

Life Skills Participant Gets Green Light to a Brighter Future



Paul Sansone Jr. and Amelica

Author Marion C. Garretty wrote, “Mother love is the fuel that enables a normal human being to do the impossible.” Lunch Break client and determined mom Amelica C. embodies this quote. Born in Haiti, Amelica was destined to find a new life in the U.S.

Her name, resulting from her father’s mispronunciation of America, couldn’t have been a more fitting choice for a child, who eventually immigrated to the U.S. at age 16. Amelica’s commitment to this country is unwavering: She served 22 years in the Navy, with 12 years devoted to active duty and 10 in the Reserves, and was stationed domestically and abroad, including Italy, Morocco, and Japan.

After retiring from military service, Amelica settled in New Mexico with her husband and two children, one of whom is autistic. Shockingly, she discovered her 16-year-old son, Cajou,

was spending school days mostly unattended without supervision from trained teachers. When Amelica’s persistent appeals to the school administration went unanswered, she began to research the best states for special needs education. New Jersey topped the list.

Amelica and Cajou moved to Eatontown, living six months in a motel room, while Amelica ran through the mire of steps to get Cajou enrolled at a qualified school in Tinton Falls. Amelica had savings to last six months, anticipating it would sustain the family through the enrollment process until she could find employment. Enter the COVID-19 pandemic. Her husband’s work hours were reduced. Businesses closed, along with hiring opportunities.

After learning about the Lunch Break Life Skills Program, Amelica worked with mentor Jan Oberdick to refine her resume and she was hired for a position in overnight security at Seabrook Village. But there was a catch. She had no car and was unable to afford one. Amelica was forced to **walk** to work for **months** in the heat, cold, rain, and snow. Sometimes the walk took more than **3 hours**. Amelica sure had a full tank of mother love! Jan Oberdick marvels, “Amelica is one strong lady!”

Because Amelica’s transportation struggles were impacting her safety and well-being, the Life Skills staff reached out to community partner Paul Sansone Jr. of Sansone Jr.’s Route 66 Auto Mall, who generously donated a used car through the “Hope For a Ride” program. Now, Amelica has a car and a green light to a successful future!

Amelica’s story of determination is inspiring.

Lunch Break is proud to “walk” with Amelica on her journey!

Local Woman Relies on Client Choice Pantry During Unemployment

Robin Pfeffer had battled Crohn’s disease since age 10, yet she managed for more than 15 years to keep a steady income working as a senior executive at a publishing company until she lost that job.

When her husband took a position outside New Jersey, Robin feared that if she also left the state she wouldn’t find a suitable doctor. She had met frequently with local doctors to alleviate her Crohn’s symptoms and to manage her condition. She worked as much as she could, but after the pandemic hit, she turned to local food banks to save money on groceries. Robin never thought she’d need food assistance and felt embarrassed

to accept it. Even worse, after sometimes waiting in long lines for food, she’d find what was offered to be rotten or inedible and she’d be forced to throw it away.

After trying four different food banks, Robin came to Lunch Break and said she found the best food available.

“When you’re handed a bag of fresh produce, or a hot lunch with meat and vegetables, you don’t feel like you’re subsisting on leftovers. You feel like someone took care in preparing the food and that they’re there to help you.”

Robin credits Lunch Break with giving her the strength to carry on, “When you get help, it doesn’t just give you food, it gives you hope in the world.”

From the President



Dear Friends of Lunch Break,

As we approach a new year, it is a time to look forward to the future while celebrating the tremendous achievements of 2021.

In the midst of a global pandemic, Lunch Break did not miss providing a single meal, a feat that would not have been possible without

the hard work, dedication, and teamwork of the entire Lunch Break family. But in 2021, Lunch Break actually thrived in the face of adversity, positioning itself to provide an even greater impact to our clients and the community. The launch of a brand new nutrition program, plans to significantly expand our facility, a groundbreaking and transformative merger of Family Promise of Monmouth County into Lunch Break, and the continual expansion of our Life Skills Center would be tremendous accomplishments in any one year period, let alone in 2021. The magic of Lunch Break was all captured in a wonderful gala that was hosted by Jon Stewart.

