

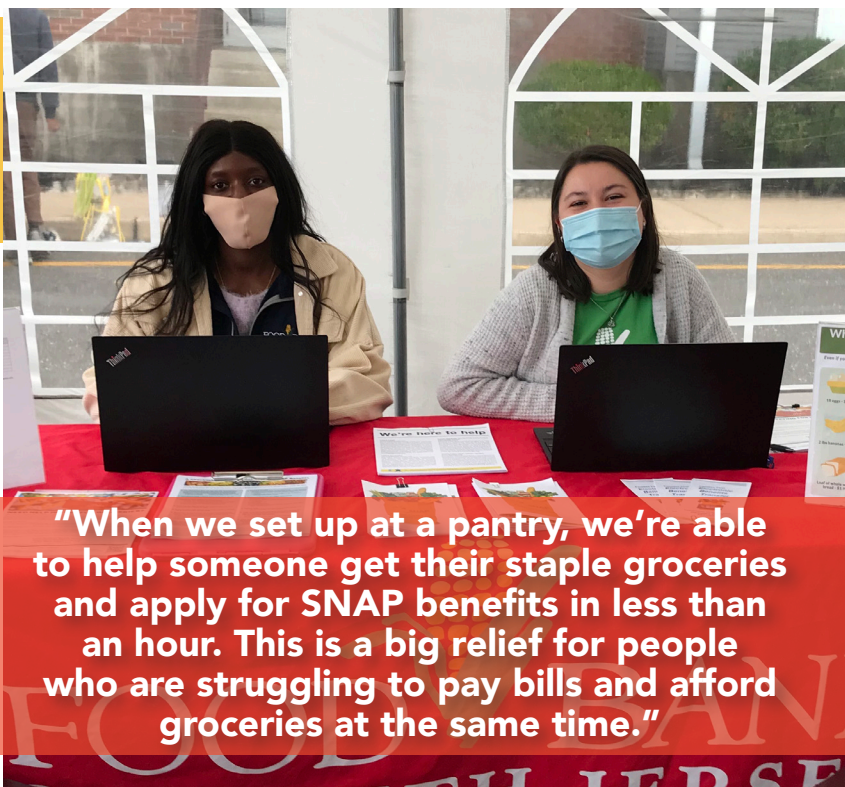
## THE DYNAMIC DUO OF SNAP OUTREACH

The NJ SNAP program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) provides vital resources for underserved populations to improve food security and helps those struggling to afford groceries. In October 2021, the Food Bank of South Jersey brought together the talents of two coordinators to launch a SNAP application assistance program for residents in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem counties.

Kaya Durkee and Talia Smith, FBSJ's dynamic duo of SNAP Outreach, engage residents in our service area to bring awareness to the program, assist with the application process and answer any questions to provide more clarity on the program. While SNAP outreach is a newer venture for FBSJ, Talia and Kaya have been assisting with South Jersey hunger relief programs for quite some time.

Talia first started with FBSJ's Health and Wellness team as a Healthy Pantry Initiative Educator in 2019. Her role consisted of bringing healthy food options to our network of partner agencies in South Jersey through nutrition education and cooking demonstrations using items commonly distributed at our pantries.

Kaya first joined FBSJ as an AmeriCorps Summer VISTA in 2019, then again in 2020 as Summer Meals Coordinator, overseeing Mobile Cafe logistics, training, and assisting with



**"When we set up at a pantry, we're able to help someone get their staple groceries and apply for SNAP benefits in less than an hour. This is a big relief for people who are struggling to pay bills and afford groceries at the same time."**

program audits. She then became the Community Impact Coordinator for our Programs and Services team before moving to her current role.

Both Talia and Kaya have taken on SNAP Outreach with the same passion and mission-focused drive that led to the success in their previous FBSJ roles. Thanks to the continued work of Talia and Kaya, a more sustainable South Jersey is on the horizon.



# A Taste of Compassion

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OUR PEOPLE. OUR IMPACT.

