economic aid, which is significantly higher than households in Suffolk County, New York State, and surrounding locations.

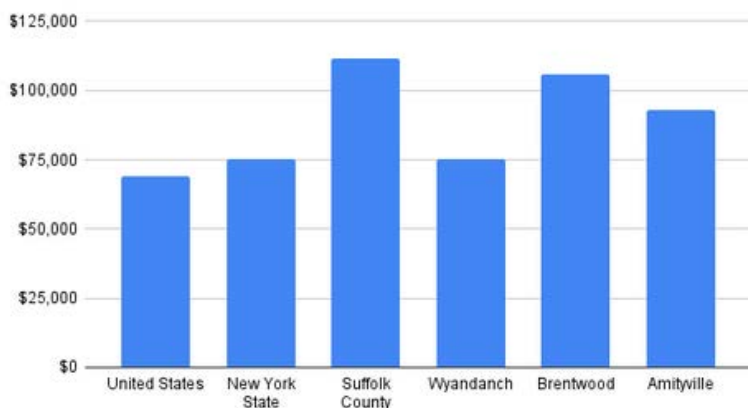
**1 in 8** Wyandanch Households with Children Receive Food Aid<sup>2</sup>

Wyandanch has a much greater percentage of households, both with (red) and without (blue) children, receiving food aid in comparison to other locations.

Percentage of Households Which Received Food Aid in 2021



Median Income in 2021



Income<sup>3</sup>

The median income of Wyandanch is lower than that of Brentwood and Amityville but comparable to the United States and New York State.

References:

1) United States Census Bureau (2021). Receipt of supplemental security income (SSI), cash public assistance income, or food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by household type for children under 18 years in households American community survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from: <https://censusreporter.org>

2) United States Census Bureau (2021). Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by presence of children under 18 years by household type for households American community survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from: <https://censusreporter.org>

3) United States Census Bureau (2021). Median household income in the past 12 months (In 2021 inflation-adjusted dollars) American community survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from: <https://censusreporter.org>