

2021

Annual Report

THE FOOD BRIGADE INC.



The Food Brigade Inc.
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Our Mission

The mission of The Food Brigade Inc. is to ensure that no child or adult in New Jersey goes hungry.

Our primary service is to provide food, whether in the form of prepared meals or fresh and packaged foods, to families and individuals dealing with food insecurity.

We accomplish our mission by building and operating a network of providers and volunteers who assist in the acquisition, transport, preparation, distribution, and delivery of meals and food to those in need.

Our focus is on reaching those who "fall through the cracks" in existing services.

Our guiding principle is compassion for our fellow man.



Our Programs & Services

Weekly Bulk Food Distribution Program

Every week, The Food Brigade distributes free bags of food containing fresh produce, protein, bread & baked goods, and non-perishable items. In 2021, our recipients included our client families and individuals, as well as local food pantries, women & children's shelters, homeless shelters, churches, social service agencies, and other hunger-relief organizations.

Weekly Restaurant Dinner Meal Program

(March-May, September-December)

Beginning in March 2021, The Food Brigade conducted a weekly distribution of free, prepackaged, restaurant-prepared dinner meals, which has continued into 2022.

Home Delivery

Every week, The Food Brigade's fleet of volunteer "road warriors" deliver meals and bags of food to people in need who lack the ability to travel to our distribution locations.



Our Programs & Services

Meal Preparation & Distribution Program

The Food Brigade delivers home-cooked meals to families who are in need due to death of a family member, loss of employment, or catastrophic illness or injury.

Food Pantry

The Food Brigade operates a fixed food pantry in Dumont, New Jersey, offering non-perishable items as well as refrigerated and frozen foods.

Diaper Program (Infant and Adult)

The Food Brigade distributes diapers obtained through private donations and as a Partner Agency of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey.

Thanksgiving Turkey Drive

Annually, The Food Brigade obtains and distributes turkeys, roaster chickens, and "sides" boxes at Thanksgiving time.



Impact and Outcomes

3 MILLION POUNDS OF FOOD

TOTAL FOOD DISTRIBUTED

The Food Brigade was responsible for the distribution of 3,003,029 pounds of food to the needy in northern New Jersey and southern New York from 10/1/20 (date of corporate formation) through 12/31/21.

62,000 GALLONS OF MILK

TOTAL MILK DISTRIBUTED

We gave out 10,179 gallons of milk and chocolate milk in 2020, and another 51,880.5 gallons in 2021.

6,000 PEOPLE IN NEED FED

TOTAL FED WEEKLY

We helped to feed as many as 6,000 local residents dealing with food insecurity at our peak impact during the Summer of 2021.



Impact and Outcomes

\$25,000 GROCERY STORE CARDS

SUPERMARKET GIFT CARDS

In 2021, The Food Brigade distributed \$25,000.00 worth of gift cards redeemable at local North Jersey supermarkets, including Shop Rite and ACME. This empowered local residents in need to purchase food items of their own choosing.

16,000 PACKAGED DINNERS

TOTAL MEALS DISTRIBUTED

Each packaged meal was restaurant-prepared and contained at least one protein, one starch, and one vegetable, at a total value of \$160,000.

THANKSGIVING DISTRIBUTION

384 TURKEYS & CHICKENS

Our Thanksgiving 2021 distribution included 384 turkeys & roaster chickens, 98 "fixins" boxes, and 250 boxes of produce (5,000 lbs.).



Impact and Outcomes

CLIENT SATISFACTION

FALL 2021 SURVEY

In a Fall 2021 thesis paper by a senior at the State University of New York, clients of The Food Brigade were surveyed to investigate the extent to which people dealing with food insecurity make use of private food pantries.

