Consistent access to nutritious food and education are key to addressing serious health conditions. Food-insecure individuals are more prone to chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure – and are more likely to suffer other adverse effects to their overall health.

Because of the established connection between food insecurity and health, New Jersey’s largest anti-hunger and anti-poverty organization combats hunger with a holistic approach. The food distribution model has evolved over the years. For the Community FoodBank of New Jersey that has meant two things – increased efficiency and strategic collaboration.

The ultimate goal of the FoodBank is to eliminate hunger across the state. Along the way, we hope to inspire positive lifestyle changes through programs that provide regular access to fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and dairy.

Last year, for example, the FoodBank distributed more than 50 million pounds of food through its community partners, including local soup kitchens and food pantries, and other programs across the state. Twenty-five percent of this food was fresh produce, which reached the tables of New Jersey families in need.

In addition to providing after-school meals for children at risk of hunger, weekend bags of supplemental food for school-age children and their families, and monthly food packages for seniors on fixed incomes, the FoodBank recently launched two innovative programs that align with its “hunger as a health issue” initiative.

The first is Food, Health & Hope: An Answer to Diabetes, a pilot program for clients who have diabetes or pre-diabetes. Through collaboration with Summit Medical Group Foundation and by working with community partners, eligible clients receive diabetes-friendly food boxes and fresh produce twice a month, as well as medical screenings and nutrition counseling. Participants have already noticed a marked difference in their well-being.

Another FoodBank program, called Healthy Families Farmers Markets, brings free, fresh fruits and vegetables into high-need communities. Modeled after traditional farmers markets, this program provides produce to food-insecure families year-round.

Nutritious food is a prescription for good health. With strategic community and health care partnerships, the FoodBank will continue its holistic approach to addressing hunger as a health issue. Keep reading this issue of The Feed for an inside-look at these and other health initiatives that are making an impact in our communities.
Dear FoodBank Friends,

I am delighted to announce that food bank veteran Carlos M. Rodriguez will be joining the Community FoodBank of New Jersey as President and CEO effective April 9, 2018. The Board extends its deepest thanks to current CEO Debra Vizzi for her work to raise awareness and alleviate hunger in New Jersey these past two and a half years.

With this exciting appointment, the FoodBank is poised to build on its 43 years of service and reach even more of our neighbors in need. Carlos comes to the FoodBank from Fulfill (formerly the FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties), where he has served as Executive Director since 2011. During his tenure, he led the creation and launch of the B.E.A.T. Center in 2015 and expanded overall food distribution by 75 percent, among other accomplishments. Prior to Fulfill, he was Vice President for Agency Relations and Benefits Access at the Food Bank For New York City. He also held high-level positions with the Children’s Defense Fund of New York and the Community Food Resource Center.

As we look forward to this next exciting chapter for our organization, we welcome Carlos to lead our excellent staff in innovative programmatic and mission delivery. We are confident all those we serve will benefit greatly from Carlos’ impressive knowledge and experience coupled with his passionate dedication to this cause. Regardless of where in the state his desk is located, his overarching commitment to feeding New Jersey continues!

Carlos will soon begin his new role at the FoodBank and looks forward to working with you. Until then, on behalf of the entire Board of Directors, thank you for your generous support of our work to end hunger in New Jersey. Best wishes for a wonderful spring.

Josh Weinreich
Chairman of the Board
Dear FoodBank Friends,

I am delighted to announce that food bank veteran Carlos M. Rodriguez will be joining the Community Food Resource Center in New York City. He also held high-level positions with the Children’s Defense Fund of New York and New Jersey. Since 2011, he was Vice President for Agency Relations and Benefits Access at the Food Bank For New Jersey and has served as Executive Director of the FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, where he has served as Executive Director. Carlos will soon begin his new role at the FoodBank and looks forward to working with you. Until then, on behalf of the entire Board of Directors, thank you for your generous support of our work in alleviating hunger in New Jersey these past two and a half years.

As you have learned in this issue of The Feed, we can make an impact due to kind-hearted people who support the FoodBank’s programs, as well as corporate partners – like Summit Medical Group Foundation.

“Partnering with Summit Medical Group Foundation allows for collaboration and innovation,” said Karen Leese, Vice President of Development of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. “Together, we target diabetes and other health conditions linked to food insecurity. The FoodBank is appreciative of the Foundation’s ongoing support of our programs and its investment in our mission to eradicate hunger and improve health.”

With Summit Medical Group Foundation, we take a holistic approach to combat diabetes. We understand that nutritious food is just one component of how we can influence the well-being of food-insecure New Jersey residents. Through an initiative called Food, Health & Hope: An Answer to Diabetes, we provide medical screenings, nutrition counseling and consistent access to diabetes-friendly food.

Another way Summit Medical Group Foundation aids our efforts to address hunger as a health issue is by being the lead funder of our Healthy Families Farmers Markets. Since its inception in May 2017, the program has distributed more than 800,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables at about 20 sites. Summit Medical Group Foundation is key to this growth, and is helping to introduce food samplings and recipes to share with clients.

“The Community FoodBank of New Jersey leads the important effort to address hunger as a health issue, and is helping to introduce food samplings and recipes to share with clients,” said Joe Finocchiaro, Executive Director of Summit Medical Group Foundation. “Partnering with the FoodBank is a great honor as the synergy between our two organizations offers the strength we need to help conquer ever-growing health and hunger issues in underserved communities in New Jersey. While each organization has its own unique mission, we are both committed to providing nourishing food and health counseling through programs like our Diabetes Initiative, which we know changes lives for the better.”

