



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Social Media Sets Stage for MCFOODS Spring Drive

MIDDLESEX COUNTY – Middlesex County’s regional food pantry is turning to social media in an effort to ramp up enthusiasm for and participation in its annual Spring School Food Drive. “This year, we’ll be scouring networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, looking for the ‘MCFOODS’ hashtag,” announced Project Manager Jennifer Apostol of the Middlesex County Food Organization and Outreach Distribution Services, MCFOODS. “We’re encouraging parents, students, classes, teaching staff and administrators to document their efforts and individual drives using ‘#MCFOODS’ on these social media platforms. In doing so, their photos and anecdotes may find their way into our future press releases or could be considered for inclusion on our webpage or in our annual report.”

Embarking on its 21st year, the spring drive has proven to be MCFOODS’ largest and most effective collection push time and again, drawing in more than 100 school participants and upwards of 42 tons of nonperishable items in 2015 alone.

“This drive is so pivotal to our operation,” Apostol said. “We hope that the surplus of food it provides carries us through the challenging summer months ahead, when donations wane and the need for supplies mounts. Teens and young children, who are out on break and have less access to schools’ subsidized food-assistance programs, are a major factor in the seasonal hardship.”

Apostol has taken extensive steps to increase and encourage involvement in this latest drive, suggesting schools host competitions between grade levels, offer incentives like parties or prizes, use cans for reduced or free admission to sponsored events or tap into other novel and creative approaches, for instance launching a “can-struction” project.

“We may yet find a faint silver lining in our struggle to feed the hungry,” said Middlesex County Freeholder Deputy Director Carol Bellante, a liaison to the Middlesex County Improvement Authority, the entity tasked with MCFOODS’ oversight. “Let’s take this drive as opportunity to impart a larger lesson to our children, values like generosity and caring for your fellow neighbor. In this way, we are sculpting the model and moral citizens of tomorrow, while at the same time helping those who are less fortunate.”

Although dates may slightly vary by location, the official launch for MCFOODS’ 2016 Spring School Food Drive began Feb. 29 and will run no later than March 24.

Residents interested in donating nonperishable items to any of MCFOODS’ permanent drop-off sites, may do so at libraries located in East Brunswick, Edison, Metuchen, Milltown, Monroe, North Brunswick, Perth Amboy, Piscataway, Plainsboro, South Amboy, South Brunswick, South Plainfield, Spotswood and Woodbridge.

For more information on MCFOODS’ services and associated organizations, log onto www.mciauth.com or call 609-655-5141 or follow the regional pantry on Twitter @MCFOODSNetwork.

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