



Help the Hungry in Mercer County Feed Their Families

## **SUPPORT ARM IN ARM'S 22nd ANNUAL VALENTINES FOR FOOD DRIVE**

### **Did you know?**

- In the last five years Arm In Arm has seen a **115% increase** in families coming to us for food assistance
- In 2025 we served families through more than **50,000** visits to our pantries, and have seen an **18% increase** in people coming to us for food assistance this year!

When you support Valentines for Food, you support Arm In Arm's effective response to food insecurity in our area:

#### **Our Princeton Food Pantry Pantry:**

- In FY25 Arm In Arm's Princeton pantry provided groceries to families through more than **9,500 pantry visits and deliveries, this is more than four times our pre-pandemic level**
- **Arm In Arm's Princeton Pantry serves approximately 400 families on a regular basis.** These are local families and seniors, many of whom are served bi-monthly through home deliveries made by volunteers to communities on: Clay Street; Witherspoon Street; Redding Circle; and Spruce Circle.
- We are providing families with **fresher, healthier food** and have made a commitment to providing families with fresh produce on a regular basis. Our food budget has tripled since before the onset of the pandemic.
- We provide **nutrition education** to community members and have conducted virtual zoom classes in both English and Spanish.

#### **Our Agency:**

Arm In Arm operates **2 bricks and mortar food pantries** in Mercer County, as well as a **Mobile Food Pantry and Resource Center** which is deployed to food insecure communities and neighborhoods 3-5 times per week. Our bricks and mortar pantries are located at:

- Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton
- 48 Hudson Street in Trenton
- People are struggling more now than more than during the pandemic. Arm In Arm served families in 2025 through more than **50,000 visits** to Arm In Arm's food and mobile pantries. **This is more than DOUBLE our pre-pandemic level.**
  - We are seeing approximately 250 new clients per month at our food pantries
- **Donations of In-Kind Food From Food Drives are Critical:**  
Every grocery order includes approximately \$20-\$25 of food that Arm In Arm purchases. **This food is**

supplemented with \$30-\$40 of food that is donated by the local food bank, and by communities like Yes We CAN! Food Drives, Nassau Presbyterian Church, Trinity Church and local schools/community groups, who conduct food drives and donate much-needed non-perishables. This means the value of a grocery order for a family is approximately \$70-\$80.

- While some area food pantries occasionally must turn hungry people away, **Arm In Arm has NEVER seen its shelves go empty, thanks to the generosity of its supporters.**
- **Arm In Arm provides fresh, local produce** for its customers, much of it donated by: farmers and farmers' markets and supporters of Yes We CAN! Food Drives; community, school, and church gardens; Whole Foods Market; Farmers Against Hunger; and our own community vegetable garden right in downtown Trenton!
- **Arm In Arm supports the Trenton Public Schools through our Parent Connect Program**, helping to ensure families with children, including homeless families, are connected to housing and resources that help to promote stability and ensure their children can attend school.

The History of Valentine's For Food:

### **22 Years of Impact!**

In 2005, Don Dickason, a member of Nassau Presbyterian Church and the Princeton Rotary, orchestrated a Valentine's Day food drive during the week of February 7-14th. What began as an ambitious endeavor to coordinate food drives at Princeton area schools, evolved into a substantial fundraising and in-kind donation effort for Arm In Arm's (then the Crisis Ministry's) Hunger Prevention program. Mr. Dickason passed away in 2006, leaving a lasting legacy of caring for neighbors in need.

In 2008, his fellow Rotarians and the Princeton Regional School system approached the Crisis Ministry to request that they continue the Valentines for Food tradition in his memory. Grateful for this opportunity, the Crisis Ministry expanded the effort to include other local congregations. **Since 2005, Valentines for Food has raised more than \$400,000 in donations and 180,000 pounds of donated food, which together is enough to feed more than 28,000 families!** Today's effort is anchored by Nassau Presbyterian Church, Trinity Church and Princeton Public Schools and is supported by individuals, schools, and corporations throughout Mercer County.