To learn more about NJ SNAP or other ways the Food Bank of South Jersey is finding sustainable solutions to improve lives for South Jersey residents, visit [foodbanksj.org/sustainability](http://foodbanksj.org/sustainability)



### DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Elias Bitar

It's a unique title – Chief Family Officer. That's how Elias Bitar describes himself – as the Chief Family Officer for Norma's restaurant located in Cherry Hill. The restaurant, founded by his parents and named for his mother, has been a part of the area for 30 years.

Recently Elias ran a campaign during the holidays to encourage his patrons to support the Food Bank of South Jersey. He took that money raised and added his own substantial donation that will provide over 150,000 meals to South Jersey residents in need. This effort is in keeping with his family's

philosophy of always giving back to the community. "We found ourselves in a unique position of doing well [during the pandemic], due to hard-work and years of involvement in the community," Elias said. "We received more than ever and therefore gave more than ever. What is best for the community is parity and balance."

Elias has been a longtime supporter of the Food Bank of South Jersey, including bringing his sons to volunteer for a day of service. After meeting with leaders at FBSJ, he knew his personal philosophy lined up with the Food Bank's and that every dollar would have an impact.



**OUR MISSION:** The Food Bank of South Jersey exists to provide an immediate solution to the urgent problem of hunger by providing food to people in need, teaching them to eat nutritiously, and helping them to find sustainable ways to improve their lives.



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- IN THIS ISSUE:**
- 2 A Message from the President & CEO
  - 3 Partner Spotlight - Pastor Georgia Dennis
  - 4 The Dynamic Duo of SNAP

# OUR PEOPLE – YOUR IMPACT

So much goes into an operation that moved 17.9 million pounds of food last year. One that also provided more than 860,000 meals to kids who were not receiving meals in schools when they went remote.

It takes technology, warehouse equipment, a transportation fleet, purchasing operations. But first and foremost – it takes people. A passionate staff. Dedicated donors and supporters. And committed volunteers.

What drives that volunteer who shows up every day in the middle of a COVID outbreak to pack food to distribute to other seniors? That Pastor whose food pantry goes above and beyond to serve all the needs of her congregation? Or that donor whose business had success during the challenge of the pandemic and the first thing he thought of was how to help others?

Everyone has a unique story from where they have come. That background, and the many influences someone faces over time, often come together to develop our true purpose. At the Food Bank of South Jersey, we will always put our purpose first. For the year ahead, we will continue our focus on how we work with our neighbors and help to advance their interests. We are committed to advancing equitable outcomes for everyone we serve. And we will recognize that our organization's purpose must be authorized by the power and voice of those impacted by our work.

We are always Better Together. And our impact will always be measured not just in numbers, but by the people we touch and the people who work side by side with us to serve South Jersey.

Yours in fighting for food equity,



Fred C. Wasiak  
President & CEO



## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: Pastor Georgia Dennis

**It was a very difficult decision. With a civil war raging in her home country of Liberia, there was devastation everywhere. Pastor Georgia Dennis had everything in Liberia, her family and she was going to school there. But she kept dreaming about coming to the United States. And then she received a nudge.**

