

2021 The Vision for a Food-secure South Jersey is NOW

COVID-19: FBSJ IS HERE FOR THE LONG HAUL

Individuals facing hunger deserve compassion and support. Hunger in itself is an everyday disaster that leaves families worried, stressed and at greater risk of developing chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. At the core of the Food Bank of South Jersey's vision is to see residents living a happy, productive and fulfilled life. Every South Jersey resident should have access to the most fundamental of human needs - FOOD, healthy, nutritious FOOD!

In 2020, FBSJ faced its greatest challenge yet; and, the organization with its long-standing 35-year history of being a steady, reliable resource for residents facing instability, was needed now more than ever. We stretched our capacity to new levels of output and did our best to ensure families facing hunger weren't left devoid of the nourishments vital for the body and soul. We operated at a sustained, intense pace for 10 months with little to no reprieve. And, it was all worth it to see families, veterans, mothers, fathers, children and grandparents go to their respective homes with the nutrition supplies necessary to live healthy sustainable lives.

Seeing our mission in action brought tears of gratitude to residents waiting in long lines to get food; it brought joy to our staff after many hours of incredible hard work; and, it brought confidence to our donors who entrusted us to serve our beloved community on their behalf, especially at a time of great need.

The COVID-19 pandemic produced an economic crisis unlike anything since the Great Depression. A November 19, 2020 article by Sophie Nieto-Munoz for NJ.com reported that nearly 1.8 million NJ workers had filed unemployment claims since mid-March. "Of those, 1.47 million were eligible, with 96% receiving at least one payment." While recovery in 2021 looks promising, there are still many more New Jerseyans struggling with poverty and food insecurity.

As FBSJ plans to support the prolonged impact of the pandemic on South Jersey, we're predicting an 18- to 24-month COVID-19 response timeline and building a corresponding financial forecast which will enable us to maintain a robust operation.

THE SHIFTED GOALPOSTS: FOOD INSECURITY SETBACK

The COVID-19 pandemic has stalled and in some cases reversed much of the progress made in the food security space. *Feeding America reports that before the pandemic, national food insecurity levels were the lowest they had been in 20 years, yet 35.2 million individuals, including 10.7 million children, lived in food-insecure households. Today, the research (combining analyses at the national, state, county, and congressional district levels) shows that the number of people who are food insecure could rise to more than 50 million, including 17 million children.

This trend holds true for South Jersey as well. 1 IN 7 of our neighbors here in South Jersey may struggle with hunger this year, and an estimated 61,000 additional residents may be left with no choice but to seek charitable food assistance. 26,650 are projected to be children.

**Feeding America: Projections based upon annual average unemployment rising to 10.5% and annual poverty rising to 14.4%.*

BURLINGTON	CAMDEN
57.4%↑	48%↑
1 in 9 People	1 in 7 People
1 in 5 Children	1 in 4 Children
GLOUCESTER	SALEM
60.8%↑	40%↑
1 in 8 People	1 in 6 People
1 in 5 Children	1 in 4 Children

At the heart of our organization is the belief that no person – young or old – should go hungry.



THE IMPACT: THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE FED

COVID-19 presented a complex crisis of increased demand, declines in donations of food, and disruptions to the charitable food assistance system's operating model. Generous support has enabled us to be proactive in meeting the economic challenges resulting from the health crisis.

Approximately 40 percent of the individuals who came to our food distributions were first-time recipients of charitable food assistance, driven to the Food Bank by the crushing economic consequence of COVID-19.

TRANSLATING THE IMPACT: WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE



99,573 Emergency Food Boxes Distributed



Nearly 100,000 pre-packaged emergency food boxes filled with highly nutritious foods (that are enough to last about one week) were distributed safely through a newly-instituted drive-thru model.



210 Partner Agencies

FBSJ has invested over a million dollars in infrastructure and resources to strengthen its partnering agencies' food distribution capacity.



998,991
Children's Meals Provided



Nearly 1,000,000 meals were served to growing children relieving their hunger and bringing them joy and much-needed continuity.



22.5
Million Pounds of Food

18.7
Million Meals

This 45 percent increase over 2019 brought food relief, hope and peace of mind to worried families.

FBSJ's nutrition education programming included an evidence-based curriculum from the CDC National Diabetes Prevention Program, Prevent T2 and a 12-month program shown to cut the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.



409 Nutrition Education Programs Completed
872 Educational Sessions Delivered

Participants engaged in a fun, live cooking class and also received free ingredients, supplies and recipes to promote easy learning and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.



