

# A Taste of Compassion

A publication of the Food Bank of South Jersey



## THE NEED I SEE



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

### How We See the Need

A senior making the impossible choice between buying groceries or paying for medication. A single father struggling to put food on the table after his cancer treatments have eaten most of his paycheck. A school-aged child going to bed hungry.

These scenes play out in homes all over South Jersey. It's the need we see at the Food Bank of South Jersey. Hunger is real in our region. And recent events are challenging us once again.

Because of rising inflation – at levels we haven't seen in 41 years – gas prices, utility bills, and the cost of everyday items are high. More and more of our South Jersey neighbors are struggling. With the disappearance of safety nets that helped sustain them, families are faced with stark realities that they've never had to confront before. Hunger has truly hit home.

But we are here to help. When a neighbor walks into a FBSJ partner pantry, the shelves will be stocked with nutritious foods. When a parent receives assistance in applying for SNAP, a family will be able to make ends meet at the end of a tough month. When a Twilight Harvest distribution takes place at a senior-living facility, a grandfather will receive much-needed groceries. And when a child arrives at a Kids Café, they will get a nutritious snack that will hold them over until their next meal. And no one will need to make no-win tradeoffs.

We will always feed the line and the need we see.

Yours in service,

Fred C. Wasiak  
President & CEO



# THE NEED I SEE

Since the start of 2022, everyday items have been getting more expensive. Gas prices are up 43 percent from one year ago, food prices are up 8.5 percent, and lifelines are being cut. The need for our services continues to grow.

We recently reached out to a few partner agency allies and members of our food bank family to talk about the needs they're seeing in South Jersey.

### Pastor Darlene Trappier, Beacon of Hope Food Pantry in Mt. Holly

It's all about affordability. Everything is so much higher. A family of six can only buy one loaf of bread instead of two. They can get a half a gallon of milk instead of one gallon of milk. They're able to put in \$10 worth of gas instead of filling up the tank. They're spending more money to be able just to provide the basic necessities: milk, eggs, cheese, bread, cereal, which are costing a whole lot more.

People are having to decide whether they're going to put food on the table or buy gas. Things like that impact the food side, as well, because they can't get to the grocery store if they don't have a car. And if they're in a food desert area, they must travel farther. With the food bank, they're able to help fill in that gap for the things that they need daily, because children need to eat. Children need to learn, children need to grow.

### Wilma Sue Morrell, Senior Manager of Agency Relations

I see our partner agencies needing more food. They need more staple items: more meats, canned products. But also, they need items for their homeless populations. It's great to have nonperishable food, but they might not have a can opener.

How can we help our pantries provide for these populations, but also give them information too? These people might not have the internet, so having dates and times on a website won't help them reach those in need.



Another major need that I see for a lot of agencies is they have a hard time trying to encourage younger people to take on their mission. I've heard quite a few people say, "I'm getting older and I want to retire, but there's no one to take on feeding people." Finding people who are willing to step into their shoes is an issue.

### Pastor Sonita Johnson, St. John's Pentecostal Outreach Church in Salem

I see the need and it is great. And it's all people because prices are so high – gas, for one, is extremely high. People are going hungry and rationing food. We have agencies that are giving food out to new families and families are making do. I know the need is great when, all of a sudden, I have agencies that are calling me again.

I see the need where families will say, "I don't know what I would do without the food pantry and the food." They love how they feel when they come to our pantry.

We are also starting to do announcements about additional resources like energy and electric. People like that, because, sometimes, they don't know that these additional resources are there. But we're providing families hope.

### Robyn Lockett, Senior Manager, Data Analyzation & Management

Seniors are our most hidden population. During the pandemic, additional foods were available because of everyone wanting to help. Now, our challenge has been to serve seniors where they are, in their homes. They can't get out, or they don't want to go out, but they still be food assistance. So the challenge has been to feed them where they are.

Seniors are the most unselfish people that we serve, because they will say, even though they are low income, "No, I don't want it because I want you to give that to someone else who needs it." And with that mentality and attitude, they won't participate in our Twilight Harvest programs because they think someone else's need comes first.

I see a need for additional help reaching seniors in our four counties, with deliveries, and for making our programs as robust and attractive to seniors that they will participate.



