
Big Apple April

1 message

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To: Robin Peacock <robin@mendnj.org>

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The MEND Newsletter - April 2023



Robin,

Morgan Stanley recently selected MEND to participate in its 2023 Strategy Challenge, the firm's flagship pro bono program which focuses on challenges that have a meaningful impact on an organization's ability

to deliver on its mission.

While seeing the MEND logo featured on the Morgan Stanley building in Times Square was certainly a highlight, *the real accomplishment is your commitment to this important work!* You have laid the foundation for the implementation and growth of MEND on the Move, and for ongoing fresh food and related support for member pantries.

Your input and continued support are essential for maximum impact! You have already given invaluable feedback through the recent donor survey (more on that, below), and, in the coming months, you'll have an opportunity to review and ask questions about MEND's 2022 Annual Report, recommendations arising from the Strategy Challenge, and our overall strategic direction.

In the meantime, in honor of our brief Big Apple moment, we're [sharing a favorite apple recipe](#) for you to enjoy!

In gratitude,
Robin Peacock
Executive Director

P.S. - Happy National Volunteer month! Scroll down to find out about the latest volunteer opportunities at MEND (and thank you for remaining patient as we continue to find more ways to incorporate you into this work while limiting the strain on our existing physical space)!

::: MEND Pantry & Partner News :::

MEND on the Move: Year 2

2023 marks the second full year of MEND on the Move, a program designed to meet people where they are, through mobile markets and home deliveries designed in collaboration with 19 community partners.

Kicking off in January, thanks to funding from an anonymous donor, the newest home delivery partnership (*Bard High School Early College* in Newark) has grown to support 18 students and their families, to date.

Each of the enrolled families reported that it is difficult for them to keep fresh produce at home due to:

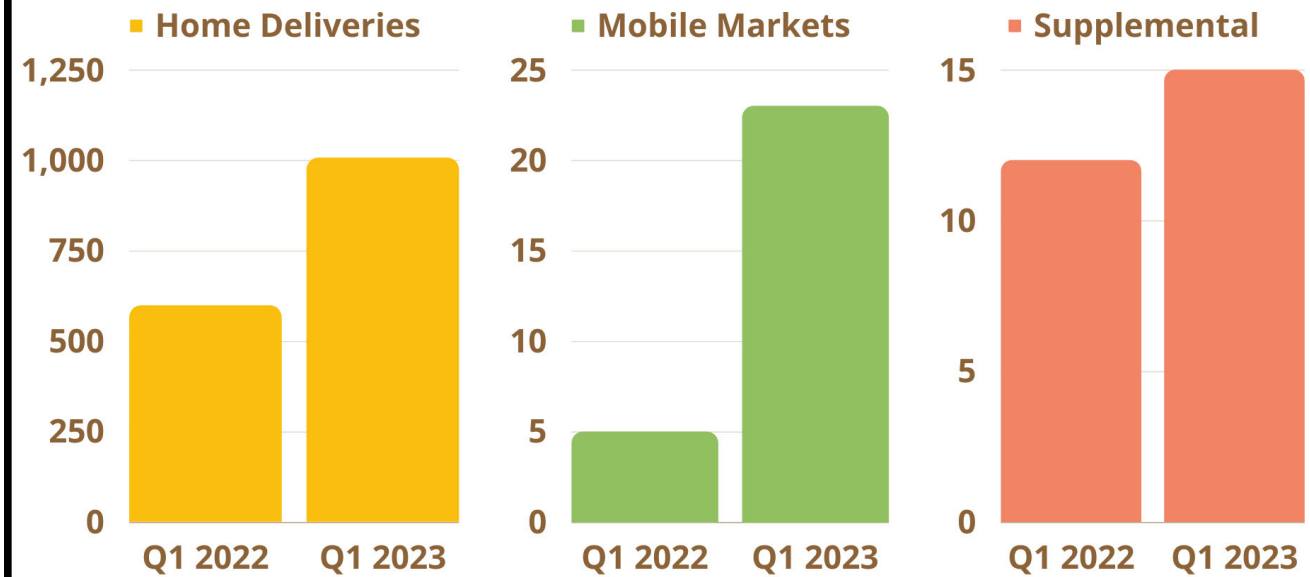
- cost,
- poor quality food options at local stores,
- lack of transportation, and
- lack of time.

MEND purchases predominantly locally sourced fresh food and select non-perishables for the home delivery packages and secures [grant funding](#) for the majority of these purchases.

Amazon donates flex drivers to deliver the packages through their "Amazon in the Community" program. Amazon representatives visited MEND in February to observe operations and gain staff feedback to support the continued success of this ongoing collaboration.



Year over Year



More Than Food

Franciscan Charities' Soup Kitchen in Newark recently relocated, but didn't want to stop feeding people while it awaited the completion of construction at its new building. Instead, it separated its cooking and distribution efforts in the short term.

