

Kathleen DiChiara
President and Chief Executive Officer
Community FoodBank of New Jersey

Kathleen started the FoodBank in the back of her station wagon in 1975. In 1978 she began the Emergency Food Program of the Archdiocese of Newark and, in 1980, the FoodBank. In 1982 she formed a non-profit corporation, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, which began operation with a staff of five in a former slaughterhouse in Newark. That year, 75,000 pounds of food were distributed to 80 charities.

Today, a staff of 153, more than 25,000 volunteers, two warehouses and a small fleet of trucks made possible the distribution of 39 million pounds of food and groceries last year to more than 1,500 charities. In addition, a commercial kitchen, job training, food rescue program, Kids Cafés, distribution of children's clothing and school supplies and a Thrift Shop operate from the 280,000 sq. ft. main warehouse in Hillside, with a community garden, emergency pantry and food rescue program operating from its 28,000 sq. ft. branch in Pleasantville, outside of Atlantic City.

Kathleen has received numerous awards, both local and national, including those from three Presidents, three Governors of New Jersey and the Pope. From among the more than 200 executive directors of Feeding America members, Kathleen was selected as the recipient of the John van Hengel Fellow Award for her vision and leadership of one of the most innovative and productive food banks in the country. During her more than 35 years of involvement in the distribution of food to people in need, she has designed and implemented programs to alleviate hunger and poverty that have been replicated by food banks across the nation.

Kathleen has a BS in Education from the State University of New York at Oneonta and eight honorary doctorates from colleges and universities in New Jersey and New York.