## HELPING KIDS THRIVE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

More than 55,000 children are at risk of hunger in South Jersey – a number that may be growing. To truly thrive, children need healthy food to fuel their growth, learning, and play after school. Which is why the Food Bank of South Jersey offers year-round programming that provides nutritious meals and snacks to kids and teens.

Recently, FBSJ relaunched its Kids Café program. Designed to help food-insecure kids so they don't go home to sleep on empty stomachs, Kids Café fills the nutrition gap by providing nourishing after-school snacks.

With the relaunch in March, about 250 kids received nutritionally balanced snacks from the program each weekday at five area locations. These snacks were provided through schools and day care centers, serving a wide age range of children in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem counties.

### SUMMER MEALS

For children who receive free or reduced-price school meals and after-school snacks at our Kids Cafes, summer vacation can mean uncertainty. To bridge the gap, our Summer Meals program provides children with fresh and nutritious meals for 10 weeks during the summer months.

This year, we expect to feed 8,000 children through the Summer programs. Breakfasts, lunches, and dinners will be provided to children in need at sites across the state — including churches, daycares, libraries, camps and parks, and other community centers. This program allows FBSJ to take on some of the burden of replacing school-provided meals. Through it, we are able to provide parents with peace of mind that their children will not go hungry during the summer.



# LET'S BAG HUNGER: HELP FEED OUR SOUTH JERSEY NEIGHBORS, NOT LANDFILLS



On May 4, New Jersey's plastic bag ban went into effect. Though a positive change for all of us – and our beautiful state – this will be a large shift for us at FBSJ and our partner food agencies.

While we support this ban as an important move towards environmental sustainability, the state gave food banks and pantries an additional six-months to comply. Over the coming months, we'll be looking for help in securing reusable bags for our 200+ partner agencies to distribute essential items to our neighbors in need.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Hold a bag drive
- When you buy a bag for you, buy one for us! You can donate the bags to a local pantry or drop them off at one of our community partners
- Donate to FBSJ so that we can purchase bags for our partners

## A+ FOR EFFORT: 20+ SCHOOL GROUPS COLLECT 12,000+ POUNDS OF FOOD

Congratulations to our local top teams for the **2021 Students Change Hunger** competition! Clearview Regional School District's Latin Club – whose annual Stuff the Bus event collects food to help feed children, families, and seniors in our region – took home first place. Cinnaminson Schools have continued to show their dedication to feeding South Jersey through their recent cereal and food drives, which earned them second place. And last, but not least, Kingsway Regional School District Ice Hockey placed third by collecting more than 800 pounds of food!

Students Change Hunger is a friendly competition where schools and youth community groups throughout New Jersey host food and/or fund drives to help feed our hungry neighbors. The contest is hosted by the five food banks in NJ, the Food Bank of South Jersey, the Community FoodBank of NJ, Fulfill, Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, and NORWESCAP Food Bank.

During the 2021/2022 campaign, more than 171 schools and groups participated across the state, donating more than 133,213 pounds of food and \$71,364 to benefit their local food banks.



## PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS/GROUPS IN SOUTH JERSEY

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Avengers Food Drive                 | George B. Fine Elementary School    |
| Baldwin Early Education Center      | Goddard School of Mt. Laurel        |
| Ben Franklin School                 | J.C. Stuart ECDC                    |
| Bright Beginnings Childcare Center  | Kingsway Ice Hockey                 |
| Cadence Academy Pre-School          | Larchmont Elementary School         |
| Cherokee High School Wrestling      | Lightbridge Academy                 |
| Cinnaminson High School             | Malvern School of Medford           |
| Cinnaminson Middle School -Unity Cl | Montessori Seeds of Education       |
| Clearview High School-Latin Club    | Pennsauken Intermediate School S.C. |
| Delair Elementary School            | Thomas Paine Elementary School      |
| Evesham Township Youth Advisory     | Virtua Child Development Ctr        |
|                                     | Yale School                         |

## WELCOME BACK, VOLUNTEERS!

We're open and ready for you to join us! Learn more about how you can get involved in feeding South Jersey by visiting [FoodBankSJ.org/donate-time](https://FoodBankSJ.org/donate-time) or emailing [volunteers@foodbanksj.org](mailto:volunteers@foodbanksj.org).



### 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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