Vegetable Lasagna

Partner Spotlight: Bayer

Bayer Fund, a philanthropic arm of Bayer, has continuously served as a year-round ally in the fight against hunger, and their recent support in response to the pandemic was especially meaningful. In April, CBH received $7,070,000 grant from Bayer Fund as part of their $2 million nationwide commitment to COVID-19 relief initiatives. The funds have been instrumental in meeting CBH’s most crucial needs in the midst of a growing demand for food assistance—$110,000 was used to purchase food, and $170,000 will enable us to add a new 26-foot box truck to our fleet.

“Bayer Fund’s generous support of our mission during this unprecedented time at a time when it is needed,” said Carlos Rodriguez, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey.

Not only have the funds helped us procure food, but they will also allow us to purchase a new truck that will bolster our operation and expand our capacity to get that food out into the community.

The support provided by this grant came at a time when it was needed most, as CBH has consistently spent about $700,000 each month on food and staffing costs in response to the crisis. Our agency partners have reported an increase in need of about 50%, on average, while food supply chains have become more competitive, resulting in higher prices.

And, as our team continues to work 24 hours a day, six days a week, a new box truck will serve as a key asset to help us move food efficiently. As part of CBH’s brand ambition in honor of our 45th anniversary, all of our trucks, including the one funded by Bayer Fund, will be rebranded with new artwork to make our vehicles instantly recognizable when they’re out on the road delivering food, help and hope.

“We’re proud to support the Community FoodBank of New Jersey to help them fight hunger and poverty in the families they serve,” said Al Mitchell, President of Bayer Fund.

“Our support ensures families throughout New Jersey have access to the food they need during these unprecedented times. Ever since the crisis struck, Bayer helped us serve our neighbors in need as a corporate Impact Partner, donating funds and time. In 2019 alone, 129 Bayer employees volunteered more than 340 hours, packing enough food for nearly 17,000 nutritious meals. For more information on how your company can get involved with CBH, please contact Denise Schenkeln, Director of Corporate Relations, at 908-242-3951 or dschenkeln@cbfnj.org.

Bayer Fund has a long and consistent track record of supporting child nutrition programs that complement the breakfasts and lunches provided by schools. We work year-round to fill the nutrition gap faced by millions of children in the United States. We know that providing supplemental food for the weekend, and a Meal Program that sustains students from one school year to the next, is critical.

But the coronavirus pandemic has presented new and unprecedented challenges for food insecure kids, who last access to the school meals that they depend on during the statewide shutdown. In response, CBH has collaborated with key partners like Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA and other neighborhood districts and charter school networks to keep children healthy and well-fed through the crisis.

We have prioritized high-need areas within the 11 counties that we directly serve where a high percentage of children receive free school meals, providing leadership to ensure that food-shock meal vendors continue to serve via grab-and-go options and guiding districts on how to promote the offering while reducing stigma around participation.

In March, we began working to provide Family Packs, of which we distributed more than 53,000 by the end of May. In June, we began serving families in Paterson, Passaic County, and we began collaborating with key partners that allowed us to work with last summer, delivering more than 61,000 nutritious, USDA-compliant grab-and-go meals by the end of May.

With thanks to our Emergency Relief Supporters

Vegetable Lasagna

1. Cook lasagna noodles according to package directions.
2. Lay out zucchini and yellow squash single layer on paper towels and lightly sprinkle with salt to draw out excess moisture.
3. Meanwhile, sauté onion and garlic with 2 teaspoons of oil until soft.
4. Combine ricotta, mozzarella, basil and egg in medium sized bowl, mix to combine.
5. Assemble lasagna: begin with a layer of sautéed sauce at the bottom, overlap layer zucchini noodles, followed by onion and garlic mixture, followed by tomatoes and spinach, followed by zucchini and yellow squash mixture, followed by ricotta filling, topped with sauce.
6. Repeat until casserole filled to top. Top with remaining 1/2 cup of mozzarella cheese.

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Want more delicious and healthy recipes straight from our kitchen? Follow us on social!
Dear FoodBank Friends,

At a distribution in Atlantic City, in the shadow of the shuttered casinos, an out-of-work valet tearfully expressed her gratitude as she accepted an emergency meal kit. It was her first time ever receiving food assistance. In Essex County Branch Brook Park, previously the site of late April cherry blossom festivities, a toddler waved, smiling, to FoodBank staff from the backseat of one of the thousands of cars in line for help. Soon after, a young man rolled down the window, honking and shouting “Thank you! God bless you all” as volunteers clapped his trunk, securing his family’s next few days’ worth of nutritious food inside.

Though the need generated by the coronavirus pandemic seems insurmountable at times, responses like those from some of the thousands of neighbors in need that CFBNJ has helped show the difference that our work makes. In every car that leaves one of our distributions is a story of hardship and struggle, but also of hope and possibility.

Food insecurity has hit home for so many of us during this crisis. No matter who you are or where you live, you likely have a neighbor, a family member, a friend, or a coworker who’s had to make difficult trade-offs between food and other essentials—perhaps for the very first time. And recent events have forced us all to confront the disturbing reality that the economic burden of the pandemic is not one that is equally shared. We know that lack of access to food and racial inequality go hand in hand, and we are committed to ensuring that all of our struggling neighbors, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, have the nutritious food that they need to lead healthy and productive lives.

Fortunately, all sectors of government—from local officials to state administrators—have been active partners in CFBNJ’s important work as we’ve navigated this uncharted territory together. In July, CFBNJ was honored to welcome Governor Phil Murphy to our Hillside warehouse, where he announced that the existing funding commitment to New Jersey’s food banks will be maintained and expanded this year through direction of funds to the Coronavirus Relief Fund, established under the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. On behalf of the New Jersey Federation of Food Banks, I want to thank Governor Murphy, Speaker Coughlin, President Sweeney, First Lady Tammy Murphy, and all of our government partners for their leadership.

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In line with the evolving needs of our communities, we will continue to be nimble and respond in coordination with our incredible network of partner food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, child feeding programs, and more that are woven tightly into the fabric of every community throughout New Jersey. Even as our state gradually reopens, the incredible network of partner food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, child feeding programs, and more that are woven tightly into the fabric of every community throughout New Jersey. Even as our state gradually reopens, the incredible network of partner food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, child feeding programs, and more that are woven tightly into the fabric of every community throughout New Jersey. Even as our state gradually reopens, the incredible network of partner food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, child feeding programs, and more that are woven tightly into the fabric of every community throughout New Jersey.

In this time of crisis, and always, we are there for those who need us most.

By joining the Food • Help • Hope Legacy Society, your planned gift will help CFBNJ provide nutritious food and address the root causes of hunger for generations to come. Learn more at cfbnj.org/plannedgiving or contact Rachel Laibson, Director of Donor Engagement and Planned Giving at rlaibson@cfbnj.org.

For more information about our coronavirus response efforts, visit cfbnj.org/coronavirus

*These statistics reflect the period of March – June 2020