We enter 2022 with an exciting vision, offering an expanded breadth of services that will not only provide help for today, but hope for tomorrow. With the ability to provide housing for

families through Family Promise, combined with the guidance and training of our Life Skills Center as well as our traditional services, Lunch Break is now positioned to assist in breaking the cycle of poverty. While always keeping true to our roots of offering food, the future of Lunch Break also is now focused on offering self-sufficiency programs, and an even broader goal of helping our clients achieve generational equity. Lastly, we are very excited to introduce a brand new logo that maintains the rich history of our roots while capturing the expanded services that will transform Lunch Break into the future.

None of this would be possible without the generosity, passion, and kind-heartedness of Lunch Break's supporters, for which we cannot begin to express our gratitude.

Our staff, volunteers, Board of Trustees, Advisory Council, and donors exemplify the power of coming together to achieve a common goal. This is in fact the essence of Lunch Break, and why so many of us consider it to be such a special organization. The ability for Lunch Break to transform lives is unlimited, and it is with the tremendous support of our community that we are positioned to make an even greater impact on the lives of so many people.

Happy Holidays!

Phil Antoon
President, Board of Trustees

Our New Look



Lunch Break
HELP FOR TODAY • HOPE FOR TOMORROW

Lunch Break is proud to announce its fresh new look and brand, *Hands of Hope*, which debuted at the annual Fall Gala on Oct. 15th at the Count Basie Center for Arts and Education.

The new logo represents a forward-thinking initiative in the resource center's 38-year history, emphasizing a unified, caring community's commitment to the well-being of its neighbors, as well as highlighting the myriad services available to those in need.

The rebrand was the result of an eight-month discovery process and brand refresh, led by Red Bank-based Spitball Marketing. Through feasibility studies and focus groups, which included clients, community members, Board and staff members and volunteers, Lunch Break arrived at the Hands of Hope design, which illustrates the embodiment of the resource

center's timeless tagline: Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow.

Central to the theme are Hands of Hope, symbolic of Lunch Break's mission to nurture and empower those struggling with food and financial insecurity -- to lift them out of desperation, with the ultimate goal of helping to break the cycle of poverty. These individuals and families arrive at Lunch Break's doors, often broken from the mental and physical ramifications of hunger, seeking fellowship and basic necessities, as well as a path toward self-sufficiency. The resource center offers its outstretched "hand" to uplift and restore dignity and self-worth to all who enter.

The logo also illustrates that not only does Lunch Break extend a hand to help alleviate financial and food insecurity, it offers hope through mentoring programs such as Life Skills employment coaching and skills training, Alliance For Success college prep guidance and vocational training for at-risk juniors and seniors, and outreach for women and senior citizens.

Lunch Break Gives A Nod to Better Nutrition

Lunch Break has become increasingly concerned about the rise in rates of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other diet-related conditions and diseases in the community we serve and beyond. Food and nutrition insecurities are linked to poor health outcomes.

It is often difficult to break the cycle of

poverty when health problems bring about the added stress of missed wages and other mounting medical costs. That link is even more pronounced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our efforts will continue to focus on providing access to procuring products that contribute greater nutritional value, emphasizing meal options and groceries



that promote and protect healthy living while decreasing diet-related diseases.

Lunch Break Expansion Proposal Gains Zoning Board Approval

RENEW THE PROMISE OF HOPE

of community members struggling with food and financial insecurities continues to escalate.

As Lunch Break endeavors to support the mounting requests from community members seeking basic necessities and job skills training, a proposal to expand its current, overcrowded facility has won unanimous Zoning Board approval, a major step in a \$12 million Capital Campaign.