(continued on page 4)
Meet Debby. She volunteers at our Southern Branch, managing incoming clients at the on-site pantry. Debby has been supporting our South Jersey hunger-relief efforts since 2012. What she loves most about volunteering at the pantry is the direct interaction she has with the people she helps. “It’s wonderful to give back, and this experience has taught me a lot including how to appreciate what I have,” she told us. “Even when it’s an especially hard and busy day, I know we did good things for so many in need.”

In Your Neighborhood

Food-insecure families experience similar challenges as other Americans in trying to follow a healthy diet. But low-income families often struggle to adopt these behaviors because nutritious food is typically more expensive than unhealthy options.

To address this problem, the FoodBank works with local organizations and health care leaders to address hunger as a health issue. Providing nourishing food is our expertise, but it is only one part of the equation. By collaborating with health care experts, we have the tools to help food-insecure households through awareness and education.

One such partnership focuses on individuals and families facing hunger in Atlantic City. In 2016, AtlantiCare launched a nutrition initiative at the William L. Gormley AtlantiCare HealthPlex, a federally qualified health center. The program began with the FoodBank’s mobile pantry visiting the center once a month to distribute food among AtlantiCare patients and clients.

Within two months, the response to the program demonstrated the need for a more permanent solution. The Pantry at the Plex, with dedicated space inside the HealthPlex, opened in December 2016, and it remains available to patients Monday through Friday. The FoodBank’s Southern Branch contributes nutritious food to the Pantry. Donations to the AtlantiCare Foundation, from AtlantiCare staff, and from other community groups also support the Pantry. “Food can be the catalyst for change,” said Laura Engelmann, Community Health & Wellness Manager of AtlantiCare. “By enhancing access to healthy food, we can empower and engage patients to take steps toward healthier lifestyles.”

In its first year, the Pantry at the Plex had 489 unique patient and client visits that benefited families, including 760 adults and 234 children. As of January 2018, the Pantry distributed 73,424 pounds of healthy food to the community through more than 1,122 visits. Half of this food was fresh fruits and vegetables.

“Food can be the catalyst for change,” said Sandy Festa, Executive Director of the AtlantiCare HealthPlex. “Another said he was especially thankful because in addition to his own health needs, he has children to care for.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 36.6 percent of Atlantic City’s population lives below the poverty level, and poverty is a key indicator of hunger. Families with tight budgets often make tough choices—like deciding to purchase inexpensive and unhealthy food to cope. Together, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey — Southern Branch and AtlantiCare fill the gap with nutritious food and education to encourage households to improve their lifestyles.
Cooking For A Cause
with Summit Medical Group Foundation

Baked Nutmeg & Cinnamon Acorn Squash

Servings: 2
Ingredients:
1 acorn squash (halves, seeds removed)
1 tbsp. cinnamon
tbsp. maple syrup
tbsp. nutmeg
2 tsp. butter or butter spread

Preparation:
• Preheat oven to 375° F.
• Place acorn squash halves inside up in a shallow baking dish with 1 inch water.
• Sprinkle the insides with butter or butter spread, cinnamon, maple syrup and nutmeg.
• Bake for 1 hour or until the insides are soft when pierced with a fork.

Acorn Squash Seeds
Ingredients:
1 cup acorn squash seeds
1 tbsp. olive oil or any vegetable oil
½ tsp. salt or to taste

Preparation:
• Preheat oven to 375° F.
• Rinse acorn squash seeds. Pat dry with paper towel and place in a small bowl.
• Add oil and salt and toss to coat evenly.
• Line a baking sheet with foil. Spread seeds on prepared baking sheet in an even layer.
• Bake for 10 to 15 minutes. Monitor closely as they can burn quickly.

Thank You To Our Recent Donors
These corporations, foundations and organizations made recent generous donations to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey:

Summit Medical Group Foundation also hosts events to benefit our partner initiatives. Most recently, the Foundation introduced Broadway Beats Hunger, a night of holiday songs performed by Broadway stars.

This past November, the Foundation held its own corporate turkey drive, which encouraged employees and patients to donate to help families in need at Thanksgiving. The turkey drive raised more than 600 turkeys and hundreds of pounds of food, along with funds, to support the FoodBank’s holiday hunger-relief efforts.

As many of our partnerships demonstrate, it is essential for communities to work together to combat hunger and its health effects. Our relationship with Summit Medical Group Foundation is one example of how we can thwart the growth of diseases and invest in the future of New Jersey.

For more information on how your company can get involved, please contact Debbie Scheinholtz, Director of Corporate Relations, at 908-242-3951 or dscheinhotz@cfbnj.org.

Partner Spotlight: Summit Medical Group Foundation, cont.

Because of the established connection between food insecurity and health, New Jersey’s largest anti-hunger and anti-poverty organization combats hunger with a holistic approach. The food distribution model has evolved over the years.

Another FoodBank program, called Good Fruit & Veggie Fund, brings fresh fruits and vegetables into high-need communities. Modeled after The Bridge at Summit Medical Group, this initiative continues to address the need for fresh, affordable produce by reaching out to individuals and families in need.

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