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Meal Recovery Coalition Commemorates One-Year Anniversary, Marking Progress Toward Ending Hunger and Food Waste

Johnson & Johnson hosts October event with state and industry leaders

PRINCETON, NJ – October 21, 2025 – Every day in New Jersey, large cafeterias prepare safe, healthy meals that may never be eaten while families nearby wonder about dinner. The Meal Recovery Coalition (MRC) was created to change that, connecting surplus with need and turning potential waste into nourishment and dignity.

Launched in 2024, the MRC unites corporations, hospitals, nonprofits, government agencies, and academic institutions in a first-of-its-kind statewide alliance. On October 20, the coalition gathered at Johnson & Johnson's Raritan campus to mark its first year of progress.

In just 12 months, the MRC has forged a working partnership with major corporations, the state's two largest food recovery nonprofits, and a network of food pantries, creating a shared vision for what's possible. Members have already recovered approximately one million meals in 2025, set a bold target of five million meals per year and cleared a critical hurdle by developing common safety and operational standards for New Jersey's food code. These achievements demonstrate how quickly collaboration can deliver results.

"Nearly one million New Jersey residents live with food insecurity because they don't have enough affordable, nutritious food," said **Hélène Lanctuit, CEO of Share My Meals and MRC Co-Chair**. "At the same time, in New Jersey's food-service sector, we estimate that five million prepared meals end up in landfills each year. In just one year, the Meal Recovery Coalition has shown what is possible when partners work together, recovering hundreds of thousands of meals and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Our vision is simple and bold: every available meal should feed someone who needs it."

Why It Matters

Meal recovery strengthens equity by ensuring nutritious, ready-to-eat food reaches communities already burdened by poverty and limited access to healthy options. It reduces environmental harm by keeping food out of landfills, supports child and family

health, and bolsters the economy by stretching nonprofit resources, lowering disposal costs, and maximizing the value of existing food, labor, and energy.

A key milestone in the first year was the publication of the New Jersey Food Donation Guidelines, the MRC's flagship project that establishes a unified framework for safe, consistent, and scalable meal recovery. This guide lays the foundation for broader adoption across New Jersey.

"By working together across sectors, we are proving that meal recovery is a practical, scalable solution to both hunger and food waste," said **Olivier Bogillot, Head of North America General Medicines at Sanofi and MRC Co-Chair**. "The coalition has created a model that delivers immediate impact for families in New Jersey and a framework for lasting change that can be replicated nationwide."

Event: *The Road to 5,000,000 Meals: Powering Progress through Partnership*

The program featured coalition updates, remarks from state leaders, a special message from New Jersey Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin and a cross-sector panel discussion. Panelists included: Mark Dinglasan, Director of the NJ Office of the Food Security Advocate; Joyce Campbell, former TASK CEO and Coordinator of the NJ Community Kitchens Coalition; Heather Thompson, Executive Director of Table to Table; and Dr. Sara Elnakib, Chair of the Department of Family & Community Health Sciences at Rutgers University.

"Hosting this milestone event at Johnson & Johnson underscores our commitment to advancing the health and well-being of the communities where we live and work," said **Chris Guiton, Head, Home State Affairs, Johnson & Johnson**. "We believe that caring for the health of communities extends beyond medicine to address fundamental needs like food security. Being a part of the Meal Recovery Coalition allows us to reduce waste in our cafeterias, provide nutritious meals to individuals and families in need, engage our employees, and help build stronger, healthier communities together."

Founding Members and Leadership

The Princeton-based nonprofit Share My Meals led the formation of the MRC. Members include corporate and healthcare partners Campbell's, Novartis, Capital Health, Sanofi, Johnson & Johnson, Novo Nordisk, Dartcor, Bristol Myers Squibb, Merck, and Accenture; food-service leaders Sodexo and Compass Group (Eurest and Flick); nonprofits and community organizations Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK), Food Bank of South Jersey, Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ), MEND, Table to Table, Nourish NJ, and FoodRecovery.org; academic and research partners Rutgers University and the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic; and New Jersey state agencies including

the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the Department of Health (DOH). Together, these organizations recover surplus meals, serve as ambassadors for meal recovery, and support the coalition through financial contributions and advocacy.

Together, these organizations are proving what New Jersey innovation and generosity can achieve—recovering meals, strengthening communities, and building a healthier, more sustainable future.

Learn more at **mealrecoverycoalition.org**.

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