



**THE  
FOODBANK**  
of Monmouth and Ocean Counties

A member of **FEEDING AMERICA**

# FOOD *for thought*

**Feeding Families, Improving Lives**

**Spring 2016**

## Take a look Inside

- 2 Message from Executive Director
- 3 It Takes a Community
- 3 Loved One Donation

## OPENING OF THE B.E.A.T. CENTER IN TOMS RIVER

*Bringing Everyone All Together*



A year ago, we announced a new partnership which joined the Jon Bon Jovi Soul Foundation, Peoples Pantry and The FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties under one roof. We are pleased to announce that The B.E.A.T. Center will open in April 2016.

The B.E.A.T. Center (Bringing Everyone All Together) is a community hub where families and individuals in need can access food, job training and other resources that aim to end the cyclical causes of hunger in Ocean County.

Located in the Silverton Section of Toms River, N.J., and accessible by public transportation, The B.E.A.T. Center will serve as a “one-stop shop” by connecting residents to resources like SNAP (also

known as food stamps), affordable healthcare and tax preparation services, as well as access to a community food pantry, meals for at-risk children and seniors, and a culinary training program.

The B.E.A.T. Center will also house the JBJ Soul Kitchen, a community restaurant where diners can pay for their meal by making a minimum suggested donation of \$10 each or volunteering. One hour earns volunteers a dining certificate for them and up to four family members.

**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS:** If interested in volunteering at The B.E.A.T. Center, please contact Judy Daniels at [jdaniels@foodbankmoc.org](mailto:jdaniels@foodbankmoc.org) or call 732-643-5857.

# Message from the Executive Director

*The State of the FoodBank*



“ We will win this fight against hunger, but we cannot do it alone.”

Spring is a time when we renew our pledge to win the fight against hunger and check in on our progress. In addition to the 11 million meals we delivered to area families last year through our network of over 300 feeding programs, we also reached these milestones:

- Distributed 2 million pounds of fresh produce, including a ton (2,000 pounds) from our own organic garden, while working with retail stores and local farmers to reduce food waste and provide nutritious produce for the tables of local families in need.
- Graduated our 45th Culinary Skills Training Class which provided students with employable skills and certifications.
- Provided assistance for clients applying for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP aka Food Stamps), Affordable Health Care and the Earned Income Tax Credits through free tax preparation. Our Free Tax Preparation store is featured in these pages.
- Created two new partnerships – one with JBJ Soul Foundation and Peoples Pantry called The B.E.A.T. Center to open in Ocean County this month (learn more at [www.thebeatcenter.org](http://www.thebeatcenter.org)) and the other with Meridian Health and United Way called the Financial Success Center located in Freehold Mall.

We are constantly working to provide solutions for families struggling with income, health and job loss. Most families receiving food have at least one member working but are more likely to be working part-time and for low wages. They are also more likely to suffer from health problems, especially high blood pressure (59%) and diabetes (29%), cutting productivity and increasing expenses.

Despite health issues, 78% report sacrificing nutrition quality for inexpensive food in order to have enough to feed their families. With our network of innovative choice pantries, families with special dietary considerations can shop for exactly what they need to maintain health and wellness. Our culinary training and job placement support can change a life and provide a living wage. Our benefits outreach team helps to ensure that all eligible families get the support they need to get past temporary setbacks. Our volunteers provide critical help and are needed more than ever this year for our new location in Ocean County.

We will win in this fight against hunger, but we cannot do it alone. On behalf of so many, I would like to thank our community for their generous support of The FoodBank and its programs. Together, we provide help, hope and solutions.

Sincerely,



Carlos M. Rodriguez

3300 Route 66  
Neptune, NJ 07753  
(732) 918-2600  
[www.foodbankmoc.org](http://www.foodbankmoc.org)

Follow us on



The FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for six consecutive years. This distinction means the FoodBank, a 501 (c)3 charitable organization, outperformed most charities in America in areas of efficiency, fiscal integrity, and effectiveness.

## 2016 Board of Trustees

David Offenberg, Chairman  
Glenn Bellomy, Vice Chairman  
Rhonda Figueroa, Secretary  
Charles T. Woolston, Treasurer  
Leslie L. Barlow  
Wayne Boatwright  
Glenn Brodwater  
Robert P. Brown  
Drew Eitner  
Jean M. Gardner, Esq.  
Michael Gualario  
Joseph J. Lebel, III  
Dean Q. Lin  
Ken Marowitz  
Bill Mayo  
Jim Murphy  
Gina Petillo  
Sammy Steinlight  
David Wintrode

**Executive Director**  
Carlos M. Rodriguez

## FOODBANK Receives EXCELLENT Score For Food Safety



We are so proud to announce that we passed our AIB International Food Safety Compliance Audit with an exceptional score over 900! The FoodBank management and staff are fully committed to distribute safe and legal food to those in need within the communities we serve.



# It Takes a Community

*Thank you to all who are involved!*

## The FoodBank Opened a Free Tax Prep Store This Year at Monmouth Mall

As the April 15th tax deadline approaches, The FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties' Free Tax Preparation Store is extremely busy at the Monmouth Mall and at other locations in the two counties. Preparers trained and certified at the advanced level through the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program help qualified families file their taxes for free.

VITA is a free, IRS-sponsored program to help low and middle income workers have their federal and state personal income taxes prepared and filed at no cost.

This year, the maximum combined federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refund has increased to up to \$8,114, but a tax return must be filed to claim it. Qualified families with incomes of \$53,267 or less qualify for free tax preparation. Households with incomes under \$62,000 also qualify for free help at [www.MyFreeTaxes.com](http://www.MyFreeTaxes.com).

