WASTE NOT

Every day, restaurants and grocery stores are left with food that ends up in a landfill. In fact, 40 percent of all food in the United States is wasted. In 1999, Claire Insalata Poulos realized something needed to change, so she founded Table to Table, a nonprofit based in Englewood Cliffs, with the goal of turning unsold foods into hot meals for people in need.

There are 1.2 million hungry souls in New Jersey; one in five children don’t know where their next meal is coming from. Table to Table has made it its mission over the past 18 years to cut these numbers by transporting foods such as meat, produce and whole grains to more than 90 agencies around the state, including soup kitchens, homeless shelters, churches and after-school programs.

“Being able to see a little girl enjoying an orange for the very first time or a hot meal before going home from an after-school program in Newark, ensuring that the neighborhood kids are eating each night—there’s just no way to describe that feeling,” says Julie Kinner Scalino. Table to Table’s director of recipient relations and community affairs. Table to Table is unusual in that there is no warehouse where food is stored. Every day, with five refrigerated trucks and a team of dedicated drivers, the organization takes hundreds of pounds of perishable food right from the hands of those who don’t need it and places it right in the hands of those who do.

The chefs of these restaurants and grocers provide Table to Table with much more than usable food. They often participate in the organization’s events to raise money to keep their trucks on the roads. Some restaurants even hold events of their own, such as “giving back” nights, where Table to Table receives a portion of the sales.

“We are able to celebrate our milestones and engage an incredible group of supporters and friends, who over the years have helped us rescue millions of meals and have become a part of the family,” Scalino says. –Julia Mullaney

Table to Table
201.444.5500
tabletotable.org/donate

About Jenn Hall
Jenn Hall writes about food, culture, travel and the places in between. A wanderer by nature with an over-rumbling belly, she’s learning that the best stories are hidden in plain sight. You can follow her adventures on Twitter and Instagram @jennsarahhall.