



MIDDLESEX COUNTY IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School Participation at its Height for County's Largest Single Food Drive

MIDDLESEX COUNTY – Participation rose, while donations slightly fell during this year's Spring School Food Drive, an annual appeal for non perishables sponsored by the Middlesex County Food Organization and Outreach Distribution Services.

Thanks to the 151 participating schools that collected a total of 58.7 tons or 117,400 pounds of food, M.C.F.O.O.D.S. once again dubbed this its largest single food drive of the year. In comparison, the 2011 drive saw a total of 149 schools credited with 61.7 tons in food donations.

Of the 125 public schools and 26 private schools, two collected more than 8,500 pounds of food, three schools collected more than 4,000 pounds and three schools collected more than 2,000 pounds.

Among the top collectors was South Brunswick High School, where students came by 10,300 pounds of donated food through an unorthodox collection approach. Led by the Student Ambassadors Club, teens took turns passing out flyers at local grocery store entrances, asking patrons to buy something extra to donate, and manned exits to collect these surplus products.

Middlesex County Academy for Science, Math & Engineering Technology in Edison placed a strong second in this year's drive with approximately 8,600 pounds of food to donate. Taking into account a pound-per-student ratio, the Academy's collection averaged out at 56 pounds of food per student; the next highest ratio totaled approximately 8 pounds per student. As a civic-minded institution, the Academy has committed to giving back to a community that was instrumental in raising funds for its establishment more than 12 years ago.

As for the other leading collectors, the Campbell School in Metuchen donated 4,450 pounds, the Randolphville School in Piscataway 4,000 pounds, East Brunswick High School 4,000 pounds, Monroe Township Middle School 2,500 pounds, AC Redshaw School in New Brunswick 2,300 pounds and Mawbey Street Elementary School in Woodbridge 2,050 pounds of food.

"Each week we give out approximately nine tons or 18,000 pounds of food to an average of 42 agencies," said Jennifer Apostol, a Project Manager charged with M.C.F.O.O.D.S.' daily operations. "Thankfully, the food from the drive will likely last us six or seven weeks."

In terms of monetary donations, John Adams in North Brunswick collected \$255 and Middlesex County Educational Services Commission \$175, for a total of \$430 in checks.

At an upcoming meeting, the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, along with the Middlesex County Improvement Authority, the entity directly overseeing M.C.F.O.O.D.S., will formally recognize the drive's top collectors.

In light of the slim shortfall of donations, Apostol is asking for continued community donations and support during what many collection agencies have come to describe as the stark summer months.

"By summer this food will be gone," Apostol said. "It's double the challenge for us when kids are not in school over the summer either. There's more pressure on families to provide and a greater need for access to emergency food. So we hope people continue to donate and coordinate food drives within their communities."

For more information on one entertaining opportunity for summer donations, Plays in the Park, log onto www.co.middlesex.nj.us/parksrecreation/pip.asp.

For any questions on the drive or the M.C.F.O.O.D.S. operation, contact Project Manager Jennifer Apostol at 609-409-5033.

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