Lunch Break last year witnessed a sharp rise in demand for groceries, with an 111 percent increase in food pickups from 2019, and a 22 percent increase in visitors arriving for Continental breakfast and lunch, served six days a week, as well as for Friday Community Dinners. The resource center sought this expansion to advance its mission to meet an unrelenting need.

"We are thrilled about the approval, which couldn't come at a more appropriate time," says Executive Director Gwendolyn Love. "I believe the community wholeheartedly supports the work of our mission and because of this, we can look forward to a new home with space to offer more services for the well-being of our neighbors."

But while our kitchen served more than 88,000 grab-and-go meals during 2020, and our Client Choice Pantry provided 21,000 grocery pickups, as well as scores of meal deliveries made to the homebound and displaced families, Lunch Break does so much more.

As many as 100 people a month attend our Life Skills Center's coaching sessions, and in 2020, more than 80 participants went on to get jobs. The Life Skills Program features a wide array of training services from resume review and GED testing prep, to ESL and tutoring for people of all ages. The services include training for job interviewing and public speaking, sharpening computer skills, household budgeting and goal planning, among others. Life Skills also provides job referrals, as well as an Alliance For Success program for junior and

senior high school students in need of college prep guidance or vocational training.

In addition, the Womyn's Worth mentorship program offers workshops and lectures focused on women's health, nutrition and wellness.

Lunch Break also is prepared to help people with other critical needs, including the COVID-19 Emergency Fund which, since last year, provided financial assistance and gift cards to help more than a thousand individuals pay urgent living expenses, including utility bills.

The planned expansion of Lunch Break's cramped quarters at 121 Drs. James Parker Blvd. in Red Bank will enable our volunteers and staff to serve more people, more efficiently, and to more safely accept truck deliveries and individual donations.

While relying on the generosity of donors and considerable community support, Lunch Break has begun a Capital Campaign, with a goal of raising \$12 million.

The \$12 million cost estimate is based on a comprehensive facility requirement study.



To better accommodate Lunch Break services and new initiatives, warehouse and administrative offices, the plans, prepared by architects Kellenyi, Johnson and Wagner, call for a two-story addition which, in total, will add 8,236 square feet to the building's original 5,080-foot design, providing for a loading dock and more space for truck parking and safer and easier off-loading of deliveries. The expansion would meet a dire need for space in all of Lunch Break's daily operations, and bring the now off-site Life Skills Center into the main building.

Create a Legacy with Planned Giving

Consider adding Lunch Break to your will or planned giving arrangements and create your own legacy for helping to feed the future. To find out how the bequest you make today will help secure a future for thousands of the most vulnerable children, seniors, veterans, single parents, and families for years to come, contact Jill Gwydir at jgwydir@lunchbreak.org.

For further information regarding planned giving, tax benefits and the current CARES ACT, please visit <https://lunchbreak.org/donate/> or scan the QR code.



Purchase tickets:
<https://bit.ly/2YPNwTV>

COUNT BASIE
DEC 18, 8PM



Jon Stewart Hosts 'We Rise Together' Annual Fall Gala

More than 300 Lunch Break supporters were reunited for a magical evening of entertainment under the stars to honor the selfless work of philanthropic community leaders on behalf of financially and food insecure community members during the 2021 Fall Gala "We Rise Together, Restoring and Rebuilding Lives" at the Count Basie Center for the Arts and Education on Friday, October 15th.

The event was hosted by Jon Stewart of the Apple TV+ series, "The Problem With Jon Stewart." The gala committee, co-chaired by Mimi Keenan and Tina Pflaster, coordinated the fundraiser's fall harvest theme -- an iconic nod to Lunch

Break's nutritious food service programs.

"Lunch Break provides an invaluable service to our community. It's essential in normal times and its value has only grown in these difficult times," said Jon Stewart of the organization's efforts to feed community members struggling financially during the COVID-19 pandemic. "I'm always impressed by their compassion and thorough execution of not just food insecurity issues, but job training and overall life management support."