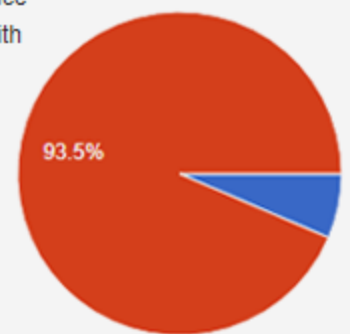
Survey respondents said that what sets The Food Brigade apart from other pantries included the high quality and variety of fresh produce and cooked meals; the extensive accessibility for those without transportation; and the convenient time windows offered for food distributions.

Over 58% responded that they had avoided accepting food assistance in the past, with 61% of those claiming it was due to pride. When asked to describe how they felt receiving help from The Food Brigade, 93.5% said that our operations made them comfortable with accepting assistance. 64.5% stated further that The Food Brigade eliminated the stigma associated with food assistance. The reasons given for this included the anonymity, the lack of critical judgement and questioning, and an overall sense of "normalcy" at Food Brigade food distributions.

Comfort Opinion

Do operations like the Food Brigade make you:

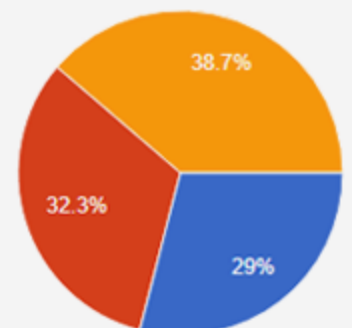
- Avoid food assistance
- Feel comfortable with food assistance



Quality

Do you find that your quality of food received from food pantries has been:

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor



In Their Words....

"I just want to say I am overwhelmed. What you are all doing is just amazing. The box is so fantastic and it made my heart cry with joy."
N.R., mother of school children in Bergen County

"I was teared up the entire time going through the line for box pick up. It is truly a blessed thing to see so many people pulling together. Just AMAZING."
R.D., Bergen County mother

"I'm calling you regarding the food which you delivered yesterday to my house. I'm just calling you to tell you thank you, and to express my gratefulness towards what you did for my family."
N.T., Bergen County mother

"Just a shout out...I haven't had my unemployment check in 20 weeks. Thanks to you guys, I had a delicious dinner. I have been borrowing money from my sister but you guys have taken a load off my mind. THANK YOU."
M.A., Bergen County resident

"We cannot thank you enough for your support of our center. Your weekly donations of cases of fresh food, including dairy products, juices, fruits, vegetables, meats, and frozen foods has eased food insecurity within our community. Your donation actively works to make life better for those who are affected by domestic violence."
Center for Hope & Safety women's shelter, Rochelle Park, NJ

"You have been a great help to us during these difficult times. Every week we receive from you many boxes full of vegetables, meats, frozen items, fruits, milk and many other wonderful items that our clients wouldn't have the money to buy."
Catholic Charities of Passaic County, Father English Community Center Food Pantry, Paterson, NJ

"Very grateful for all the help and donation you have done to thousands of families in the Kearny and Harrison area."
Peruvian Civic Association of New Jersey, Kearny, NJ



Awards and Recognition

Top Medalist, Founder/Innovator - NJ Governor's Jefferson Award

On September 12, 2021, The Food Brigade's President, Karen DeMarco, was awarded the New Jersey Governor's Jefferson Award for Public Service, for her work in feeding the hungry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer's "Hometown Hero" Award

On July 9, 2021, The Food Brigade's President was given a Congressional commendation as a "Hometown Hero" by U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer, for her work on behalf of the food insecure in North Jersey.

New Jersey Realtors® Statewide "Good Neighbor" Award

On December 7, 2021, The Food Brigade's President was honored at the annual New Jersey Realtors® Awards ceremony in Atlantic City for her community service. She was the first recipient to ever be given the "Good Neighbor" award at the state level.



**"You do so much for so many, and I'm so proud
and grateful to be part of your organization!"**

Food Brigade volunteer, 12/22/21

**"Thank you so much for today. It was such a pleasure
to volunteer with you guys. I could really feel the love
and great spirit of the volunteers."**

Food Brigade volunteer, 12/21/21

