



## Food & Drink

# South Plainfield Borough Taking Part in Foodstock Week Initiative

By VICTORIA CARUSO  
July 3, 2019 at 1:00 AM



## All donations to benefit the South Plainfield Food Pantry

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SOUTH PLAINFIELD, NJ – The Borough of South Plainfield will participate in a weeklong effort to help less fortunate community members struggling to put food on their tables.

At a meeting June 17, Mayor Matt Anesh declared July 7 through July 12 as Foodstock Week in the borough. During this time, borough employees are encouraged to fill brown paper bags, provided by Foodstock, with non-perishable food items in an effort to help the grassroots organization's mission to stock the shelves of the South Plainfield Food Pantry. Residents and businesses within the community are also encouraged to participate.

"The borough is happy to be taking part in the Foodstock Week initiative and hope to collect much-needed food items to stock the shelves of the South Plainfield Food Pantry," said Anne Daley, secretary to Mayor Matt Anesh and organizer of the Foodstock Week initiative in South Plainfield. "We hope the community also supports this initiative and we look forward to South Plainfield playing a hand in helping Foodstock not only meet but exceed its goal."

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"We certainly appreciate the borough participating and we are hoping that with the eagerness of the people at town hall we will be able to collect a large amount of food and reach our ultimate goal of collecting 10,000 pounds of food," said Robert Swisher, founder of the Freehold-based non-profit organization.

Foodstock began in 2010 with the mission to 'facilitate the movement of food from those who have been abundantly blessed to those who are in need, and to inspire future generations to do the same.'

Back then, Swisher's daughter was volunteering at a Red Bank food pantry and was concerned that there wasn't much on the shelves. Looking to do something to assist the Lunchbreak Food Pantry, Swisher held a food drive in his backyard, offering free food and music in exchange for donations from family and neighbors.

"The idea was people would bring food for the food pantry and we would feed them food that was donated to us and they would listen to the band play. It was a smashing success," said Swisher, noting that the event was initially called 'Ton of Fun' and the goal was to raise 2,000 pounds of food. "We ended up raising over 6,000 pounds."

The following year, the event was expanded with additional bands and the name officially changed to Foodstock, an off take on Woodstock. Today, the organization helps facilitate food donations throughout the year and holds Foodstock, an annual daylong fundraising effort featuring live music, food, and more. Held on the Saturday after Columbus Day, Foodstock 2019 will take place Oct. 19 from 1 to 7 p.m. at the Freehold Municipal Building.

Since its inception, Foodstock has collected over 360,000 pounds of food and raised over \$60,000 for area food pantries. The goal this year is to collect 120,000 pounds of food with Swisher hoping to collect 10,000 pounds during the upcoming Foodstock Week initiative.

"During the year, there are food drives in schools and communities, especially around Thanksgiving and the holidays. Food pantries have the hardest time stocking their shelves in the summer because school is out and that is when they need food donations the most," said Swisher, adding, "We set a goal to get 50 towns to participate and, to date, have about 53 towns taking part."

According to Swisher, some towns are also taking the initiative a step further, challenging their neighbors in a friendly competition to see who will collect the most food; among them are Berkeley Heights versus Scotch Plains, Mountainside versus Kenilworth, High Bridge versus the Town Clinton, and Red Bank versus Eatontown.

To ensure that the community residents in need benefit from the weeklong initiative, each participating town was able to select where they wanted the food donations to go. In South Plainfield, all donations will be weighed at the end of the week and then delivered by the department of public works to the South Plainfield Food Pantry.

"It's all about getting food to people in need," Swisher said.

Anyone from South Plainfield and the surrounding communities looking to take part in the Foodstock Week effort can drop non-perishable food items off at South Plainfield Borough Hall Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 7 through July 12. For additional information, contact Anne Daley at (908) 226-7604.

For additional information on Foodstock NJ, visit [www.FoodstockNJ.org](http://www.FoodstockNJ.org) or following the organization on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FoodstockNJ>. Additional information is also available at [\\_](#)

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