

Franklin Food Bank Fueled by Community Support

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Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School donated boxed and canned foods to the Franklin Food Bank

Credits: Courtesy of TEECS



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FRANKLIN, NJ – Over past eight months, more and more families have been turning to the **Franklin Food Bank** for help.

Since the pandemic hit, the Franklin Food Bank has been working to meet over 100 requests a day. Additionally, since March, the average number of families the non-profit agency serves each month has increased by 65-percent with the number of new families reaching out over the first five months of the healthcare crisis representing an increase of 73-percent over the previous year.

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"We expect to see the need continue or increase," states the food bank on its website [TAP here](#) to read. "We hope the pandemic ceases but we do not expect the economic issues to stop for quite a while."

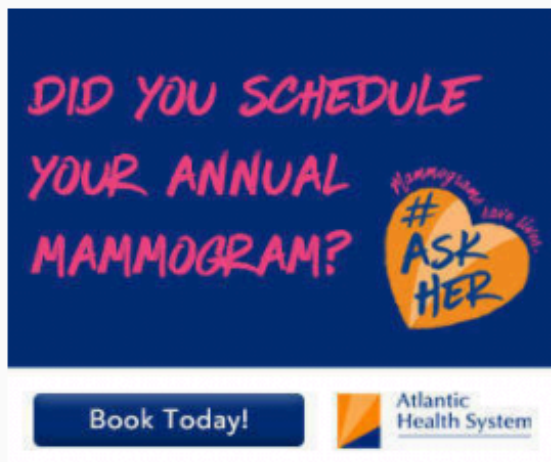
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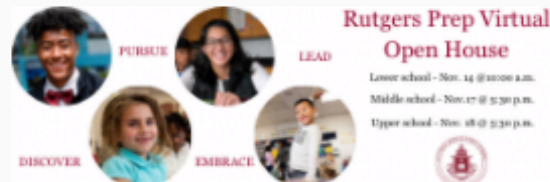
The Franklin Food Bank is a private, non-denominational, non-profit organization. Although it receives small government grants, the vast majority of its funding comes from individuals. As a result, the organization relies on food and monetary donations to not only keep its shelves stocked but also to offset everyday expenses such as utilities, insurance, rent, and more.

With annual fundraisers – such as Empty Bowls and the Tour de Franklin, which combined typically raise upwards of \$100,000 – tailored down due to the pandemic, businesses and houses of worship along with individuals, community groups, and government agencies have stepped up to help meet the increased demand.



In May, Assemblyman Joseph Daniels and his staff made fresh homemade pizza and handed out masks to families arriving at the Food Bank for assistance.

"Food banks are struggling across the state to maintain supplies and deliver meals to families in need," Daniels said in a news release. "They are all doing their best to provide for our communities, and we must all do what we can to support them with donations, volunteering, and anything else we can do to help."



In June, the **Delaware & Raritan Canal Festival (CanalFest)** served as a month-long initiative to support 'food justice through music' with proceeds benefiting the Franklin Food Bank. The following month, members of the New Jersey chapter of Design Your Careers (DYC) donated \$500 and approximately 50 pounds of non-perishable foods to the agency.

Earlier this month, the Sodhani Foundation, through its appeal for Sewa Diwali 2020 Food Drive and with the support from its members, Canal Walk residents, and the Indo American Club, raised over \$4,200 and collected a large amount of non-perishable vegetarian items for Franklin Food Bank. The donation was presented to food bank representatives earlier this month.

"It gives us great joy to let you know that based on our appeal for Sewa Diwali 2020 Food Drive for Franklin Food Bank we have received incredible support from our community families and friends," Vimal Sodhani, the foundation's president, stated in an email to *TAPinto*.

Earlier this week, Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School donated boxed and canned foods to the Franklin Food Bank. Students and staff dropped off donations to the Main Office throughout the week to collect for the donation.

"Thank you to the families who donated," TEECS Lead Person, Oguz Yildiz stated in an email to *TAPinto*. "Happy Thanksgiving to all!"

Local childcare facility Lightbridge Academy through its Lightbridge Foundation conducted a cereal drive and raised \$500 to benefit the Franklin Food Bank.

"The Lightbridge Foundation's mission is to support families on their life's journey in the communities we serve, Lightbridge Center Director, Colleen Monaco stated in an email to *TAPinto*. "Throughout the year, we raise funds for the foundation and in turn, we can offer support and give back to individuals or families in need in our community through grants, scholarships, and donations."

Through the generosity of the community, the Franklin Food Bank has been able to continue offering its pre-packaged program throughout the pandemic. Additionally, on Nov. 24, representatives from the agency delivered 50 turkeys to HOPES preschool. This is second consecutive year the food bank has given back to its former next-door neighbor, with the initiative established in 2019 by a supporter who passed away this year from COVID-19.

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"In 2020, we continue to recognize how important it is to work with other local non-profit organizations to make sure that young children are fed and have a holiday meal," said Allie O'Brien, grants writer for the Franklin Food Bank.

In an effort to continuing helping families in need and keep its staff healthy and safe, the Franklin Food Bank has revised its client choice program; due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a fixed-bag is available to township residents in need, by appointment only. Residents may call (732) 246-0009 and leave a message with their name and phone. Someone will call back to schedule an appointment.

The Franklin Food Bank is located at 224 Churchill Avenue, Somerset.

For more information, visit <https://franklinfoodbank.org> or follow them on Facebook (New Franklin Food Bank) [TAP here](#) for details. [TAP here](#) to make a monetary donation. Checks can also be mailed to The Franklin Food Bank, PO Box 333, Somerset, NJ 08875.

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