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SEVENTH ANNUAL WOMEN FIGHTING HUNGER LUNCHEON EXPANDS TO SOUTH JERSEY,
FEEDS STRUGGLING COLLEGE STUDENTS

Event raises funds for the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, featuring Soledad O'Brien

Sponsored by PNC Bank and Spencer's and Spirit Halloween

HILLSIDE, NJ—November 1, 2022

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ) hosted its Seventh Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon on Wednesday, October 26 at the Park Avenue Club in Florham Park and the ICONA Avalon in Avalon. For the first time ever, CFBNJ held the event in two locations simultaneously – one in North Jersey and one in South Jersey to unite supporters from across the state. Nearly 575 people attended the event, representing tremendous growth over prior years. With the generous sponsorship of PNC Bank and Spencer's and Spirit Halloween and the support of the event chairs, table sponsors, and attendees, CFBNJ raised close to \$300,000 to feed college students in need.

Many college students are financially unstable with limited budgets, making them more susceptible to food insecurity and putting them at risk of dropping out. To combat this problem, CFBNJ distributes enough food for more than 130,000 meals each year to students at campus pantries. In addition, CFBNJ's advocacy work in partnership with state and local government aims to enact long-term solutions to college hunger, while the FoodBank's resource access and nutrition education efforts connect students in need with nutrition education and help to determine their eligibility for SNAP benefits.

The Seventh Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon was chaired by Jill Gateman of PNC Bank, Pam Kapsimalis of Porzio Bromberg & Newman PC, Wendy Lazarus, Kelsey Nakamura of JLL, Lauren Parisier Weiss, Susan Present, and Roby Weinreich in North Jersey. The South Jersey event location's Luncheon committee members included Maryanne Adams of Avalon Flooring, Kathleen Corbalis, Debra Fox of AtlantiCare, Kathi Galletta, Alicia Ginn, Eileen Lenegan of Lenegan

Plumbing & Heating, Jann Mevoli of Sturdy Bank, Elizabeth Sheridan of Inspira Health Network, Veronica Town of Atlantic City Electric - an Exelon Company, Marissa Travaline, Erin Skotarczak, and Donna Vecere.

The Luncheon began at 11 am with a volunteer hour at both locations, during which attendees packed nearly 1,200 college meal kits that included oatmeal/grits, soup, canned tuna, applesauce, and mac and cheese. CFBNJ will donate the meal kits to its campus pantry partners. Guests also donated canned soup, granola bars, and other healthy snacks to the event's college pantry soup and snack drive, which collected more than 2,200 pounds of food.

The event's lunch and formal program featured an interview with award-winning documentarian, journalist, speaker, author, and philanthropist Soledad O'Brien. The Executive Producer of "Hungry to Learn," a documentary on the hidden reality of college hunger, Soledad is dedicated to telling empowering and authentic stories on a range of social issues. The interview was live in North Jersey and simulcast in South Jersey.

"The issue of college hunger is dear to my heart, and I'm honored to have served as lead speaker at the Community FoodBank of New Jersey's Seventh Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon," Soledad said. "To be a student and have to constantly wonder how you're going to get your next meal is brutally unfair and exhausting. But food insecurity is a very solvable issue."

The program was moderated by NBC 4 New York Anchor Natalie Pasquarella and also featured testimonials from campus pantry managers and college students.

"I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to share my experience with Luncheon attendees," said Suzeana Stewart, Director of Student Development and Campus Life and Pantry Manager of Newark and New York Campuses at Berkeley College. "At Berkeley, we work to make sure that the pantry is a beautiful place with a welcoming atmosphere. It helps to remove stigma as we meet every student where they are and work to fight hunger holistically."

"We are excited to expand the presence of our Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon to two locations to bring anti-hunger advocates from across the state together in support of struggling college students," said Carlos Rodriguez, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. "These students are in school to pursue better futures for themselves and their families, and we can't let food insecurity stand in their way."

In 2020, CFBNJ launched its Women Fighting Hunger Initiative at the Luncheon, and this year the initiative expands to South Jersey. With more than 60 members who have donated over 3,000 volunteer hours, Women Fighting Hunger supports the goals and priorities of the FoodBank through hands-on philanthropy, leadership, and collaboration. Another goal of this year's Luncheon was to recruit more Women Fighting Hunger members.

On Friday, November 4 from 1 to 3 pm at CFBNJ's Hillside headquarters, Women Fighting Hunger members will pack the soup and snacks that were donated to the event's food drive into kits for struggling college students.

Learn more about the Women Fighting Hunger Initiative at cfbnj.org/womenfightinghunger.

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[The Community FoodBank of New Jersey \(CFBNJ\)](https://cfbnj.org), a member of Feeding America®, has been delivering food, help and hope across the state for more than 45 years. Last year, CFBNJ provided nutritious food for over 85 million meals through its network of more than 800 community partners including pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, mobile pantries, and child and senior feeding programs throughout the 15 New Jersey counties it serves. For our hungry neighbors, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey is the powerful agent of change that fills the emptiness caused by hunger and provides resources that are essential to earning a sustainable living.