

LOOKING AHEAD: HARVEST SEASON PREP

The final stretch of the year moves quickly, and so does the need in our community. As we prepare for the busy fall and holiday season, the Food Bank is already planning for major campaigns, special events, and increased demand.

FOOD BANK OF SOUTH JERSEY

PRESENTS

Viva South Jersey

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2025 6 PM

HONORING 40 YEARS OF SERVING SOUTH JERSEY

BRINGING 1985 TO 2025

GIVING TUESDAY



- **Save the Date:** Our 40th anniversary gala, Viva South Jersey, is just around the corner on **Friday, November 14**. To learn more, visit foodbanksj.org/vivasj.
- **#GivingTuesday is coming:** This global day of giving on **December 2** is a powerful way to support our Feed South Jersey campaign and help us reach more neighbors during the holidays.
- **Want to help early?** Turkey donations and holiday food drive contributions are welcome in advance. Visit foodbanksj.org/donate-food for most-needed items and more.

LAST CALL: SHARE YOUR STORY & RECIPE FOR OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY

As we honor 40 years of serving South Jersey, remember, we want to hear from you! Whether you've volunteered with us, donated, or are part of the incredible individuals who serve our neighbors, your experiences are an important part of our story. And if you have a go-to family recipe, now's the time to submit it! We're collecting final entries for our 40th Anniversary Community Cookbook, a collection of recipes and stories that reflect the food, family traditions, and community spirit that nourish South Jersey.

Submit your story, your favorite recipe, or both by October 1, 2025. Visit foodbanksj.org/40survey to share yours today.

Share Your FBSJ Story



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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A Taste of Compassion

A Publication of the Food Bank of South Jersey

Back in School with FBSJ



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CELEBRATING SEVEN YEARS OF A SELFLESS COMMUNITY

I've been known to take a selfie or two when I'm out and about in South Jersey.

Recently, I announced my retirement as President & CEO of the Food Bank of South Jersey effective December 31, 2025. Saying "yes" to the Food Bank of South Jersey was the best decision of my professional career. And those selfies – they've been my opportunity to celebrate the selfless people who make this mission possible.

This includes our agency partners, who show up with dedication and passion for service, making our work possible every single day. They've weathered hard times and never stopped meeting the challenges ahead.

There are selfies with our incredible volunteers, who show up with smiles on their faces, lending helping hands to everything we do.

Our supporters – from our donors to elected officials – throughout South Jersey, whose selfless contributions to our work and advocacy help us achieve new heights of reaching our community.



And finally, I am beyond grateful to have been called to serve alongside so many amazing, dedicated, and passionate colleagues over the last seven years.

I've met so many people on this journey. Working together, we have succeeded because someone else's life was made a little easier.

But there are still so many more lives waiting to be lifted, nourished, and served. That's why, as I look toward retirement, I know the Food Bank's work will remain as vital as ever, and the selfless spirit I've witnessed will continue to carry it forward for years to come.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to be a part of this mission.



HUNGER ACTION SPOTLIGHT

September is Hunger Action Month, a time when communities across the country come together to raise awareness and take action to end hunger. At the Food Bank of South Jersey, this month is more than a campaign – it's a call to stand with our neighbors and advocate for a South Jersey where everyone has consistent access to nutritious food.

Throughout the month, we're sharing powerful stories, offering opportunities to volunteer, and spotlighting the policies and community efforts that can drive lasting change. You can be part of the movement:

- **Donate** to support local hunger-relief programs
- **Volunteer** your time to help sort, pack, and distribute food
- **Speak out** by sharing our messages on social media or signing up for our advocacy alerts

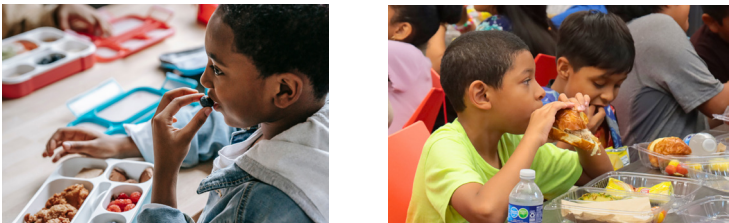
When we raise our voices together, we help shape a future where hunger has no place.

THE IMPACT OF SUMMER MEALS

This summer, thousands of children across South Jersey had access to free, nutritious meals thanks to the Food Bank's Summer Meals program. For many families, these meals were more than just lunch. They were a source of relief and consistency during the break from school.

"There's a sense of community, a sense of security," said Nicole Sheppard of Promise Neighborhood Family Success Center in Camden. "Families don't have to worry about missing a beat when it comes to breakfast and lunch. They're getting the meals they need – and the meals they deserve."

Summer can be a vulnerable time, when families lose access to vital free and reduced-cost school meals. But our Summer Meals program helps bridge the nutrition gap by providing healthy meals and snacks at community sites across the region. This year, we were delighted to serve more than 320,000 meals at 71 sites during the 10-week program.



HEALTHY MEALS, HEALTHY MINDS

A nutritious breakfast and lunch are some of the most powerful tools for student success. But packing healthy meals every day can be a challenge. That's why our Health & Wellness team shares simple, budget-friendly tips to make it easier:

- Add a fruit or veggie to every lunch, like baby carrots, apple slices, or grapes
- Choose whole grains when possible, such as whole wheat bread or brown rice
- Use leftovers creatively – turn last night's grilled chicken into a wrap or sandwich

YEAR-ROUND SUPPORT

While Summer Meals provide critical nourishment during school breaks, our commitment to children's health doesn't stop when the school year begins. Through our Kids Thrive 365 initiatives, we ensure that children have access to nutritious food and wellness resources all year long.

These resources do more than fill stomachs – they help children thrive in the classroom. Research shows that students who eat balanced meals are more focused, have better attendance and perform better academically. By supporting families with consistent access to nutritious food, we're investing in the success and well-being of the next generation.

Learn more about how Kids Thrive 365 is helping children grow strong and succeed: foodbanksj.org/feed-kids

Kids Thrive 365 includes:

- School pantries stocked with healthy staples that students and families can access discreetly
- Weekend meal kits that help bridge the nutrition gap when school cafeterias are closed
- Nutrition education programs that teach kids how to make smart food choices and build lifelong healthy habits



FUELING THE FUTURE

And remember: many families qualify for free or reduced-price school meals through the School Meals and Summer EBT Application. It's a quick, confidential way to ensure your child has access to the nutrition they need to thrive. Applications are available at your school or on your school's website.