## Never Too Old — Never Too Young to Give Back!

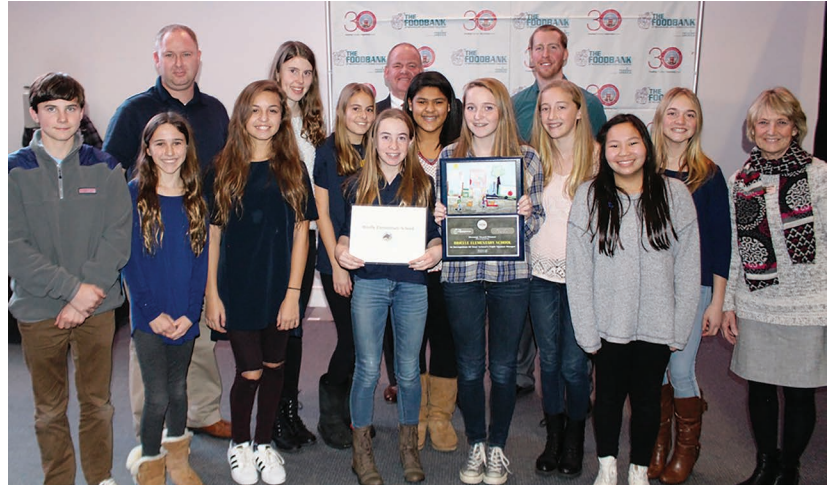
Meet Ruth – who celebrated her 95th birthday by volunteering at the FoodBank. Ruth has been a regular volunteer for six years and was helping us with our holiday ornaments when we took a break to wish her a Happy Birthday. What does she attribute to her wellbeing? Yoga and, as we know, giving back.



Meet Suzette - Age 4 - who told her mom she wanted to help other children who were hungry, so she agreed to skip her "pick a place for dinner" nights and instead ate something light and put the money in the jar. She also asked her family to pitch in and within a short time raised \$75 dollars, which she donated to the FoodBank. Since \$1 equals 3 meals,



Suzette's donation allowed us to provide 225 meals! We were all very proud of her and she was presented with a certificate for her efforts.



*Brielle Elementary School Wins the Governor's Cup*

## A Record-Breaking Year for STUDENTS CHANGE HUNGER

This year, new records were established in the Students Change Hunger campaign that ran from September through November. There were a record 100 schools that participated, a record-setting weight of 78,120 pounds of food collected, and a total outreach of over 66,000 students joining in friendly competition to help win the fight against hunger in our community.

Students Change Hunger is a statewide school food drive competition. The challenge gives students, parents, teachers and staff an opportunity to help those less fortunate during the holiday season. Schools are categorized by the size of their student population. The schools then compete to collect as much food as possible for The FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties. The schools that bring in the most food in their division are given special awards at the end of the competition. In addition, one school, Brielle Elementary School in Monmouth County, won the top prize, the Governor's Cup. The Governor's Cup, endorsed by Governor Chris Christie, is awarded for school spirit, advocacy, and active participation throughout the competition.

Congratulations to all our students - We can't wait to see you break new records next year!

## Support the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive

Saturday, May 14th is Stamp Out Hunger, a national food drive benefiting food banks across the US. Want to help fight hunger in your community? Simply leave a bag with non-perishable food items (remember, every little bit helps) next to your mailbox early on May 14th and your donation will be picked up by your letter carrier. Last year, the FoodBank received over 80,000 pounds of food from this successful campaign.



# Consider Remembering a Loved One with a Donation

“One of the most important things to us is to keep our daughter’s name and memory alive,” said Kathleen Chrzanowski, whose only daughter Jessica died at the tender age of 26. For the past three years, Kathleen and her husband Robert have decided to honor Jessica E. Leshay with an Entertainment Sponsorship at the FoodBank’s annual Culinary Classic Event. They saw it as a fitting tribute to Jessica, who loved the FoodBank, volunteering and music, and was passionate about helping people in her community. “This donation brings all her passions together, and we are always so pleased to participate in this wonderful event and fundraiser.”



Jessica worked at the Front Street Trattoria in Red Bank and would volunteer to orchestrate the “Take a slice out of hunger” campaign that the restaurant held on behalf of the FoodBank. “Even though Jessica was on crutches at the time, she would ask me to help her go to every

business in the area and collect items that could be auctioned off at the event, increasing

donations for the FoodBank,” said her mother. “Jessica was the one everyone relied on and throughout her life, she always believed in the value of paying it forward. We know that had Jessica lived, she would still be doing whatever she could to help the FoodBank.”

“This donation brings all her passions together, and we are always so pleased to participate in this wonderful event and fundraiser.”

Kathleen and her husband Robert plan to continue their service to the FoodBank by volunteering their time at The B.E.A.T. Center in Ocean County where they live. “I am still in awe of what the FoodBank does for the community and how \$1 can provide 3 meals. When I first saw the distribution center in Neptune, I was so impressed with the people and the operation. We believe the FoodBank is the perfect place for us to pay it forward, and it truly honors our daughter’s memory in a meaningful way.”

For more information on how to donate on behalf of a loved one, contact Diana Flippo at [dflippo@foobankmoc.org](mailto:dflippo@foobankmoc.org) or call 732-643-5843.

## A Magical Night Under the Stars — The FoodBank 2016 Humanitarian Gala

The FoodBank held its 2016 Humanitarian Gala at the Navesink Country Club on March 11th. Our 2016 Honorees included Stop & Shop, The Jersey Strong Foundation, The Schreiber Family and WBI Investments, Inc., Junior Humanitarian Andrew Beer and Agency Partner Reformation Community Food Pantry. The entertainment was Motor City Revue.



*The Schreiber Family, WBI Investments, Inc.*



*The Roma Family from the Jersey Strong Foundation.*