



To the Editor:

What are you looking forward to this summer? With the new season officially arriving June 20th, and the academic year winding down at schools across the state, many in New Jersey are planning vacations, trips to the beach, and bountiful picnics and barbeques.

But for hundreds of thousands of our neighbors, summer is not a time of sun and fun. It is a time of stress and fear, as they wonder how they will feed their children. When the school breakfasts and lunches they rely on stop, a new struggle against hunger begins.

Almost 700,000 children in New Jersey take part in the National School Lunch Program, and more than 300,000 participate in the breakfast program. But when that final school bell rings this month, only 19 percent of eligible low-income kids will be registered to get the summertime nutrition they need.

What should be a carefree time turns into the most vulnerable time of the year for the nearly one in five New Jersey children facing hunger – a harsh reality that is hard to fathom.

We at the Community FoodBank of New Jersey are pulling out all the stops to reach as many of these children as we can. Right now, dozens of Summer Food Service Program sites are being set up across the state, and by the time they are done for the season, we expect to provide almost 180,000 meals. But, as always, we can't do it alone. The generosity of our caring donors and supporters is needed right now, and more than ever.

The bad news is that hunger is a 365-day-a-year problem in New Jersey, and for the next couple of months it will be especially acute for kids. The good news is that working together, and with the gifts of funds, food and time, we have the power to make things better.

Our children deserve nothing less.

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