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Franklin Food Bank moving to larger site



Frank Hasner, Franklin Food Bank executive director, in the new client choice section of the food pantry where clients are able to select the food they want as part of a pilot program. SUZANNE RUSSELL/STAFF PHOTOS

Location is about mile from old facility

Suzanne Russell
Central Jersey Courier News
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

½FRANKLIN (Somerset) - Frank Hasner, executive director of the Franklin Food Bank, wants to get more food to more hungry people. To do that the food bank has taken a multi-prong approach which involves providing food along the township's southern border, and perhaps beyond,

maintaining the same level of service to the food bank's existing clients, while offering clients more choice in the foods they take home. And to execute that plan the food bank is now leasing a larger facility about a mile away from its Millstone Road headquarters on Churchill Avenue, with plans to move the entire operation to the Churchill Avenue site in 2019.

See **FOOD BANK**, Page 4A



Pallets of peas at the Franklin Food Bank are ready for distribution.

Family settles Ancora lawsuit

Kim Mulford
@CP_KimMulford
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

TOMS RIVER — No one will be held responsible for Tara Murphy's drastic weight loss, her multiple injuries — broken teeth, cuts, scratches and bruises — or her bouts of pneumonia, or her failure to improve. A settlement check, funded by New Jersey taxpayers, is in the bank. And with it, all of the state workers and institutions accused of wrongdoing in her civil rights lawsuit have been released from further demands, claims, damages or future lawsuits. The state denies its employees did anything wrong while the Toms River woman was a patient for 18 months at Ancora Psychiatric Hospital in Winslow Township. According to the state, its nurses and physicians provided proper care, though a community hospital documented her dirty bandages and disheveled appearance, her infected wounds and anxious behavior, and a feeding tube that leaked stomach fluids onto her raw, irritated skin. Her injuries and damages were the result of pre-existing conditions, the state concluded. The state contended her civil rights weren't violated, though she was often kept in restraints and at least one employee was fired after being charged with assaulting her. That alleged incident was caught on video and turned over to a Winslow municipal court judge, who threw out the assault charge due to lengthy procedural delays. For her parents, John and Margaret Murphy, there is no closure, no justice, for how their daughter fared while in the

See **LAWSUIT**, Page 13A

More online

Check out photos and a video at mycentraljersey.com

'The Book of Eric' celebrates life of an 'extraordinary' man

Cheryl Makin
Central Jersey Courier News
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

EAST BRUNSWICK — Eric Arauz died suddenly at the age of 47 in March. His death sent shock waves through his friends, family and his widespread professional community in the mental health, drug advocacy and veterans' support worlds. Arauz's good friend, Frank Greenagel, himself a specialist in grief therapy, needed a way to deal with his own grief. To cope, Greenagel wrote about Arauz every day for 30 days, sharing his stories and photographs on social media. Others followed suit and soon a book was created. "The Book of Eric" celebrates the life of an "extraordinary" man, whose service to others lives on after his death, said Greenagel, a Pis-



Eric Arauz, left, suddenly died at the age of 47 in March. COURTESY OF FRANK GREENAGEL

cataway resident. "It also provides a model on grieving," he added, though that was not the original intent. "Someone else might read it and know where you are coming from and share it themselves. To being able to grieve with one another just makes such a huge difference."

Who was Eric Arauz?

Arauz is the award-winning author of "An American's Resurrection," published in 2012. The book tells the story of Arauz's descent into the personal hell of a locked down Veteran's Administration (VA) ward. A disabled Gulf War I veteran diagnosed with bi-polar disorder, Arauz also had a problem with alcohol and drugs. He went on to become sober, earn two degrees at Rutgers University and become a mental health advocate working with NAMI and several others. By the time his book was published, Arauz was a faculty member at Rutgers Medical School and a national trainer with an expertise in mental health disorders, trauma and suicide. Greenagel met Arauz in the fall

See **ERIC**, Page 6A

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Food Bank

Continued from Page 1A

"There is much more office space, more conference rooms, which is very important, an area if we need to talk to clients confidentially, a conference room right off the lobby where we can talk to people in private. It's little things that are important in this business that we don't have here," Hasner said.