Stewart introduced this year's honorees, which included such distinguished community leaders as Lunch Break

Advisory Council Member Carol Stillwell, President and CEO of Stillwell-Hansen, Inc., Norma Todd Service Award; former Lunch Break Board President John Klein and his wife, Board Member Robin Klein, Heart to Hand Award; and Guttenplan's Frozen Dough, A Child's Place School, Lincroft, and Abe and Linda Littenberg, Corporate Platinum Partner Award.

Their legacy of giving is unparalleled.

"I'm hard pressed to think of a more worthy organization, especially given how they have risen to this unusual and challenging moment," Stewart said. "We must now rise to meet them."



Volunteer Spotlight - Judy Stevens, Client Choice Pantry

What brought you to Lunch Break? Upon retiring I was looking for a way to give back to my community. Lunch Break, with all it does, and the several volunteer opportunities, seemed a good place to ask, "How can I help?"



Judy Stevens

How have you used your talents for our mission? I don't think what I do requires talents – just a willingness to do whatever is needed that day, balancing client needs with what the pantry and our time allows (sometimes our clients really need a sympathetic ear). I enjoy the work.

A favorite volunteer moment. I can't think of any one moment that stands out – what does frequently come to mind, is how, day after day, staff and volunteers try to meet the needs and wants of the people who come to Lunch Break with humor, compassion, grace and fortitude.

What would you tell others about your experiences? Super people, volunteers and staff. Give a bit of yourself and you'll get so much back. Ask questions, share in what needs doing, learn about your little piece in making it all work.

How has volunteering made a difference in your life? I think if it were not for volunteering at Lunch Break, I would feel more deeply the various stressors COVID has brought to us all. I can feel helpful and useful. I've gotten off very lightly in this pandemic, for which I am grateful, and being at Lunch Break has allowed me to share my time and effort in this community's dedication to making the load more bearable for everyone who comes through its doors.

Lunch Break Welcomes New Board Members



KEVIN I. ASADI

Zager Fuchs, P.C.

"To be selected to serve this organization is one of the greatest honors of my life, and I am extremely excited to be involved in fulfilling Lunch Break's vital mission for our local community and beyond."



CHRISTINA JORDAN

Denholtz Properties

"Lunch Break's work to break the cycle of poverty has made an indelible mark on the Monmouth County community that I am so proud to call home. For that reason, I am deeply honored and humbled to join the Board of Trustees and have the opportunity to work closely with their dedicated team to continue to bring life-changing programs to those in need throughout our local communities."



"B" CARR MAHON

Christie's International Real Estate, NJ

"I've been blessed to be fortunate and it's a great feeling to help those less fortunate."



MYCHAL MILLS

Fulfill & Konscious Youth Development & Service (KYDS)

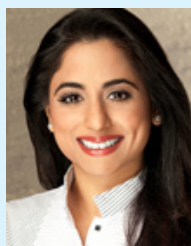
"Lunch Break has always been dear to my heart. I learned of Lunch Break through family connections and began volunteering as a mentor in the Male Mentor Program. I've been able to see the transformation of the staff and community through their loving presence."



DAIANA RIOS

Wellness Coordinator for Horizon

"I love the heads-down-helping-every-day work that Lunch Break does to make important changes for the people in our community."



NEELAM SHARMA

PwC

"I believe wholeheartedly in the mission of Lunch Break and I'm grateful to be a part of the family."



TRACEY STEWART

Animal advocate & author

"It is my honor to work with Lunch Break and its passion to help make healthy and nutritious foods accessible to all."

Life Skills Program Is Restoring Dignity & Hope

The Life Skills Center has been humming with activity this year. More and more participants were enrolled in skills training programs; others took advantage of free resume help and employment and financial coaching, as well as ESL classes.

