
Take That, 2020!

1 message

Robin <Robin@mendnj.org>

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Reply-To: Robin@mendnj.org

To: Robin and Daniel Peacock <robinpeacock3@gmail.com>



Your 2020 Impact (Spoiler Alert - It's Amazing!)



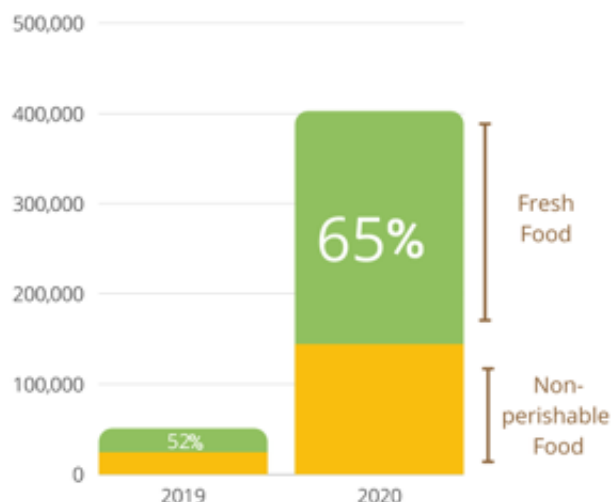
It should certainly come as no surprise that the numbers were wayyyy up in 2020. This is due in large part to the impact of the Coronavirus on the numbers of people turning to the pantries for assistance (with many pantries reporting 4 to 5 times their pre-COVID numbers), but it's also due to the fact that you helped launch the Fresh Food Hub in record time!

Receiving the \$120,000 [Impact100 Essex](#) Grant Award in January of 2020, followed quickly by the generous support of the community once COVID hit, made all the difference!

Having the Hub allowed MEND to:

- expand its community partnerships to support additional pantries and other organizations that suddenly found themselves with hungry clients;
- welcome more volunteers to alleviate some of the burdens on the pantry teams,

Pounds & Types of Food Sourced 2019 v. 2020

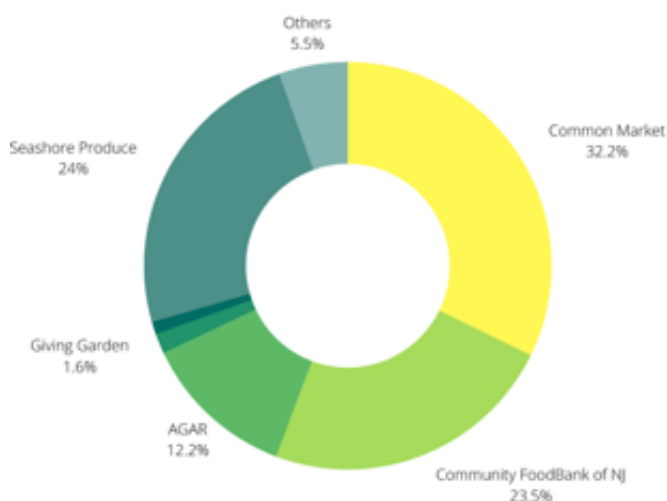


- source larger donations and make bulk purchases of requested foods, and
- provide the needed infrastructure to help bear the logistics associated with fresh food handling for the pantry network.

The USDA Farmers to Families boxes were a large part of the fresh food offered to the pantries this year, and many pantries would not have been able to receive them without Hub support.

Your generosity also allowed us to make weekly trips this summer and fall to [America's Grow-a-Row](#) to transport over 25,000 pounds of freshly-harvested produce, and to regularly pickup food from the [Community FoodBank of NJ](#) and others.

Donated Fresh Food Sources



MEND also purchased nearly 50,000 pounds of fresh food to respond to specific requests from the pantries for items not available from other sources.

None of this would have been possible without you.

Thank You!

The (Virtual) Green Bean Gala is Almost Here!

Those lawn signs may be mostly buried in the snow by now, but, rest assured, ***The Green Bean Gala is happening online on Saturday, March 6th, at 7:30 p.m.***

This annual fundraising event is more important than ever, and, while we will miss gathering together at The Woodland, the silver lining is that you will get a deeper look behind-the-scenes at



the important work you help to support!

Thanks the power of video, this year's event will feature:

- in-depth interviews with several food pantry managers who will share how they have adapted their efforts in response to COVID-19 to meet the growing need,
- footage of the new Fresh Food Hub, which has helped to transform hunger relief locally by easing the fresh food logistical burdens on the pantries,
- opportunities to support the work of MEND through donations and by bidding on unique auction items (who wouldn't want to win an "instant wine cellar?!"), and
- special musical performances and appearances by local artists and celebrities.

Best of all - it's free! Simply register and you will receive an event link ahead of March 6th (of course, there are other ticket levels should you choose them, including a "Link and Drinks" option which gets you the event link, as well as a cocktail kit to mix up a Bus Stop signature beverage from home!).

"See" you on March 6th!

["Buy" Your Tickets Today!](#)

[Learn More About the Event](#)



Meet Cameron!



If you've stopped by the Fresh Food Hub lately, or seen the Sweet Pea van around town, you may have met Cameron Johnson - MEND's new Operations Manager!

Thanks to funding from [The Healthcare Foundation of NJ](#), we are thrilled to welcome Cameron to the team, where he joins Alicia and Robin in carrying out MEND's mission! Cameron will oversee all Hub operations and logistics, and provide extra programming and administrative support, as needed.

Cameron previously worked as a warehouse supervisor for NetJets Aviation. He is also a long-time volunteer for the East Orange Jr. Jaguars Youth Organization. [Email Cameron](#) to say hello!





Our Contact Information

Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity, Inc.
(MEND)

P.O. Box 1304

Maplewood, NJ 07040

862-250-5216

<http://www.mendnj.org>

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