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A FASHIONABLE FUNDRAISER: BLUE JEAN BALL FEATURES BROADWAY ENTERTAINMENT, RAISES OVER \$1.4 MILLION
Community FoodBank of New Jersey's annual gala honors dedicated supporters in the fight against hunger

Honoring New Jersey Department of Agriculture Secretary Douglas Fisher, Roby and Josh Weinreich, and CFBNJ's partners in addressing hunger as a health issue

HILLSIDE, NJ—May 25, 2023

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ) held its Blue Jean Ball gala on Thursday, May 18 to raise funds for food insecure residents of the Garden State. The beloved annual event, which had a new home this year at Hudson House in Jersey City, provided guests with a fun, social night out while honoring some of CFBNJ's most committed supporters. Thanks to the event chairs, sponsors, honorees, and nearly 500 attendees, this year's Blue Jean Ball raised over \$1.4 million.

The event was chaired by Polly and Terry O'Toole, Patty and Chris Perry, Judy and Bob Spires, and Jane and Mark Wilf.

With a fashionable denim chic dress code, the evening began with a cocktail reception and mingling, followed by a gourmet dinner and award ceremony. The theme of the formal program was "The Seeds of Food Security." Speakers focused on fresh produce distribution and CFBNJ's alignment with the future of food banking, reminding guests that, together, hunger is a solvable problem. New Jersey's very own Adam Sank served as Master of Ceremonies for the festivities.

Several of CFBNJ's steadfast partners received awards representing the organization's core tenets of food, help, and hope. The FOOD Award was given to New Jersey Department of Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher for his visionary leadership and work to ensure healthy outcomes for the state's most vulnerable.

"I'm proud that, for the past 14 years, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture has worked hand in hand with the Community FoodBank of New Jersey to advance access to wholesome, healthy, and 'Jersey Fresh' produce," said New Jersey Department of Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher. "It is a great honor to receive CFBNJ's FOOD Award and to continue these efforts into the future."

Roby and Josh Weinreich received the HELP Award for their decades of leadership and personal commitment to CFBNJ's mission, as well as their heroic efforts in response to the pandemic.

"We are proud to be part of the CFBNJ story. During the pandemic, it was incredibly inspiring to see what dedicated people could accomplish by pulling together and refusing to be discouraged or defeated," said Roby and Josh Weinreich. "We have a vision that someday our society will truly commit to the idea that no person, and especially no child, should be food insecure. Until then, we will continue to support the work of CFBNJ."

Governor and First Lady Murphy attended the Blue Jean Ball to honor their friends, Roby and Josh Weinreich, and to express their commitment to fighting hunger in New Jersey. The relationship between the two couples grew during Josh's time as CEO of New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund.

The HOPE Award was shared among several of CFBNJ's dedicated partners who provide essential fresh produce and inspire healthy lifestyles for New Jerseyans in need: Eastern Fresh Growers, Meadowlands YMCA, Mid-Atlantic Regional Cooperative, and Saint John United Methodist Church.

After the award ceremony, the evening's entertainment featured Broadway star Lexi Lawson, best known for her lead role in Lin-Manuel Miranda's 11-time Tony award-winning Broadway phenomenon, HAMILTON.

"Year after year, CFBNJ's Blue Jean Ball offers a great night out for a good cause," said Karen Leies, Chief of External Affairs at the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. "We're so grateful to everyone who joined us to make the event a success and helped us honor some heroes in the fight against hunger."

CFBNJ would like to extend a special thank you to the event's top sponsors: Jess Chang and Wayne Paglieri, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Rachel and Michael Rimland, Appaloosa L.P./The Tepper Foundation, Larry L. Luing Family Foundation, Frances Burns and Richard S. Nitzberg, Polly and Terry O'Toole, and Roby and Josh Weinreich.

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[The Community FoodBank of New Jersey \(CFBNJ\)](#), 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.