



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Season of Thanksgiving at Middlesex County's Food Bank

MIDDLESEX COUNTY – It truly is the season for giving thanks at Middlesex County's food bank.

With 2016 nearing a close, organizers from the Middlesex County Food Organization and Outreach Distribution Services are taking stock of the usual holiday season's landslide of donations.

To date, MCFOODS has been on the receiving end of 62.17 tons of food donations, more than a third of which has flooded into the organization's East Brunswick warehouse from the October and November drives alone.

"Generosity runs deep here in our region," said Jennifer Apostol, project manager for the Middlesex County Improvement Authority, which manages MCFOODS' operation. "But the holidays are our busy season, when the number of drives climbs and donations are at their height. If this is a good year, then hopefully, collections should tide us over until spring."

The feel-good stories behind the donated goods are just as plenty, Apostol said.

In cooperation with New Brunswick officials, the Feeding New Brunswick Network and the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, MCFOODS partook in a 700-turkey giveaway on Nov. 21.

Other stories have emerged like that of longtime food-bank supporter, Lisa Chippendale, a Middlesex Borough resident, who annually enlists local children to gather thousands of pounds of neighborhood contributions.

As of late, donations exceeding 12,000 pounds have also found their way to MCFOODS by way of area youth.

Upper- and underclassmen from Old Bridge High School's Junior ROTC program, members of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America at John P. Stevens High School in Edison, multiple troops from the East Brunswick Boy Scouts of America and the student bodies from Metuchen High School and Murray A. Chittick Elementary School in East Brunswick ran successful drives across the region.

"Sometimes children are the best teachers we have," said Freeholder Deputy Director Carol Bellante, liaison to the MCIA. "We can learn so much from their compassion, their generosity and their respect for others, regardless of his or her station in life. I want to commend our young citizens for their efforts to help Middlesex County's struggling families and individuals – you give us all something to aspire to."

In Iselin, Jennifer Scola converted her grief into a positive labor of love by collecting more than 2,100 pounds of nonperishable items in honor of her late mother.

She partnered with Colleen Williams, a nearby commercial building's property manager, and Ken Brickel, a director at Nicholas Markets Foodtown of Colonia, and businesses like Colonia Natural Pharmacy, the VCA Iselin Animal Hospital and the Colonia Fire Department.

Scola inspired many to roll up their sleeves for a good cause and as a result, rolled out a reserve of supplies for needy families.

"It's a hallmark of this time of year – giving and being thankful," Apostol said. "We have so many people to thank: businesses, corporations, children and teens, schools, churches, families, friends and all of those organizations and individuals who are at the very heart of what we do here at MCFOODS. We'd like to thank you all on behalf of the thousands of lives you have touched."

Permanent drop-off sites for MCFOODS are located at participating libraries in: East Brunswick, Edison, Metuchen, Milltown, Monroe, North Brunswick, Perth Amboy, Piscataway, Plainsboro, South Amboy, South Brunswick, South Plainfield, Spotswood and Woodbridge.

For further details on MCFOODS or hosting a food drive, log onto www.mciauth.com, call 609-655-5141 or follow the food bank on Facebook at Mcfoods Network on Twitter @MCFOODSNetwork or on Instagram at mcfoods_network.

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