

## **FACTS ABOUT HUNGER, HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY**

- The face of hunger and homelessness continues to change, affecting individuals of all ages. It could be someone you know; it can happen to anyone.
- Though we tend to associate hunger with urban areas, the growth rate for food insecurity is highest in the suburbs.
- Families no longer visit “emergency food” sources for temporary relief; they rely on food pantries as a supplemental food source.
- Not having enough of the right kinds of food can have serious implications on a child’s physical and mental health, academic achievement and future economic prosperity.
- Close to 1 in 3 college students choose between paying for food and covering educational expenses.
- According to national studies conducted by Feeding America, 66% of households have to choose between food and medical care.
- According to Feeding America, 57% of households have to choose between food and housing, while 69% choose between food and utilities.
- According to Feeding America, 84% of households with children purchase the cheapest food available, instead of the healthiest option, to provide enough food for their household.
- In 2015, the average client of SNAP (formerly food stamps) received a monthly benefit of \$126.39 monthly (\$4.15 a day), and the average household received \$256.11 monthly (\$8.42 a day).

## **IN NEW JERSEY:**

- More than 1 million people in NJ are food insecure, which means they are unable to get enough healthy food for themselves and their families.
- One out of every 3 people who are hungry in New Jersey is a child.
- About 1 of every 5 children in New Jersey is hungry.
- Since 2010, NJ has seen a 59% increase in the number of low-income students receiving a healthy breakfast at school each day. Still, roughly 300,000 children go without school breakfast.

- According to Advocates for Children of NJ, tens of thousands of children who eat meals at school lack access to healthy summer meals.
- In NJ, one reason why so many continue to have problems getting enough food is that many of the post-recession job gains are in low-wage fields.
- According to NJ Counts, an annual survey of the homeless population in New Jersey, homelessness is decreasing across the state, but the numbers in Essex County are increasing.

### **IN PARTNERS FOR HEALTH FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES:**

- Six Montclair schools are classified as Title I, which means a minimum of 1 out of 5 of the children in these schools qualifies for free and reduced lunch.
- Toni's Kitchen served more than 50,000 meals in 2015, including on-site and outreach meals, and backpacks distributed through tutoring programs.
- The Human Needs Food Pantry distributes an average of 2,500 bags of groceries each month, and the number of clients is growing.
- Salvation Army Montclair served 18,300 hot meals in fiscal 2014-15, and more than 3,000 breakfast meals.
- Salvation Army Montclair serves individuals and families who don't qualify for public assistance. They have income from employment, unemployment or child support, but it's not enough to sustain housing, let alone put food on the table.
- *A Lot to Grow* community gardens produced more than 10,000 pounds of fresh vegetables and herbs since 2010, all of which were donated to local food pantries and soup kitchens.
- A Partners for Health grant to HOME Corp funds financial literacy workshops on budgeting, credit repair, savings, foreclosure prevention/intervention and home ownership.
- Partners for Health funded free tax preparation services that resulted in refunds of more than \$1 million in 2016, including \$324,000 in Earned Income Tax Credits.