



Report to the Community 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

COVID - A Year of Plan B

Anticipating the pandemic shutdown, we overhauled our business processes to keep volunteers and clients safe and to meet the rapidly increased demand for food and personal products. We quickly transitioned to a drive-up process and added an on-line order capability. **Both drive-up and online ordering have been more efficient and more appealing options for many clients.**

We handled the increase in new clients just like we always do – we registered and graciously welcomed new families and eased the stress caused by the pandemic by providing them with food and personal care items. Many never expected to be in this situation. **We welcomed 520 new families in 2020.**

In the beginning, access to food was an additional unanticipated challenge. We gratefully accepted prepared meals from local restaurants. Our clients were thrilled to receive high quality, healthy prepared meals for their families. **More than a dozen Hunterdon County restaurants donated over 10,000 of these incredibly popular prepared meals for our clients.**

Our families now had kids at home for meals that they might normally receive at school, so we instituted our summer student bonus pack program three months early and continued it through the end of the year. **Where we normally distribute 500 of these packs, we gave out 2,700.**

With all of the changes and stress, our 330 volunteers not only continued to show up but they helped in other ways. For example, a team of volunteers delivered orders to clients who were homebound due to illness, lack of transportation, or quarantine. **We delivered close to 1,800 food pantry orders in 2020.**

At times it felt like we would never get a break; yet, we never took a break.

The Pantry never closed due to COVID.

MEAL KITS FOR FAMILIES!

Meal prep kits like Hello Fresh and Blue Apron have become popular as a way to prepare healthy meals without the stress of "what should I make for dinner tonight?" and "do we have all the ingredients necessary to make a recipe?" Since 70% of our clients self-report having a health issue, with 51% being overweight, healthy meal preparation is a critical issue. Concurrently, the Partnership for Health began a campaign educating families on the benefits of sharing family meals, including: improved academic performance, enhanced nutrition, family discussion, less television viewing, decreased use of illicit substances, fewer risky behaviors, improved family relations, and less family stress.

So we created the ComMITT Kit Meal Kit Program for our families to commit to family meals!



Each month, 50 families pick up their meal kit during a pantry visit or volunteers delivered their meal kit. ComMITT Kit makes it simple to prepare a full meal, often surprising our clients with the ease of making healthy and hearty versions of meals like: lasagna, meatloaf, chili, a long list of chicken dishes, and several vegetarian options. The kit contains a recipe (provided by a ShopRite nutritionist) that they can duplicate with food pantry items. Chef Shauna from America's Grow-a-Row creates a video showing how each meal is prepared. Often, a surprise appears in the meal kit – measuring spoons, extra spices, family games, crafts, kitchen gadgets, and more.

This program has been wildly successful! Families are not only enjoying their meals, but they're sending us videos of them cooking together and commenting on how much they enjoy trying new recipes that they can make again.



ComMITT Kit is a true collaboration between multiple organizations and a team of volunteers who work to plan, supply, pack, and provide these meal kits for families who would have otherwise never had the opportunity to try them. It's yet another way to show our families that healthy eating is possible, cooking can be easy and fun, and that they are important.

Our family just made the November ComMITT kit meal. It was a thumbs up. It got us trying out new foods- food such as cabbage that we would typically not pick out to eat. We can't wait to try out next month's meal.

Went to Grammy and Pop's house to surprise them with making a wonderful lunch. Great memories and fun. Thanks so much.

BRINGING THE PANTRY TO THE PEOPLE

We have a responsibility to provide not just food, but healthy food, in a way that's accessible to all who need it.

Little Pantry

St. Paul's Lutheran Church had a big idea for a little pantry. This Little Pantry is in the front of our Pantry building and is open when we're closed. What a great way for folks in need to get some food 24/7.

24/7
HOURS/DAYS

1,772
DELIVERIES

Home Deliveries

So many were stuck at home because they were sick, quarantining, at high risk of infection or didn't have a way to get to the Pantry. Plus we have regular deliveries to seniors at our pop-up Pantry and neighbors needing special care through our Food2You program. It was no surprise that we had a list of volunteers willing to deliver carts full of food and personal care items to the doorsteps of neighbors who needed it.

Food2You

In partnership with Hunterdon Healthcare Home Health Services, we set up a home delivery service for homebound clients. Clients are linked with a Pantry volunteer who develops a relationship and learns the special dietary needs or requests for specific foods that will help them in their recuperation.

40
FOOD2YOU
CLIENTS

5,616
SENIOR VISITS

Pop-Up Pantry & Special Senior Hours

The number of seniors needing the Pantry is increasing every year; in fact, we've seen a 117% increase since 2017. We've responded with senior-only hours and a community meal (to go during COVID). We also partnered with Hunterdon Senior Services to create the county's only Pop-Up Pantry at a local senior center. Volunteers bring seniors' grocery orders right to their doors along with boredom busters and birthday gifts. During the pandemic, our volunteers were one of the few visits for the seniors.

What a Year!



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