In elementary school, this was recognized by our founding partner, James L. Cooper, a champion of civil rights and social justice. We are grateful to be able to continue his work with Let Us Eat – Please and the Community FoodBank of New Jersey to help and food insecurity in South Jersey. Now, more than ever, in the wake of COVID-19, which resulted in thousand Atlantic City’s casinos, summer feeding will serve as an essential source of nutrition for kids in our South Jersey service area. A mainstay of support for this important work, Cooper Lemoness started Let Us Eat – Please early this year in response to school closures during the crisis, working with CFBNJ and local school districts to provide families in need with emergency food boxes and vegetables enough for over 3,000 students.

Let Us Eat – Please is one of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey’s more than 300 partner programs in South Jersey. Every February and September, Atlantic City Let Us Eat – Please split the funds raised at the Progressive Atlantic City Boat Show’s Captain’s Table Reception. The event features local chefs, live entertainment, and fine spirits and this year alone generated enough support to provide nearly 209,000 nutritious meals to South Jersey families in need.

Our relationship with Cooper Lemoness is really special because it doubles as both a corporate partnership and a programmatic opportunity through their Let Us Eat – Please initiative,” said Carlos Rodriguez, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. Cooper Lemoness has also provided support for our South Jersey special events. In 2018, their CEO, Lloyd Levenson, was one of twelve local figures who competed in our first ever Dancing Under the Atlantic City Stars. As one of the event’s top three Hunger Relief Fundraisers, he received a mirror ball trophy at the end of the competition.

“The Community FoodBank of New Jersey is grateful for the dedication of community-focused partners like Cooper Lemoness, which aimed to support those in food insecurity,” Carlos Rodriguez added. “Our joint hunger-relief efforts with Let Us Eat – Please ultimately work toward a hunger-free South Jersey, kids, allowing them to enjoy summer vacation as all children should.” For more information on how your company can get involved with the FoodBank, please contact Daniel Schnchen, Director of Corporate Relations, at 908-242-3951 or dscheinholtz@cfbnj.org.

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) commands news headlines, CFBNJ has served as a critical part of our state’s emergency response plan, working to provide nutritious food to those suffering from the pandemic’s staggering economic effects. With schools across the state closed and businesses shuttered, including the casinos that employ many in South Jersey, countless people have faced the realities of reduced work hours, layoffs, and missed paychecks.

We are there for our senior citizens whose health may be impacted by hunger. Our Food Service Training Academy staff and students have cooked and packaged healthy meals for delivery to homebound seniors with limited resources, keeping them healthy and well fed.

We are there for the suddenly unemployed who don’t know where their next meal is coming from. For those in need of additional nutrition assistance, our SHARP Outreach team has provided help applying and recertifying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly known as food stamps) over the phone, coordinating with county offices to monitor the development of streamlined approaches that were put in place due to the emergency.

Learn more about CFBNJ’s response to COVID-19 and how you can help at cfbnj.org/coronavirus

We are there for our food pantry and soup kitchen partners who rely on us to give them the food they need. In partnership with state and federal agencies, we have adapted our operations in real time, working around the clock in three, eight-hour shifts, six days a week, to ensure continuity of service to our neighbors in need. With a focus on maintaining our daily activities, we have continued providing food to our network of agency partners, asking that they lift quantity restrictions to allow neighbors in need to stock up, and providing additional guidance on how to best fulfill their operations in line with changing health concerns. Throughout the crisis, both our Atlantic and Egg Harbor Township locations, along with most of our partners, have remained open to serve our community.

We are there for the families that need us more than ever. We have provided emergency meal kits via dedicated distributions and mobile pantries, which include healthy nonperishables like peanut butter, canned proteins, canned fruits and vegetables, pasta, rice, soup, shelf-stable milk, and more—enough food to sustain a family in need for several days. Our dedicated staff and select pre-screened volunteer groups have been able to produce 2,000 of these boxes per day, the equivalent of about 80,000 meals daily.
A Message From Carlos

Dear FoodBank Friends,

Having devoted decades of my life to ensuring access to critical resources for those in need, I am no stranger to emergencies of many kinds. During 9/11, I was at FoodChange in New York City, and when Superstorm Sandy struck New Jersey’s shores, I had been the newly minted Executive Director of Fulfill (Monmouth and Ocean Counties) for just a few short months.

I have experienced firsthand the need for food banks to spring into action during a crisis, crafting entirely new operations and distribution plans at a moment’s notice. I have seen the vulnerability of those whose homes have been destroyed, who have lost their livelihoods, and who have suffered greatly in the turmoil of a changing crisis. But I’ve never experienced anything to the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic before.

With so many of our neighbors feeling the financial pain of a job loss or reduction in work hours, a shocking one-third of households nationwide, we at the Community FoodBank of New Jersey were charged with formulating a response that not only ensured continued service to those already struggling but that also accounted for the surge in need caused by the economic impact of the coronavirus.