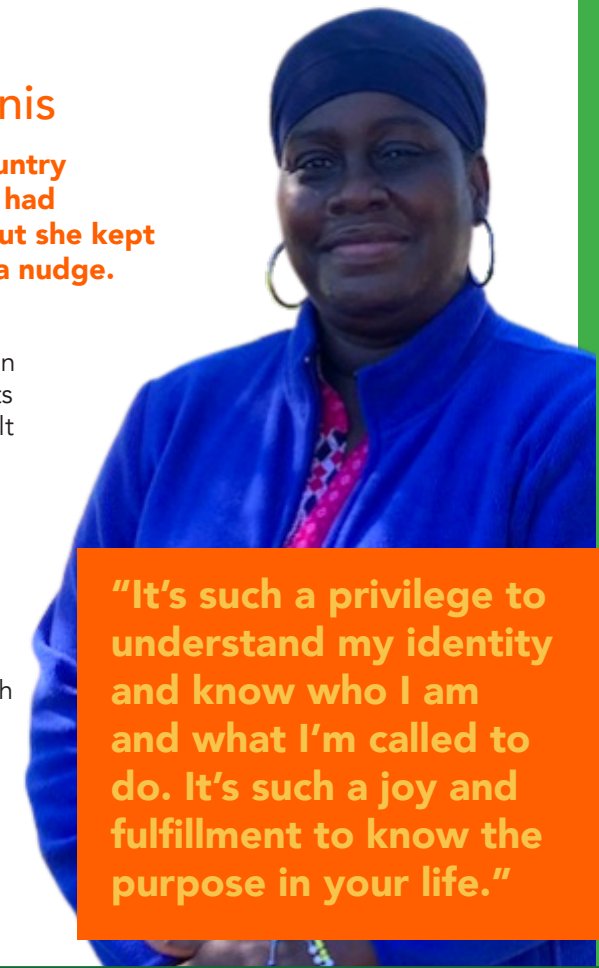
"My uncle was an international businessman and he traveled all over," Pastor Georgia recalled. "He said to me your future is too bright. There is no way you can stay here." So at the age of 20 she made the difficult decision to leave her parents and her family and come to the United States. While she was nervous, she also felt it was destiny, and she had great appreciation for how her parents raised her.

"We always have to look at the good that comes from a bad situation," she said. Pastor Georgia is always finding the good.

Following a calling that she received, in 2000 she and her husband opened their church Love Ministries International, Inc. in Pennsauken. And soon after she opened a food pantry as part of the church.

Pastor Georgia's food pantry serves the community multiple days a week and each month thousands come for the food distribution at Love Ministries International, Inc. She knows this was something she was born to do.

"Just to know at the end of the day, when I lay down, knowing that somebody is glad that they are eating. They're able to go home and I see that fear and uncertainty of food insecurity vanish."



**"It's such a privilege to understand my identity and know who I am and what I'm called to do. It's such a joy and fulfillment to know the purpose in your life."**

## 2021 COMMUNITY IMPACT SNAPSHOT

**17.9 MILLION POUNDS** of food distributed

**59,000 PEOPLE** fed monthly through our agency partners

**868,577 SUMMER MEALS** served to children

**2,259 PEOPLE EDUCATED** through nutrition courses

**7,157 SENIORS FED** through Twilight Harvest program

**3,268 INDIVIDUALS** volunteered

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Diane Snipas

**"People were very appreciative of the actions of FBSJ, getting food out to the community and appreciated the staff and volunteers being out there, even in the cold weather, getting food out."**



As a nurse, even through the height and stress of the pandemic, Diane Snipas wanted to do more. She started volunteering with the Food Bank of South Jersey in 2020 and has been volunteering since.

Diane is one of the many volunteers that are the backbone and driving force of FBSJ's activities in the community. We couldn't do the job we do without the help of our volunteers.

When the pandemic started, Diane felt the need to get out of the house and give back to the community. She didn't want anyone to go hungry. "Food insecurity is something no one should deal with." Diane said. "It felt great to be able to put some more action into my efforts. I enjoyed it from the get-go."

Diane volunteers at many of our Pop-Up Pantries in places like Willingboro, Lakeside, and the Greens to name a few, assisting with distributing food throughout our communities. During the early days of the pandemic, Diane said "people were very appreciative of the actions of FBSJ, getting food out to the community and people appreciated the staff and volunteers being out there, even in the cold weather, getting food out."

Diane enjoys being able to give back and has a sense of satisfaction knowing she is helping the communities. She enjoys meeting people, making friends and the camaraderie she shares with other volunteers, staff, and community members. Diane is now retired from nursing and enjoys playing pickleball when she's not volunteering at a Pop-Up Pantry.