318
Mobile Food Pantry Distributions



Covering an estimated 250,000 miles, FBSJ trucks filled with produce, dairy, meat, poultry, eggs and non-perishable food items left our distribution center (almost daily) and headed for neighborhoods where people reside, making food access a possibility for all.

11,987 Volunteer Hours Donated



Thousands of kind, compassionate individuals donated their time and talent to help those in need.

58+ Communities Served



FBSJ took a step closer to bridging the hunger gap by connecting the diverse South Jersey landscape of urban, suburban and rural communities with much-needed food resources.



95,000 Residents Received Food Monthly



Almost 100,000 living, breathing reasons for us to keep going! Every human being deserves to have access to food and to enjoy the benefits of a healthy meal.

2021 AND BEYOND: STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOUTH JERSEY

One of the four pillars of the Food Bank of South Jersey's strategic plan is to adopt a forward-looking mindset that seeks opportunities, identifies future challenges and proactively plans for them. This crisis has reinforced the integral role FBSJ plays in helping to create a stronger, thriving and food-secure South Jersey. As FBSJ plans to support the prolonged impact of the pandemic on South Jersey, our long-term priorities include:

- Increasing our procurement of food resources to align with the growth of hunger-relief programs.
- Increasing our warehouse's capacity to respond to the need for a redesigned operational infrastructure.
- Becoming an official NJ SNAP Outreach vendor to educate, facilitate and connect eligible recipients with SNAP benefits.
- Establishing satellite HUBs to increase access to food resources to the least developed and most isolated communities FBSJ serves.
- Providing funding to 13 partner agencies to build capacity for expanding their at-home food delivery services to home-bound seniors.
- Expanding our Pop-Up (mobile) Pantries by at least 50% and incorporating financial/technical assistance programs.
- Teaching residents (through a virtual kitchen) how to prepare and consume healthy foods through our nutrition education programming.
- Maintaining a robust operation that addresses the increased food demand, increased cost to purchase food, increased labor impact, increased distribution and equipment costs, along with accounting for the declines in donations and volunteer support.
- Continuing to meet the rising demand for nutritious food from residents relying on our support for the first time.
- Providing healthy, nutritious meals to children through our robust year-round feeding programs.
- Partnering with a local municipality to host monthly food distributions for constituents devastated by unemployment, poverty and food insecurity.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

We have the potential to emerge from this crisis stronger and even better positioned to meet the evolving needs of our community.



We will FEED the line: We will continue to bring millions of pounds of food into our communities, from wellness food boxes to large distributions, from child feeding programs to senior feeding programs – we will continue to feed South Jersey.

We commit to SHORTEN the line: With an organizational vision to continue to grow our neighborhood reach and infuse South Jersey with sustainable health and wellness strategies, we commit to doing all we can to shorten the line and rebuild food security for many – and introduce food security to many more. Providing food is not the cure for systemic, concentrated poverty, it is part of a larger solution that helps those who need temporary food assistance. As we emerge into the future, we as a community need to do much more by providing opportunities to eliminate the inequities which adversely affect the communities we serve. In that vein, we'll further deepen our engagement with stakeholders, donors and community partners, working collectively to bring forth a new future that will empower individuals to eventually step out of the cycle of food insecurity.

We will work tirelessly to ELIMINATE the line: While food insecurity will be pervasive during 2021 and, in all likelihood, a component of our community for years to come, we will endeavor to expand and institute programming, services and resources to, one day, eliminate the line – bringing food security to all South Jersey households.

We know the impact of this crisis will continue at a high level long after the story of families seeking food assistance has left the public eye. We are incredibly grateful for the outpouring of community support we have seen over the past year. We are judiciously drawing upon these resources to meet today's need and plan for the recovery ahead.



THE FUNDING NEEDS:
THE GREATEST NEED IS FOOD



FBSJ saw a 72 percent decrease in community food donations from 2019 to 2020, which is 308,467 pounds of food LESS.