As a primary responder in the State of New Jersey’s disaster relief plan and a dependable safety net for New Jerseyans in need 365 days a year, CFBNJ, like me, is not unused to being called upon during an emergency. But unprecedented times call for an extraordinary plan of action. Working with state and federal agencies like the New Jersey Department of Health, New Jersey Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (NJVOAD), Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), the Department of Education, the Salvation Army, and the Red Cross, we coordinated resources to create alternate distribution scenarios in line with changing health concerns.

Together with these agencies and with our more than 1,000 community partners across the state, we provided Family Packs to kids without access to school breakfasts and lunches. We delivered nutritious food to homebound seniors. We gave emergency meal kits to struggling small business owners and families missing paychecks. And we helped those facing long-term need to obtain critical SNAP benefits.

For the Department of Education, the Salvation Army, and the Red Cross, we coordinated resources to create a sustainable source of income, which is especially important after times of crisis. For some schools, it’s a new and challenging role for them. For those in need, it’s a welcome and life-changing crisis.

But I’ve never experienced anything to the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic before.

FoodBank Leadership Team Expands with NEW Women Fighting Hunger Initiative

CFBNJ’s new Women Fighting Hunger Initiative debuted at the 4th Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon. Thank you to all those who helped make our 4th Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon a success! With the help of our sponsors and 320 event attendees, we packed over 1,200 bags of supplemental food for hungry college students, collected 436 pounds of healthy cereal, and raised over $250,000 to help fuel student and children of all ages.

The luncheon was made possible by the generosity of our corporate sponsors, Kings Food Markets and PNC Bank, and featured Lauren Bush Lauren, Founder and CEO of FEED, as guest speaker and ABC 7 NY’s Michelle Charlesworth as program moderator.

Visit cfbnj.org/45monthly to set up your recurring donation.

Items Of Note

FoodBank Leadership Team Expands with NEW Women Fighting Hunger Initiative

CFBNJ’s new Women Fighting Hunger Initiative debuted at the 4th Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon in March, marking another addition to the FoodBank’s growing leadership team. With a goal of helping us to provide food, help, and hope through hands-on philanthropy, leadership, and collaboration, members will act as ambassadors to help expand our community of hungry-fighting advocates.

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celebrate 45 years with a Monthly gift!

Become a monthly donor of $45 or more and receive a special gift! Your ongoing generosity in honor of our milestone anniversary will provide the FoodBank with a sustainable source of income, which is especially important after times of crisis. Visit cfbnj.org/45monthly to set up your recurring donation.

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FoodBank Flexibility Leads Team to Reopen

Whether South Jersey has some of the state’s highest rates of food insecurity, some areas of Atlantic, Cape May, and Cumberland counties lack accessible food assistance programs. The Community FoodBank of New Jersey’s 29,000 square-foot Egg Harbor Township location is home to our in-store Community Assistance Pantry that provides food to individuals and families living in nearby communities without access to pantry services.

The Community Assistance Pantry is a choice pantry, giving neighbors in need the liberty to grab a shopping cart and hand-select the food that they bring home to their families.

“Giving hungry families the opportunity to choose what food items best meet their needs goes above and beyond providing meals,” said Deb Fischer, Pantry Manager. “It gives them the dignity that comes with being able to shop the way you and I shop. Last year alone, the Community Assistance Pantry at the FoodBank’s Egg Harbor Township location provided enough food to support more than 1.4 million nutritious meals for South Jersey residents. This year during the COVID-19 crisis, the pantry remained open to serve neighbors in need and saw a 60% increase in demand, particularly among those who were out of work due to state mandated shuttering of Atlantic City’s 1,100 casinos, which according to data from the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement, collectively employ more than 28,000 table-game dealers, bartenders, waiters, hotel staff, and others.

Facing indefinite closure, all of the casinos donated their extra food to local community organizations—providing more than 125,000 pounds of fresh produce and dairy to CFBNJ’s Egg Harbor Township location.

“We are so incredibly grateful for the help that we’ve received from our casinos,” Deb added. “Through and through, year-round, they’re big supporters of our mission.”

Helping Hands

A veteran food banker with 34 years on the job, Clyde has seen it all. Since 1986, he’s driven trucks, run the agency shopping area, worked on mobile pantries, and helped the FoodBank relocate twice, just to name a few of his many experiences. As a member of our operations staff, he has also been part of the FoodBank’s response to major emergencies, including 9/11, Superstorm Sandy, and the COVID-19 crisis earlier this year.

“There are the people who care that are so fed up and fight, the people who take care of the people,” Clyde shared. “There are the people who instill hope. When people ask what kept him here for so long, Clyde told us, “I love what I do. I love to see people with smiles on their faces when they walk away knowing that they can eat tonight and that they can feed their families.”

In Your Neighborhood

4th Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon

Thank you to all those who helped make our 4th Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon a success! With the help of our sponsors and 320 event attendees, we packed over 1,200 bags of supplemental food for hungry college students, collected 436 pounds of healthy cereal, and raised over $250,000 to help fuel student and children of all ages.

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Visit us on Facebook to see photos from the event!