



Harvest Helpers

Fall Volunteer Opportunities

Advocating for Impact

Summer Bounty

Two teams of volunteers hit the fields at [America's Grow-a-Row](#) to harvest donated produce. Picking Jersey's finest fresh food - corn in August, and tomatoes in September - the volunteers harvested 1,185 pounds of food (4,740 servings) for five MEND pantries!

All summer long, volunteers from The Giving Garden at the [Wagner Farm Arboretum](#) also harvest donated produce. There's just one catch: we need to transport the food from Warren, NJ, to our member pantries.

Enter Judy Nunn, our volunteer driver! Judy has loaded up her van and delivered the Giving Garden bounty to several MEND pantries across Essex County each week.

"Delivering produce to the food pantries is just my small way of contributing. I love doing something concrete to help folks have something healthy to eat. And I've gotten to know some terrific people, too. It's inspiring to be around so many people who are committed to helping others. And whenever I can rope any of my guys into helping out, it's even better," says Judy.

Thanks to Judy and the Giving Garden volunteers, five pantries have received weekly deliveries of assorted fresh produce, totaling an additional 1,620 pounds (6,480 servings) so far!

To help combat summer hunger, generous grants from The Reitman Foundation and The Knight Family Foundation also provided MEND pantries with supplemental funding to purchase child-friendly, healthy foods for June through August.







Fall Volunteer Opportunities

Want to join us on the farm? Our next Harvest Day at America's Grow-a-Row is scheduled for Tuesday, October 22nd, at 9:00 a.m.

We have other opportunities to help, as well: volunteer at a pantry distribution, assist pantry volunteers in unloading and shelving food, transport donated food, and more.

Check back often for updates!



Volunteer with MEND!

Advocacy Update

In addition to bringing the leadership of our member pantries together regularly to share ideas

and discuss challenges, and focusing our efforts on providing greater access to healthier foods, we also educate and advocate for changes that will lead our patrons out of poverty.

Recently, these efforts included attending the [WhyHunger](#) Closing the Hunger Gap and Regional conferences, participating in a [2020 Census](#) nonprofit information session, and submitting comments in opposition to [recent proposed cuts to SNAP benefits](#).



Food Drive Tips

This time of year, many are looking for ways to give back. One way to help is to host a food drive. Based on input from our pantries, we have created a "most needed" items list, and updated our donation guidelines to emphasize healthy food options.

If you are interested in organizing a food drive, please [email us](#) so that we can coordinate and connect you with a pantry in your area.

There are also some things we have learned from our pantry managers to help make the most of your collections. Check out the Food Drive Tips to learn more.



[Most Needed Items](#)

[Food Donation Guidelines](#)[Food Drive Tips](#)

Save the Date!

MEND turns 40 in 2020, and we hope you can join us to mark the occasion at the second annual Green Bean Gala, scheduled for Saturday, March 7th, 2020, from 7-11 p.m., at The Woodland in Maplewood.

We have big plans in store for the next 40 years, and are looking forward to making a difference with you!



Attend/Support this Event!

MEND Welcomes Three New Trustees



Shawna A. Early



Margaret Santana



Rick Wessler

[Read About Shawna, Margaret and Rick](#)

Newark Water Update

Thanks to three community water drives, and a corporate donation, seven Newark-based MEND pantries have received 1,023 cases of bottled water to help those affected by the lead water crisis.

Our pantries have asked for continued water support, while the city works to test filters and update its infrastructure.

[Water Crisis Info](#)



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