



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School Is Out, Summer Meals Are In!

Food Bank of South Jersey to Deliver 205,000 Meals to Low-Income Children at 100 Sites; Non-Profit Organization's Award-Winning Summer Meals Program Expands by 125 Percent Over 2015

Pennsauken, NJ (PR.Com) – June 13, 2016 – The Food Bank of South Jersey (FBSJ), the area's largest hunger-relief organization, today began its 2016 Summer Meals Program (SMP) – an ambitious campaign projected to deliver 205,000 breakfasts, lunches, and snacks to low-income children from mid-June through September 4.

Approximately 3,500 children – enrolled in community, summer school, and church programs at 100 sites in Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, and Salem counties – will benefit from FBSJ's SMP. The number of meals to be served this summer represents a dramatic 125% increase over last year, when 92,000 meals were supplied to 2,350 children across 45 sites.

As in previous years, FBSJ will function as a “self-prep” sponsor for its SMP; it procures food directly from wholesalers and relies on the cooperation of volunteers and the expertise of staff to prep and pack an average of 3,000 fresh meals daily and deliver them to participating sites on time each summer day. FBSJ was named a “Summer Feeding Champion” in 2014 by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA), and is in line for a repeat of the special honor this year.

Three community partners, *Virtua Health, Bimbo Bakeries, and Bentley Truck Services*, will play a key role in helping FBSJ execute its SMP successfully. Virtua is providing free use of commercial kitchen space in Camden that serves as a food preparation hub. Bimbo Bakeries is donating 400 loaves of bread weekly throughout SMP. Bentley is lending two 18-foot box trucks required for delivery routes.

Only 1 in 5 Eligible Children in New Jersey Get Help through Summer Meals Programs

While the growth of FBSJ's Summer Meals Program is significant, there is considerably more work to be done to make sure that all at-risk children receive the nutrition they require when schools are in recess and free and reduced-price lunches are unavailable. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture estimates that only 19% of eligible children statewide participate in a federally-funded *Summer Food Service Program*, of which FBSJ is an approved sponsor.

MORE



The Food Bank of South Jersey exists to provide an immediate solution to the urgent problem of hunger by providing food to needy people, teaching them to eat nutritiously, and helping them to find sustainable ways to improve their lives.

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“The Food Bank of South Jersey has certainly demonstrated leadership in expanding their Summer Meals Program the last several years,” noted Stephanie Sutton-Page, Coordinator for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture’s Summer Food Service Program. “Our department salutes the care and commitment they have shown in delivering this essential program to more and more South Jersey children each year.”

Kick-Off Event at Wiggins Park in Camden, June 22

FBSJ is launching its 2016 Summer Meals Program with a kick-off event on Wednesday, June 22 at Wiggins Park in Camden, from noon until 2:00 pm. Approximately 250 children from participating SMP sites will be on hand to enjoy games, music, face painting, and lunch. Speakers will include Stephanie Sutton-Page (NJDA); Timothy Walsh (USDA Nutrition Programs Branch Manager/Mid-Atlantic Regional Office); and FBSJ’s CEO and President Val Traore.

Site Sign-Ups for Summer Meals Program through July 31

Organizations that still wish to participate as feeding sites in FBSJ’s 2016 SMP can apply through July 31. To qualify, sites must be located in a low-income area, where 50 percent or more of the children are eligible for free/reduced-price school meals; or at least half of the children that attend the site’s summer program are eligible for free/reduced-price school meals.

For more information, contact Falynn Milligan, FBSJ Senior Manager of Direct Services, at 856-425-4612 or fmilligan@foodbanksj.org.

About the Food Bank of South Jersey

The Food Bank of South Jersey (FBSJ) is the leader in providing safe and nutritional food to people in need throughout South Jersey. FBSJ distributes food, provides nutrition education and cooking courses, and helps food-insecure families and seniors find sustainable ways to improve their lives. In 2015, FBSJ provided 10 million pounds of food to nearly 200,000 South Jersey residents. FBSJ is a member of Feeding America, our nation’s largest hunger-relief organization. To learn more visit www.foodbanksj.org.

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