



United Way
of Gloucester County



Food Bank of South Jersey Children's Year Round Feeding Program

A 2021 SUCCESS STORY FEATURING...

MARIA & GABRIELLA

The pandemic's economic impact has been devastating to all demographic groups, but the impact on lower wage workers has been most dramatic. Families with parents that were able to provide for their families with multiple jobs and hard work suffered as more employers were forced to close shop as the economy spiraled downward. Eight-year-old Gabriella and her mother Maria were in a school pantry line in November, the day before Thanksgiving. Maria explained that she and her husband both lost jobs in the food service industry and her husband lost a part-time job in a small retail store. Unemployment benefits were not enough to meet basic needs and she was afraid they would not have food for the long weekend and certainly not for a Thanksgiving dinner. Maria was also worried that the food she was able to buy was not nutritious enough for Gabriella. But as they went through the school pantry line, Maria teared up as she saw turkeys and basic trimmings for a meal, as well as additional children's meals that were being distributed at the event. This meant that she and Gabriella would enjoy a nutritious Thanksgiving meal after all. Gabriella was a little shy but at the end she smiled and said, "thank you for making my Mommy happy."