



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nicole Williams, Communications Manager
nwilliams@cfnj.org / 908-355-3663 ext. 282



COMMUNITY FOODBANK OF NEW JERSEY'S BLUE JEAN BALL RAISES OVER \$1.36 MILLION TO FIGHT HUNGER
Annual Gala Focuses on Work to Address *Hunger as a Health Issue*
Honoring Wakefern Food Corp., Judy & Josh Weston, Summit Medical Group Foundation, and seven of the
FoodBank's community partners

HILLSIDE, NJ—May 22, 2019

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey held its annual Blue Jean Ball on Saturday, May 18 at the Central Railroad Terminal in Liberty State Park. The FoodBank's longest running fundraiser has provided guests with a fun, social night out for more than 25 years while raising money to support the organization. This year's event drew a crowd of nearly 500 attendees and raised more than \$1.36 million to help address *hunger as a health issue* with nutrition education and fresh produce, which accounted for 27% of all food distributed by the FoodBank last year.

The event was chaired by Alma DeMetropolis, Patty & Chris Perry, Liz & Tom Pryma, and Roby & Josh Weinreich.

Complete with a denim chic dress code, the Blue Jean Ball began at 5:30 pm with a cocktail hour featuring food trucks on the Hudson River overlooking the New York City skyline. Three food truck partners generously donated their time and the food that they prepared to kick off the evening deliciously: Harvest Restaurant Group, Compass Group, and Stone Soup, the FoodBank's own on-site catering service run by Chef Paul Kapner.

Afterwards, the festivities moved inside for a gourmet dinner and an awards presentation honoring FoodBank supporters who have exemplified the organization's core values of Food, Help, and Hope. The formal program was emceed by New Jersey's own Adam Sank, who also performed a comedic set at the end of the night.

The FOOD award was presented to Wakefern Food Corp., one of the FoodBank's founding partners and the organization's largest food donor. Wakefern and the fifty member families that own and operate ShopRite, Price Rite, Dearborn Market, and The Fresh Grocer stores also provide leading financial support and engage thousands of their employees as volunteers. Last year alone, they donated more than 6 million pounds of food to provide for neighbors in need throughout New Jersey.

"Giving back is a defining aspect of our unique culture at Wakefern," said Joe Sheridan, President & COO of Wakefern Food Corp. "It's our shared commitment to eliminating hunger that makes us great partners with the Community

FoodBank of New Jersey. We're proud to accept this year's FOOD Award and will continue to fight hunger and help struggling families in the communities we serve."

Judy & Josh Weston, two of the FoodBank's most dedicated philanthropic leaders, received the HELP award for their generous financial support and their decades of unwavering guidance, which have been instrumental in maximizing the organization's impact for neighbors in need.

"We support hunger efforts in New Jersey because hunger is a terrible handicap," said Josh Weston, who also serves as a member of the FoodBank's Board of Directors. "Anyone who's lucky enough to do well should give back."

The HOPE award was given to the Summit Medical Group Foundation, the FoodBank's partner in *Food, Health and Hope: An Answer to Diabetes*, and the seven partner agencies that participated in the program's inaugural year: Catholic Charities Father English Food Pantry, FOCUS Hispanic Center for Community Development, House of Prayer Food Pantry, Interfaith Food Pantry of the Oranges, Salvation Army of Plainfield, Seventh-Day Adventist Church of the Oranges, and Solid Rock Baptist Church Food Pantry.

"The Summit Medical Group Foundation and the Community FoodBank of New Jersey have worked side by side to create this program and to recognize the need in the community and have a really true, authentic partnership that's made the world of difference to people in need and their families," said Joe Finocchiaro, Executive Director of the Summit Medical Group Foundation.

After the awards presentation, the evening concluded back outside with a feast of desserts crafted by the food trucks.

"The Blue Jean Ball is a celebration of what we, at the FoodBank, do year-round—raising funds, distributing food, and creating a network of support for our neighbors in need to help them lead healthy and active lives," said Carlos Rodriguez, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. "Thanks to the event chairs, sponsors, and attendees, we've exceeded our fundraising goal and honored a few of the FoodBank's most committed partners. We're deeply grateful for their support of our mission."

Please contact Nicole Williams, Communications Manager, at nwilliams@cfbnj.org or 908-355-3663 ext. 282 for additional photos and to learn more about the Community FoodBank of New Jersey's Blue Jean Ball.

The [Community FoodBank of New Jersey \(CFBNJ\)](#), a member of Feeding America®, has been delivering food, help and hope across the state for over 40 years. Last year, CFBNJ provided nutritious food for over 47 million meals through its network of more than 1,000 community partners including pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, mobile pantries, and child and senior feeding programs. For our hungry neighbors, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey is the powerful agent of change that fills the emptiness caused by hunger and provides resources that are essential to earning a sustainable living.