THE NEED I SEE

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THE NEED I SEE

Since the start of 2022, everyday items have been getting more expensive. Gas prices are up 43 percent from one year ago, food prices are up 8.5 percent, and lifelines are being cut. The need for our services continues to grow.

We recently reached out to a few partner agency allies and members of our food bank family to talk about the needs they’re seeing in South Jersey.

Pastor Darlene Trappier, Beacon of Hope Food Pantry in Mt. Holly

It’s all about affordability. Everything is so much higher. A family of six can only buy one loaf of bread instead of two. They can get a half a gallon of milk instead of one gallon of milk. They’re able to put in $10 worth of gas instead of filling up the tank. They’re spending more money to be able just to provide the basic necessities: milk, eggs, cheese, bread, cereal, which are costing a whole lot more.

People are having to decide whether they’re going to put food on the table or buy gas. Things like that impact whole lot more.

Another major need that I see for a lot of agencies is they have a hard time trying to encourage younger people to take on the mission. I’ve heard quite a few people say, “I’m getting older and I want to retire, but there’s no one to take on feeding people.” Finding people who are willing to step into their shoes is an issue.

Pastor Sonita Johnson, St. John’s Pentecostal Outreach Church in Salem

I see the need and it is great. And it’s all people because prices are so high – gas, for one, is extremely high. People are going hungry and rationing food. We have agencies that are giving food out to new families and families are making do. I know the need is great when, all of a sudden, I have agencies that are calling me again.

I see the need where families will say, “I don’t know what I would do without the food pantry and the food.” They love how they feel when they come to our pantry. We are also starting to do announcements about additional resources like energy and electric. People like that, because, sometimes, they don’t know that these additional resources are there. But we’re providing families hope.

Robyn Lockett, Senior Manager, Data Analysis & Management

Seniors are our most hidden population. During the pandemic, additional foods were available because of everyone wanting to help. Now, our challenge has been to serve seniors where they are, in their homes. They can’t go out, or they don’t want to go out, but they still need food assistance. So the challenge has been to feed them where they are.

Seniors are the most unselfish people that we serve, because they will say, even though they are low income, “No, I don’t want it because I want you to give that to someone else who needs it.” And with that mentality and attitude, they won’t participate in our Twilight Harvest programs because they think someone else’s need comes first.

I see a need for additional help reaching seniors in our four counties, with deliveries, and for making our programs as robust and attractive to seniors that they will participate.
LET’S BAG HUNGER: HELP FEED OUR SOUTH JERSEY NEIGHBORS, NOT LANDFILLS

On May 4, New Jersey’s plastic bag ban went into effect. Though a positive change for all of us – and our beautiful state – this will be a large shift for us at FBSJ and our partner food agencies.

While we support this ban as an important move towards environmental sustainability, the state gave food banks and pantries an additional six-months to comply. Over the coming months, we’ll be looking for help in securing reusable bags for our 200+ partner agencies to distribute essential items to our neighbors in need.

A+ FOR EFFORT: 20+ SCHOOL GROUPS COLLECT 12,000+ POUNDS OF FOOD

Congratulations to our local top teams for the 2021 Students Change Hunger competition! Clearview Regional School District’s Latin Club – whose annual Stuff the Bus event collects food to help feed children, families, and seniors in our region – took home first place. Cinnaminson Schools have continued to show their dedication to feeding South Jersey through their recent cereal and food drives, which earned them second place. And last, but not least, Kingsway Regional School District Ice Hockey placed third by collecting more than 800 pounds of food!

Students Change Hunger is a friendly competition where schools and youth community groups throughout New Jersey host food and/or fund drives to help feed our hungry neighbors. The contest is hosted by the five food banks in NJ, the Food Bank of South Jersey, the Community FoodBank of NJ, Fulfill, Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, and NORWESCAP Food Bank.

During the 2021/2022 campaign, more than 171 schools and groups participated across the state, donating more than 133,213 pounds of food and $71,364 to benefit their local food banks.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:
- Hold a bag drive
- When you buy a bag for you, buy one for us! You can donate the bags to a local pantry or drop them off at one of our community partners
- Donate to FBSJ so that we can purchase bags for our partners

WELCOME BACK, VOLUNTEERS!
We’re open and ready for you to join us! Learn more about how you can get involved in feeding South Jersey by visiting FoodBankSJ.org/donate-time or emailing volunteers@foodbanksj.org.

OUR MISSION:
The Food Bank of South Jersey exists to provide an immediate solution to the urgent problem of hunger by providing food to people in need, teaching them to eat nutritiously, and helping them to find sustainable ways to improve their lives.

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