It also was a year of firsts, as the Life Skills team launched the Alliance For Success program, in partnership with The Source at Red Bank Regional High School. This pilot program is designed to provide education, motivation and guidance for at-risk juniors and seniors, who might otherwise fall through the cracks when it comes to setting college and career goals.

And it was a year of hope: More than 80 participants have found meaningful employment among our business partners, as well as vital avenues to reliable transportation through auto dealership donations.

What will next year bring? A look at enhancing Life Skills programs and furthering community partnerships. And it's all thanks to our dedicated volunteers and, of course, YOU! Our community's support is what ensures that we can help those with goals for tomorrow to begin restoring today.



Making Hope A Reality

- Impacting lives through the Resource Real Estate/Carolynn Ozar Diakon Foundation, where women enrolled in the Life Skills Program may be eligible for financial assistance toward career and life-enhancing goals
- Establishing relationships with green energy organizations such as Trinity Solar/Solar Landscape for training and employment opportunities
- Partnering with Monmouth County Vocational School to host panel discussions and seminars to better educate our participants in making career choices
- Establishing relationships with local auto dealerships to develop donation programs as a means to alleviate obstacles to employment because of transportation issues
- Continue to offer hybrid ESL options, allowing students more flexibility to learn English
- Grow Life Skills Program from 131 to 150 active participants

Help for today. **LUNCHBREAK** Hope for tomorrow.

January-October 2021

Giving Local



CLIENT CHOICE PANTRY

**14,687 TOTAL
FOOD PICKUPS**

Helps Locals



8,467 MEALS

ARE DISTRIBUTED TO RESIDENTS
OF THE PAN AMERICAN MOTEL
IN EATONTOWN

There's Hope

**MORE THAN
\$960,000**

DISTRIBUTED THROUGH
THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY FUND FOR THE
PAYMENT OF OUTSTANDING UTILITY AND CABLE BILLS,
CAR PAYMENTS, AND RENT ASSISTANCE

In Touch

CONNECTIONS



There's Family



LOOK WHO'S COOKING OFFERED

**50 CHILDREN TUITION-FREE
VIRTUAL COOKING CLASSES**

COVID-19 PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS



Over **72,512**
grab-and-go meals

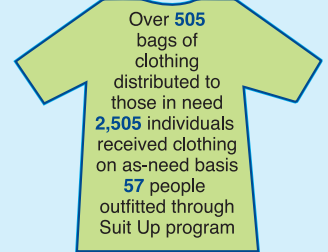
10,462 meals
delivered to
the homebound
by volunteers



Front-line
volunteers
20,162 total
service hours



**Countless hours of
love and support**
given to guests through the
Women's Mentoring Initiative



Over **505**
bags of
clothing
distributed to
those in need
2,505 individuals
received clothing
on as-need basis
57 people
outfitted through
Suit Up program

1,062 backpacks
distributed to youth

More than **1,100**
Holiday Toy Program
gift cards distributed
to children



Helping guests lead
healthier lifestyles
through Health and
Wellness initiatives
and connections to
Social Service providers

There's Fellowship



**BREAKFAST & LUNCH
IN-PERSON & GRAB-AND-GO**

9 A.M.-1 P.M. - MONDAY-FRIDAY • 9 A.M.-NOON - SATURDAYS

There's Life Skills



LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH CLIENTS TO

**GAIN SKILLS TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY.
UP TO 100 PEOPLE PER MONTH ATTENDED COACHING
SESSIONS, WITH 45 PARTICIPANTS GAINING EMPLOYMENT.**

Beyond Homelessness: Single Mom Rebuilds Her Life

When Dominique sought help from Family Promise in the winter of 2016, she was a struggling, working single mom. She had recently been homeless and had hit a financial low. Today, she's filled with confidence — she recently ran as a candidate for state Assembly — and a new outlook for which she credits Family Promise. It was the way she was treated, Dominique says, that allowed her to look beyond homelessness.

