

# HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE & END-OF-YEAR GIVING

As the holidays approach, we're reminded of the power of community. Our **Holiday Food Drive on Saturday, November 22** is a chance for community members and businesses to come together and make a tangible impact. Every can, box, and dollar helps us provide meals and hope to families facing hunger this season.

This year, the need is especially great. Federal funding cuts and reduced SNAP benefits are putting additional strain on food banks and the families we serve. Community support is more critical than ever to help us keep pace with the rising demand for food assistance.

As we near the end of the year and **Giving Tuesday** approaches on **December 2**, we invite you to consider a gift to the Food Bank of South Jersey. Your tax-deductible gift helps us purchase food, expand programs, and respond to growing needs.

Every dollar makes a difference.



## GET INVOLVED: VOLUNTEER WITH US

### When One Person Steps Up, Communities Grow Stronger

Looking for a meaningful way to make a difference? Volunteering at the Food Bank of South Jersey is a hands-on experience that connects you to your community and helps provide food for neighbors in need. From sorting donations to assisting at distributions, every hour you give strengthens our fight against hunger in South Jersey.

Ready to make an impact?

Learn more at [foodbanksj.org/volunteer](https://foodbanksj.org/volunteer).



# A Taste of Compassion

A Publication of the Food Bank of South Jersey

## A SEASON OF FEEDING SOUTH JERSEY



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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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LOOKING BACK WITH GRATITUDE, FORWARD WITH HOPE

*"If you are reading this message, then you should feel good about your relationship with the Food Bank of South Jersey's mission. Somehow, somewhere along the way, you had a part in helping someone improve and nourish their life in spirit, mind, body and heart through your gift of selflessness. For this, the Food Bank of South Jersey is grateful."*

That was part of my opening in my first Taste of Compassion newsletter seven years ago. Today, as I share my last piece before I retire at the end of the year, it's hard not to think of all the somehows and somewheres I've been a part of along the way.

Somehow, our organization pivoted in the middle of a global pandemic to keep operations open and respond to one of the greatest food insecurity moments of the last 100 years, thanks to our passionate staff and dedicated volunteers.

Somewhere, throughout four counties in South Jersey, there are 300 community partners that step up every day to meet our neighbors with dignity and with hugs to ease the burden.



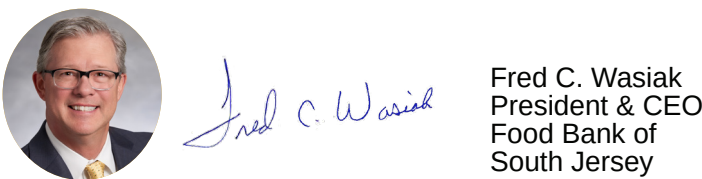
And somehow, the Food Bank has made it through what I will call all the ambiguous challenges – never knowing what's coming next.

With the help of so many, we've expanded programs, innovated approaches, and found new ways to reach and help our most vulnerable populations.

I hope you've felt a part of "helping someone improve and nourish their life in spirit, mind, body and heart" through your partnership with FBSJ.

I would love to say food insecurity is on the decline after seven years. But we often don't have control over the ambiguous factors that challenge us in so many ways. As we face a difficult current environment, I know, somehow and somewhere, the Food Bank of South Jersey will rise and respond with hope.

I'm forever grateful for your partnership and support.



A NEW SPACE FOR LEARNING, HEALING, AND COMMUNITY

FBSJ is excited to introduce the **Center for Health, Wellness & Nutrition** – a new space designed to empower our neighborhoods through education, connection, and support.

The 20,856-square-foot facility was created to meet the growing need for nutrition access, education, and opportunity across our region. The Center expands the reach of our Health & Wellness Department, offering hands-on, evidence-based programs that help individuals and families make lasting lifestyle changes and help reduce food waste.

This center will host cooking classes, wellness workshops, and community programs, but it's more than a classroom – it's a place where neighbors come together to learn, grow, and thrive.



WHERE OUR FOOD COMES FROM – AND WHERE IT GOES

Every weekday, the Food Bank of South Jersey moves thousands of pounds of food to where it's needed most. Not every month. Not even every week, but every day.

Last year alone, we distributed more than 23 million pounds of food, helping ensure that families, seniors, and children had access to the nourishment they need.

Most of the food we distribute is purchased – which is why financial support is so critical – but we also receive generous donations from food industry allies, local retailers, and many more incredible partners that keep South Jersey plates full of food.

So far this year, we've distributed more than **17.7 million pounds of food and produce**, with more than **1.5 million pounds** coming from New Jersey farmers.

Once food arrives at our warehouse, it's sorted, packed, and distributed to a network of about 300 community partners across Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem counties.

These agencies – including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and other community-focused organizations – are the heart of our hunger-relief efforts.

As Tess Holley of the Neighborhood Center in Camden, one of our vital partner agencies, shares: "Somebody might have a job today and might not have a job tomorrow. If they can get a free meal and then use their money for something else, that's what happens. It helps people stretch what they have and keep their families going."

These partners ensure that our neighbors know where to turn in times of need.



FEEDING OUR MOST VULNERABLE NEIGHBORS

Hunger doesn't affect everyone equally. That's why we focus on reaching those most at risk, particularly our South Jersey children and seniors.

Through our **Kids Thrive 365** programs, we provide nutritious meals and snacks to children on the weekends and during the summer months when they might otherwise go without. These meals help children stay energized, focused, and ready to learn, while also easing the burden on parents who are working hard to stretch tight household budgets. In addition, our afterschool partnerships and nutrition education programs give kids the tools they need to build healthy habits for life.



For older adults, we offer a variety of programs to help ensure they have access to nutritious food that supports their health and wellbeing. Our **Senior Nutrition Resource Supplement program (SNRS)** program brings groceries and fresh produce directly to seniors, some of whom face mobility challenges or live on fixed incomes. In addition, our partnerships with local pantries, places of worship, and community organizations help provide regular access to fresh produce, protein, and pantry staples.

As Pastor Maria Siegel of Victory Assembly of God's pantry observes, "A lot of the people who have been with us for a long time... say constantly that they could never do this without us. We're their anchor, a place they can always count on for high-quality foods."

We also operate mobile distributions throughout the region, bringing fresh produce, shelf-stable items, and protein directly into neighborhoods where access to food is limited.