- 2019: 424,253 pounds of food donated
- 2020: 115,786 pounds of food donated



GIVING OPPORTUNITIES:
HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE WORK

GIFT AMOUNT	NUMBER OF GIFTS	TOTAL
\$500,000	2	\$1,000,000
\$250,000	4	\$1,000,000
\$150,000	4	\$6,000,000
\$100,000	5	\$500,000
\$75,000	6	\$450,000
\$50,000	8	\$400,000
\$25,000	10	\$250,000
\$15,000	20	\$300,000
\$10,000	20	\$200,000
\$5,000	40	\$200,000
\$2,500	40	\$100,000

**93.5% of contributions go directly into hunger-relief programs that serve adults, children and seniors.
* Based on 2019 financial audit.*

\$1=3 MEALS

**TOTAL: \$5,000,000
15,000,000 MEALS**



ROSARIO



EDIEL



MARITZA



RUTH



SHARON

Sharon Menezes
RECIPIENT AND VOLUNTEER
COMMISSION 2 SERVE
INTERNATIONAL CHURCH



ISABEL



THE MISSION AT WORK

Rosario, Cherry Hill Resident

Rosario is 77. A widow for more than 12 years, Rosario and her husband had no children. Her nearest relatives live in New York – a sister and her family. Once a month, Rosario visits a food pantry in her town in South Jersey – Cherry Hill. She receives fresh produce, canned goods, chicken, tuna fish, fresh breads and muffins, crackers, cookies, soups, beans, rice, pasta, cereals – and more. Rosario counts the days each month as her visit to her local pantry comes closer. She views her pantry days as her grocery days – the days her kitchen gets filled with food. “I could not do without going to the food pantry,” Rosario shares. “I depend on the food I get – it’s important for my life. The food pantry is how I have enough food to make it from one month to the next – it is how I survive and stay as healthy as I can be at this time of my life.”

Ediel, Camden City Student

When Ediel Velazquez first participated in the Food Bank of South Jersey’s Health & Wellness programs, he was just starting middle school at Cooper B. Hatch Family School in Camden. The program Ediel experienced was Cooking Matters for Kids, a component of the program Cooking Matters, which empowers families with the tools and strategies to stretch their budget in order to cook healthy meals. Today, at 18, with a focus on supporting and demonstrating a message of healthy food understanding, nutritious food preparation and youth hunger awareness, Ediel serves as a Nutrition Assistant at the Food Bank. Ediel has grown from a shy middle schooler into a powerful youth leader – with a passion for sharing the importance of healthy eating.

Maritza, Mother of Two

Impacted by job loss due to COVID-19, Maritza and her husband found it difficult to make ends meet. Maritza, a housekeeper, and her husband, a construction worker, struggled throughout 2020 to maintain their household bills and keep their two young children, Matthew and Cielo, comfortable and well fed. “The situation is very bad. I love my job and every day, it is a struggle.” Turning to the support of charitable food assistance, Maritza and her family were able to sustain throughout 2020, avoiding the crisis of empty plates and hungry bedtimes for Matthew and Cielo.

Ruth, Pennsauken Hope Mobile Distribution Recipient

The Food Bank of South Jersey has helped us out tremendously during this pandemic. The kids being out of school, they are eating twice as much now at home – it’s been a crisis for many families keeping up with school closings and job loss. This food bank has helped us enormously, sending all this food – thank you ever so much for everything.

Sharon, Burlington County Resident and Pantry Volunteer

As the COVID-19 crisis impacted her family with job loss and financial hardships, Burlington County resident Sharon Menezes opened her home to family members in need – bringing Sharon’s household to a total of 10 people, including grandchildren, nieces and nephews. For Sharon and the members of her family living under her roof, money for food became a struggle. Seeking to maintain a home with healthy meals and full plates, Sharon turned to the Food Bank of South Jersey for vital food resources. “By the time March came around, everything changed. I am grateful for the food support we received at a time when we needed it most.”

Isabel, Camden County Resident

Isabel Garcia was desperate to feed her family as she pulled into the parking lot of the Food Bank of South Jersey one cold morning in 2020. Isabel, who had first received vital food support provided by the Food Bank of South Jersey in Puerto Rico, having survived Hurricane Maria’s devastation to her island home in 2017, was hopeful that, once again, her family would find food with the charitable organization. Now a resident of South Jersey, Isabel was struggling to feed her daughters, pay her father’s medical bills and life-sustaining prescription costs and keep her household together. Her cold morning visit to the Pennsauken headquarters resulted in an emergency supply of nutritious food to sufficiently feed her family for two weeks. She was also given the vital information that she was eligible for a variety of food resources – and the knowledge that her elderly father was also entitled to receive food assistance. With tears of joy in her eyes, and armed with enough food to feed her family for two weeks, Isabel was finally able to breathe a sigh of relief in the knowledge her family would be fed, and better days were ahead.

** Photos featured are not all actual images of individuals cited.*



COMMUNITY & EVENTS
Donations up, but record need for Food Bank of South Jersey

By Katherine Scott
London, December 24, 2005



35 Years of Standing Strong with South Jersey



Live Local. Give Local.

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