During her struggles, the organization provided Dominique with

a new living space every week and saw after all her family's needs, from food to laundry, all for free. A Family Promise accountant, for a nominal \$50 fee, helped her acquire an LLC for her homemade soap and candle business.

The business would last a few years, but most important, she learned that her dreams were within reach. Dominique credits Family Promise as key to getting her life on track. "They gave me the mindset."



Dominique

Family Promise of Monmouth County and Lunch Break Merge to Address Homelessness

Did you know on an average day in Monmouth County there are 200 children who are homeless?

When Family Promise of Monmouth County began 20 years ago, it was a local response to a problem in Monmouth County, N.J. Now it has grown to more than 500 volunteers. Family Promise, has a proven track record of making an impact on the well-being of thousands of families. Families reach out in crisis; this incredible organization helps them rebuild their lives with new skills and ongoing support. **We are proud to welcome them into the Lunch Break family.**

Family Promise works with community agencies, faith-based services, churches and synagogues to provide supportive services, financial assistance, shelter, and food, for families and individuals in need.

In a collaborative effort, Lunch Break and Family Promise will combine resources to assist local communities in coordinating their compassion to address the root causes of family homelessness -- holistically. Through prevention services before families reach crisis, shelter and case management when they become homeless, and stabilization programs once they have secured housing, Family Promise, under the Lunch Break umbrella, will strive to ensure clients remain independent, empowering families toward economic stability.

In addition to services provided by Family Promise, Lunch Break will continue to offer clients clothing and groceries, life skills training, and ESL classes and mentoring sessions for both adults, and school-age children and adolescents.



Family Promise guests



Family Promise of Monmouth County

Students Give AFS Program A Thumbs Up!

The Alliance For Success program for at-risk junior and senior high school students is on its way to completing a full year!

After launching on July 12th, the program, in collaboration with The Source at Red Bank Regional, will have offered 18 workshops by year's end, covering everything from goal-setting and overcoming obstacles, to social and emotional learning, and writing and journaling for self-expression.

Sixteen students are presently enrolled, and each is paired with a mentor. Mentors and students meet on a weekly basis to discuss progress. Some of the students are facing unfortunate hardship at home, finding it difficult to attend sessions regularly. AFS team members are doing their best to stay in contact with students between sessions, especially those struggling with issues at home. Our participants are grateful for the support they received, as well as for their wonderful mentors.

Highlights of a great first year

- Established a vocational panel representing various trades, from culinary to plumbing
- Offered workshops featuring motivational speakers, including author Dennard Mitchell
- Incorporated SAT prep and tutoring
- Two students found paid internships during the summer
- One student has employment prospects; another will be completing community service at Lunch Break

2022 - Spring workshops, held Feb. 28th through May 9th, will offer opportunities for college and trade school tours and motivational workshops.



Life Skills Program Director Marcel Quinones with AFS program students



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Red Bank, NJ 07701

Lunch Break
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Follow us (LunchbreakNJ)



Follow us (LunchbreakNJ)

Give the Gift of Hope

Scan the QR Code
to donate now.



*Thank you for your support:
we couldn't do what we do without you!*

2021 Programs in Action



Backpack give-away



Children's Cooking Class "Cooking With My Hero"

Double Your Gift!

Your Holiday Season gift will be matched dollar for dollar up to
\$50,000.00

by a generous Lunch Break supporter. Donate before midnight, Dec. 31st
and double your impact on our programs and services today and into the future.



Kitchen Crew



Courtney Byrne and Board member Tracey Stewart of Hey Friend Foundation



Glen Goldbaum of Lambs & Wolves salon



Tom Polzer of Eat Clean Bro and
Red Bank Mayor Pat Menna



Parker Family Health Center COVID-19 vaccine clinic



Director of Administration Millie Jeter; Board President Phil Antoon; Development Manager Jill Gwydir-Govel;
NJ First Lady Tammy Murphy; Program Director Sharda Jetwani Love