Now, Franciscan Charities' chefs prepare and cook food in a temporary kitchen in Patterson, and then transport the food to Newark for distribution. Thanks to your generosity, MEND was able to provide 22 new folding tables so that guests have a place to dine in their new space!

"I am constantly amazed at what MEND does for Franciscan Charities and in turn for the people we serve. You get it. This has been a trying couple of weeks and this is just a beautiful gift."

-Director, Franciscan Charities

::: Our Bread and Butter :::

Why do you support MEND?

"For its mission to provide fresh, nutritious food."

"I believe their innovative approach to addressing food insecurity and providing specific solutions to meet the community's needs is making a huge impact on people in need across Essex County."

"Because it is the responsibility of those whose needs are met to help those whose needs are not."

Survey Says...

Thank you for your responses! Here are a few of your survey highlights:

- **92.5% of you felt that your support of MEND makes a difference;**
- 46% of you gave most recently due to your **general awareness of food insecurity as an issue** in our community;
- Beyond hunger relief, **other issues important to you include anti-racism/social justice, education, and homelessness;** and
- 57% of you would like to **learn more about volunteering** at a pantry or partner site.

If you'd like to discuss the survey results, or provide additional comments, [contact Lisa Duggan](#), Development and Communications Manager.

Join 10 Days of 10Ks!

Now in its sixth year, [10 Days of 10Ks](#) is a fun and family-friendly community run that has raised over \$200,000 for healthy hunger relief to date!

From July 7 - July 16, 2023 (or any/all days in between), challenge yourself to participate, and contribute to the \$50,000 fundraising goal!

A generous, anonymous donor has pledged a \$50,000 matching gift -- bringing the potential raise of this event to an incredible \$100,000!



10 Days of 10Ks is a free event with a suggested minimum donation of \$10. Whether you walk or run 1 day, 3 days or all 10, your participation provides greater access to fresh and healthy food in our community!

Sponsorships are available at the Community level (\$500) and Wheels on the Bus level (\$1,000). Contact [Jessica Lituchy](#) for more information, or simply sign up to join the fun!



Join 10 Days of 10Ks!

::: The State of Hunger :::

SNAP Benefit Reductions

In February, ahead of the federal government's end to emergency supplemental food benefits, Governor Phil Murphy signed a bill to ensure every NJ household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ([SNAP](#)) benefits will receive at least \$95 in monthly benefits beginning March 1. New Jersey was the first in the country to set its own minimum monthly SNAP benefit.

In February and March, MEND displayed flyers in both English and Spanish at all mobile markets, sharing the latest updates and resources about the end of pandemic-related allotments. This information was included in all home delivery packages as well.

[Learn More](#)





Coalition Building & Learning

Recently, MEND leaders participated in two public conversations about food security in New Jersey.

The first was held in Trenton with Mark Dinglasan, the Director of the NJ Office of the Food Security Advocate, which included Local Distribution Agencies (LDAs) from northern and central NJ. The group discussed how to collectively advocate and leverage resources to prioritize a community-led, trauma informed and health-focused approach to hunger relief.

The second was the "Sustainable Healthy Cities and Urban Food Innovations Workshop" at Princeton University, which highlighted the food policy work of several organizations, including the [City of Newark](#), Somerset and [Passaic County Food Policy Councils](#), the [Trenton Health Team](#), and the [NJ Food Democracy Collaborative](#).



Ways You Can Help!

Volunteer Your Time

Every hour you devote to MEND makes a difference for those who experience hunger in Essex County.

Volunteers fluent in Spanish are especially in demand! If this is you, please [contact Keily Hayes](#), Director of Community Impact.



Volunteer with MEND!

Modernize Food Drives

Volunteer to lead a "reverse produce stand" [like students from the MEND Clubs at Pingry and Millburn High School recently held at Kings in Short Hills](#) (we'll show you how)!

Or, spearhead a [Fresh Food drive](#), designed to get more fresh and healthy food into underserved communities across Essex County.

[Learn More!](#)



Preserve SNAP

The Farm Bill is a comprehensive piece of legislation updated every five years that dictates federal policies governing food and agriculture programs, including SNAP.

Take action by asking your Congressional Representatives to preserve SNAP, via [this tool from Hunger Free NJ](#).



Volunteer Spotlight



MEND

MELANIE SIM



"I volunteer as a way to help those in my community who are in need. And, you guys make it very easy to find opportunities!"

Melanie began volunteering for MEND during Covid, driving supplies from The Hub to various partners. Recently she has been helping distribute food at several mobile market sites.

Asked why she volunteers Melanie said, "I enjoy it! I enjoy people, learning about my neighbors and I'm lucky to have the time, ability, and availability to be part of MEND's mission.

I'm so glad to be able to help MEND in any way I can, and I look forward to continue helping out in the future!"

Give the Gift of Nutritious Food Today!

Follow MEND on your favorite social media platforms to stay updated between newsletters:



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