



Partnering to End Hunger

FMC Newsletter: January 2021

Greetings!

“Thank you” to all the hundreds of folks who donated to Feeding Middlesex County in 2020 does not seem adequate. The outpouring of support enabled us to purchase over \$250,000 of food for our fellow residents in need. People heard about the great need and responded wholeheartedly. Our partner, MCFOODS, distributed over 4 million pounds of food, double what was distributed in 2019. We are so grateful for the contributions, no matter how small or how large.

Unfortunately, we continue to need that support, as the number of food insecure residents continues to grow during this crisis. We urge all our supporters to schedule food drives, ask family and friends to send a donation, and ask employers to consider a donation to Feeding Middlesex County.

As we see hope in 2021, we thank you again for your incredible support in 2020.

A Virtual Community Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day



On January 18th, Rutgers Bonner collaborated with the New Brunswick Cultural Center to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. with a virtual event. This event, *Uplifting Communities in Light of Hardship*, included panels, performances, and community reflection. Speakers addressed racial injustice, food insecurity, criminal justice reform and undocumented immigration. MCFOODS Director Jennifer Apostol was one of the food insecurity panelists along with Keith Jones, Director of the newly created Department of Human and Community Services for the City of New Brunswick, and Anthony Capece from Elijah's Promise. This conversation illuminated the meaning of food insecurity and the ways in which people become food insecure. The impacts of COVID 19 and how these organizations have dealt with the challenges of food insecurity prior to the pandemic and in response to COVID were discussed. Panelists were also able to give people ideas as to how they can help, get involved, and support our work.

This event was also used as a kick off to the annual *Windows of Understanding* exhibition. Artists were paired with MCFOODS and many other local non-profit organizations to interpret the question "How do we see through hate?" and transform local public spaces into literal windows of understanding. These public spaces in New Brunswick, Highland Park and Metuchen display art for the community to learn about the positive strides being made by local organizations around a wide array of social justice issues that don't make daily headlines. *Windows of Understanding* is a creative, community-building response to the negativity and hate being perpetuated in today's media landscape.

[Click here](#) to watch the *Uplifting Communities in Light of Hardship* recording and [visit this website](#) for more information about the *Windows of Understanding* exhibition.

Changes to SNAP Benefits in 2021

According to [this CNBC article](#), the recent stimulus package, signed in December, has made it easier for people to qualify for food stamps. \$13 billion was allocated for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and millions of dollars were set to go towards food banks and programs such as Meals on Wheels. According to the Urban Institute, "at the end of September, nearly 20% of all adults and 40% of those in a family where at least one adult lost a job reported food insecurity."

How will this help people?

~From January to June of 2021, SNAP benefits are boosted by 15% per month for all (this equates to about \$25 more per person per month & a family of 4 will get an

extra \$100 per month)

~It is now easier for low-income college students to qualify.

~\$5 million has been allocated to the Department of Agriculture in order to expand people's ability to order food online.

Click the link above to read the full article and get more information about who qualifies, how to sign up, and more.

Follow Your Dollar: How does FMC help MCFOODS?



Last month, we introduced you to this behind-the-scenes series, in hopes of illuminating the process following your donation to FMC. We talked a bit about our revenue and expenses. This month, we want to highlight how we are able use your donations to help MCFOODS Network provide nonperishable food and necessities to those in need in our community.

MCFOODS is a county entity that makes purchases through a government process, which includes gathering quotes and bids for purchases. FMC, as a separate 501(c)3 entity, can negotiate lower prices and has the ability to act quickly to buy things for the county food bank. Especially during this time, we have been able to make the most of your generous donations in trying to meet the growing need that has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Check back in the next issue as we continue to follow the path of an FMC donation. Thank you for your continued support at this crucial time!

A quick note before you go...

If you find yourself shopping online, we invite you to make your Amazon purchases through Amazon Smile. This is another great and easy way to support our organization! You can log into your Amazon account via smile.amazon.com and designate Feeding Middlesex County. Amazon will donate a portion of the price of your eligible purchases to FMC! "You shop. Amazon gives."





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