A number of relatively poor New York City neighborhoods are characterized by a health crisis stemming from the twin problems of obesity and hunger. While these areas are often referred to as “food deserts,” findings suggest that lack of physical access to healthy food is not the sole cause of unhealthy eating. In this paper, these neighborhoods are referred to as “nutritionally insecure.” Information provided comes from a literature review, interviews, a survey, site visit, and a review of government documents. Findings suggest that the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) program, which incentivizes large-format supermarkets, does not adequately address nutritional insecurity. This paper asserts that food cooperatives can alleviate some of the causes of nutritional insecurity by empowering residents to work together to change their food environment. Because of their participatory business model, food coops can offer high quality food at lower cost. Because of their role as social institutions, coops can foster environments in which members teach and learn techniques for healthy eating.