"It will relieve a little bit of our cramping office wise," he added. "The warehouse is twice the size plus it has high ceiling so we can store stuff higher. It's just going to be a much much better operation. There is more parking."

A choice of foods

The new Churchill Avenue space is already being used to house a pilot "Client Choice" program based on a point system that allows larger families to get more point each week.

At the food bank clients come in for food once a month, with farmers and the Community FoodBank of New Jersey providing a lot of the produce needed to promote healthy eating. But if zucchini is what the food bank has on hand, that's what clients get, even if they would prefer carrots.

Hasner said the "Client Choice" pilot project comes from the realization that a fixed bag of food products for needy families isn't the best way to serve people. As one supporter noted, clients want to be able to get food just like everyone else.

"So we sort of adopted that. We go to the supermarket and with our budget get whatever we can. If you don't like beans and rice, why should you get beans and rice," he said.

With the pilot program clients can come and shop as many times as they want to spend their points in the food bank's small supermarket, complete with shopping carts.

"We have 60 families that are going now. It's working very well," said Hasner, adding the regular food bank program is still being housed at the Millstone Road location.

Still under consideration with the Client Choice program is staying open into the early evening to help working families. Hasner said being open from 3 to 7 p.m. also will offer an opportunity to get more of the community involved because people who work may not be able to take off to help out as volunteers, but if they finish work by 5 p.m. they may be able to offer a few volunteer hours.

"This is a community-based organization," he said. "We want people to be involved. Without the community's we're not going to be able to do what we need to do."

The transition to Churchill Road began with the signing of the lease about two months ago. The lease will cost about \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year, not counting heat, electric and garbage disposal costs, which he hopes will be offset by the leasing of the Millstone Road site owned by the food bank.

"We didn't want to try to make that transition in the middle of the holiday season because we still have lots of people coming here for the traditional packages. Even through I think this new way to provide food is going to be head and shoulders over this one, change is always tough for people. So we want to try to transition people, which is why we started with 60 families. I'm hoping that before the end of the year we can get another 60 families over there to try it and to see how we handle it," Hasner said.

Heading south

Through their outreach, vision and strategic planning Hasner said the food bank also has found there is an unmet need for food in the southern end of the township along Route 27.



Boxes of stuffing being prepared for distribution at the Franklin Food Bank's new location in Franklin Township. SUZANNE RUSSELL/STAFF PHOTO

During the summer, a time when the food bank tends to have a lot of fresh produce, a weekday farmer's market out of a food bank truck for clients was available at the Six Mile Reformed Church in Franklin Park; it attracted a few more people but not as many as expected.

Hasner is unsure if distance, work hours or stigma of coming to a food bank may have been factors.

"The southern end is only about five or six miles away, but if you drive Route 27 and take a hover craft you would be all right. But depending on the time of day it may take you time to get here," Hasner said. "I do believe if we do go into Kingston, the border of three counties, South Brunswick and Princeton, folks may look to use our services coming from there. And that's not our direct mission, but we did expand our mission a little and look at the whole community."

Hasner said the food bank is now looking to do something more permanently with the Six Mile Reformed Church and the Kingston Methodist Church to address community members' need.

Statistics show the food bank is located and is serving the lowest income census track in the county and in Franklin. But clients in this area know about the food bank.

"We're able to help and the numbers were fantastic into how much food we are able to get into this area roughly bordered by Churchill, Route 27 and Franklin Boulevard," said Hasner, adding the numbers show there is a need further down Route 27 and those folks are not getting the same amount of food. "So we know we really need to address that."

Although Hasner is seeing an increased need for food in the southern end of the township, overall there has been a slight decrease in the number of family served by the food bank. He said in October 2017 the food bank saw 810 families and this October 783 families.

