



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EIGHTH ANNUAL WOMEN FIGHTING HUNGER LUNCHEON SUPPORTED NEIGHBORS IN NEED, FEATURING SOPHIA ROE
Beloved annual event raised funds for the Community FoodBank of New Jersey in two locations

Sponsored by Wakefern Food Corp., ACME Nourishing Neighbors, Spencer's & Spirit Halloween,
PNC Bank, and Atlantic City Electric

HILLSIDE, NJ—November 1, 2023

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ) hosted its Eighth Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon on Wednesday, October 25 at the Park Avenue Club in Florham Park and the Linwood Country Club in Linwood to support CFBNJ's healthy food distribution efforts. For the second time, the event was held in two locations simultaneously – one in North Jersey and one in South Jersey – to unite supporters from across the state. In total, 550 people attended the Luncheon, which raised more than \$350,000 with the generous support of sponsors, event chairs, and attendees.

The North Jersey event was sponsored by Wakefern Food Corp. and PNC Bank, and the South Jersey event was sponsored by ACME Nourishing Neighbors, Spencer's & Spirit Halloween, and Atlantic City Electric.

CFBNJ works to address hunger as a health issue, providing nearly 37 million pounds of fresh produce annually so that neighbors in need can live healthy, active, and productive lives. The organization distributes over 90 million meals annually to support neighbors' nutritional needs related to health concerns, cultural considerations, and food preferences.

Luncheon attendees supported a healthy lifestyle and spice food drive to help CFBNJ provide healthy, flavorful food. They brought low-sodium canned vegetables, canned chicken, low-sodium canned soups, and bottled spices and dried herbs to the event for distribution to CFBNJ's partner pantries. The drive collected nearly 2,400 pounds of these sought-after items.

The Luncheon began at 11 am with a volunteer hour at both locations, during which attendees packed close to 1,100 healthy lifestyle meal kits that included canned chicken, low-sodium chicken broth, low-sodium canned vegetables, fruit in natural juice, split peas, rice, garlic powder, Italian herbs, and a recipe card.

The event's lunch and formal program featured an interview with celebrated chef and food justice advocate Sophia Roe. Sophia is a Brooklyn-based James Beard Award winning chef, writer, founder of Apartment Miso, and Emmy Award-nominated TV host known for her distinct lens on honesty, diversity, and inclusivity. The interview was live in North Jersey and simulcast in South Jersey. Arrangements for the appearance of Sophia Roe were made through UTA Speakers, New York, NY.

"Food insecurity is not a new issue. It's a systemic problem that's going to require incredible shifts in legislation, mindset, healthcare, supply chain distribution, education, etc.," Sophia said. "We are only well when our neighbors and community are also well. Every moment is an opportunity for action and solution integration."

The program was moderated by NBC 4 New York Anchor Natalie Pasquarella. The second part of the South Jersey event included a live conversation between certified nutritionist and fitness professional Nancy Adler, Samantha Kiley, Executive Director for the AtlantiCare Foundation, and Michelle Gross, Director of Community Nutrition at CFBNJ. They spoke about health and wellness and how the conditions in which we work, live, and grow affect our well-being. In North Jersey, this portion of the program featured a live discussion between Sophia Roe, Andrea B. Harris, MBA, CHIE, PAHM, Vice President, Chief Quality & Health Equity Officer, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, and Jeannie Fournier, Vice President of Programs & Services at CFBNJ.

"Access to food, healthcare, education, and other critical necessities shapes health and well-being. That's why CFBNJ works to create and follow strict guidelines about the nutritional quality of foods we source and distribute to our neighbors," said Elizabeth McCarthy, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. "This year, our Eighth Annual Women Fighting Hunger Luncheon brought anti-hunger advocates from across the state together to support this effort. We're grateful to the sponsors, attendees, and event chairs who made it possible."

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[The Community FoodBank of New Jersey \(CFBNJ\)](#), a member of Feeding America® and the state's largest anti-hunger organization, has been delivering food, help, and hope across the Garden State for nearly 50 years. Last year, CFBNJ provided nutritious food for over 90 million meals through its network of more than 800 community partners, including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, child and senior nutrition programs, and more, serving 11 New Jersey counties directly and four in partnership with affiliate food banks. It also addresses the root causes of food insecurity with supportive services like nutrition education, job training, SNAP outreach, and hygiene product distribution. By delivering neighbor-centered solutions and collaborating with all sectors of society, CFBNJ believes that food insecurity is a solvable problem.

Commented [EC1]: North Jersey program P2 speaker i confirmed: Saira Jan, Vice President and Chief Pharmacy Officer, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey

Commented [RH2R1]: @Evelyn Chiu - is she Dr. Saira Jan?

Commented [EC3R1]: title updated

Commented [EC4]: Additionally, program part 2 will also discuss our Growing Healthy Pantries initiative

Commented [NW5R4]: @Evelyn - Let me know if the revised version of this paragraph addresses both of your comments or if it needs to be revised further.

Commented [RH6R4]: @Nicole Williams @Evelyn Chiu - karen said there's no need to include growing healthy pantries. Also, we will ask Sophia to stay on stage for the panel discussion

Commented [EC7]: We will not include a quote from Nancy and/or Saira