



### A Feeding Middlesex County Success Story

Meeting the increased needs to supply food during the COVID19 crisis has been a fierce challenge---one that is being met day by day and week by week by Feeding Middlesex County. The county food bank started to distribute food 5 days a week (previously distributing food 2 days a week) on March 16. To meet the large needed food purchases, funds had to be raised and food had to be purchased.

Feeding Middlesex County reached out to its list of contacts explaining the dilemma and asking for donations. There was also an outreach on social media for funds. Several of FMC's board members, community stakeholders and volunteers organized personal fundraising efforts on their own social media. The response from the community was both swift and generous. More than 3 times the monetary donations received in all of 2019 have been received by Feeding Middlesex County at the end of June, 2020.

Believe it or not, purchasing food was not an easy task. Many of the local wholesale suppliers specialize in servicing restaurants and large institutions, and therefore, their stock is made up of large containers of food, whereas, Feeding Middlesex County needed family-size items. Supermarkets in general could not help us because they were having trouble stocking their own shelves. By completing some intensive research, we were able to find some family-size items at some suppliers that were new to us. We partnered with a local caterer and were able to utilize their business connections to find new sources of food supplies. There were limited family-size foods purchased through the State of New Jersey. Our regular relationship with Costco enabled us to purchase some



items. And we located a number of food suppliers who donated numerous pallets of food. The Community Food Bank of New Jersey helped in many ways.

By the end of June 2020, approximately 946 tons of food has been distributed by the county food bank for this 6-month period to the more than 130 food pantries, soup kitchens and social service agencies that partner with the food bank and Feeding Middlesex County. Close to this same amount of food was distributed in ALL of 2019.

There is no doubt Feeding Middlesex County has met the challenge, but at the same time, there is no doubt that the need for food will continue to increase for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021. Monetary donations to Feeding Middlesex County will help us meet the remaining difficult tasks that we face.