When he started in 2008 the food bank served 574 families which increased to 942 in 2014.

Looking ahead

The past year has been filled with change — a lot of it.

"It's very nice that we're doing all these things but there is an added cost and we are going to need the public's help to get this done," said Hasner, adding the charges that have been made were based on community input. Now, he added, the community's financial support is needed to help the community served by the food bank.

"People come from all different view-

points but giving people food in your own community is something we should all be able to rally together on. This is not political. It's not religious. It's just a community concern and a way to get something done and I think we do a great job of doing it. So if the community chips in we can accomplish things. We can make sure people have sufficient food in our own town," he said.

With the food bank's holiday mailing set to go out soon, he's hoping folks will give a little extra so they can continue to help neighbors in the community.

Helping out this year Venus Jewelers is teaming up with the Franklin Food Bank to "Feed a Family For The Holidays" in which store clients who round up their purchases made between Nov. 23 and Dec. 15 to the nearest dollar amount can have that amount matched at 100 percent by Venus Jewelers up to a goal of \$1,500 to provide holiday meals. For \$40 a healthy holiday meal, including turkey and traditional fixings, can be provided for a family of five.

For more, visit <https://franklinfoodbank.org/>.

Staff Writer Suzanne Russell: 732-565-7335; srussell@mycentraljersey.com

How to support the Needy Cases Fund

From Nov. 25 to Sunday, Dec. 2, the journalists of the Home News Tribune and MyCentralJersey.com will focus on eight organizations serving Central Jersey as part of our annual Needy Cases Fund project.

Community members will see how these organizations improve the lives of their neighbors in need, and how they can help the agencies accomplish their missions.

Our sincere hope is that after viewing and reading the work of journalists, community members will in turn support this community-service project by sending in donations that will go directly to the eight highlighted agencies.

The Needy Cases Fund is a Central Jersey holiday tradition. Over the past seven decades, the Needy Cases Fund has collected donations from a caring community, and distributed the funds to local agencies that use them to directly support their work. The community-service project has been sponsored by the Home News Tribune and its predecessor, the Daily Home News, working with the Lions Club of New Brunswick. In the last two decades alone, more than \$523,000 has been raised and given out by this program.

This year's agencies include the Franklin Township Food Bank, Elijah's Promise, the Lions Club of New Brunswick, the Make-A-Wish Foundation of New Jersey, Women Aware, the Crisis Room at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, FISH Hospitality Program and CASA of Middlesex County.

Send donations (checks made out to the Needy Cases Fund or cash) to: Needy Cases Fund, Home News Tribune, 92 E. Main St., Suite 202, Somerville, NJ 08876. Please indicate with a note whether you want to be acknowledged in a wrap-up story about the program, scheduled to run in late December, or whether you wish to remain anonymous.

Donations will be gratefully accepted through the end of December.

The Needy Cases Fund is maintained in a separate account by the New Brunswick Lions Club, and distribution of the funds is apportioned by representatives of the Home News Tribune and the club.

For any questions, contact Carolyn Sampson at 908-243-6624 or sampson@MyCentralJersey.com.

Through the Needy Cases Fund, we have helped make powerful connections in the community for seven decades.

We know this holiday tradition will continue in 2018 — and beyond.

Paul C. Grzella is general manager/editor of the Courier News/Home News Tribune/MyCentralJersey.com. Contact him at pgrzella@gannett.com or call 908-243-6601.

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To Our Community

You are invited to the Saint Peter's University Hospital Annual Public Meeting

Wednesday, December 12, 2018 7:00 PM

Sister Marie de Pazzi Conference Center Saint Peter's University Hospital 254 Easton Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ

Leslie D. Hirsch, interim CEO and president, Saint Peter's Healthcare System, will share how we are addressing our community's healthcare needs. He will highlight Saint Peter's focus on quality and safety, new patient care services, and the healthcare system's future goals.

Members of the public will have the opportunity to ask questions, share experiences, and provide feedback.

This meeting is open to all members of the community.

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