

Greater Cleveland Food Bank  
COVID-19 Update  
Week of April 20 - 24, 2020: Week in Review

It is hard to believe that we've been operating in disaster mode for almost two months. What seemed strange at first is now familiar. We've all changed our perspective on so many things. What seemed important in certain situations now seems trivial. And, what we sometimes took for granted – like a hug or a handshake -- are so important and so missed. But, it is Friday and that brings an end to another week and a busy one at that!

Thursday's drive thru distribution went very well – little changes that the team made resulted in a “smoother than silk” day. We provided nutritious food to 2,300 households. We received feedback on the food – beautiful fruit – bags of apples and oranges, fresh veggies and a box of assorted shelf stable items. Wait times averaged about 14 minutes – we had lots of media coverage and couldn't be more appreciative of the wonderful assistance of the National Guard and Ohio Military Reserves, the Cleveland Police and the Ohio State Highway Patrol. If you total the number of people served at the six drive-thru distributions that we've done, we have served more than 14,300 families and over 42,000 people. And a lovely note – today, our Help Center received a call from a senior who received food in yesterday's distribution. She called to thank us for the produce – she hadn't had fresh produce in 3 weeks and was so grateful!

Big shout out and thanks to Greg Lawrence, the owner of the Lakeshore Coffee House in Euclid. He donated a large container of hot coffee, sandwiches, wraps, cookies, and brownies for our volunteers and staff working the distribution. He plans to do it every distribution till at least June if needed. If you are out Euclid way, stop in and thank him for his support – we are so grateful.

Please see the attached flyer from businesses that support us through a variety of CRM campaigns.

Parma schools requested an additional 100 bags of food through our BackPacks for Kids Program for next week's delivery. We are now reaching 1,504 children a week in Parma and 9,100 children total each week through the program – for now. The need continues to grow. Our Repack department is very busy between backpacks, emergency boxes, boxes for seniors and other miscellaneous items – today, we boxed up fresh milk which will be available to our partner agencies. As Scott, our repack manager, said, “we're turning and burning.”

Right now, our Receiving department is busier than they've been in ages. To give you an idea – In January of this year, we purchased and received 250,000-290,000 pounds of purchased product – 5 to 6 truckloads. In the period of 3/23 – 4/23, we purchased **One Million pounds of product**. Also, we were receiving product for mobile pantries that'll be taking place this weekend. The mobile pantry program provides free mass produce distributions in underserved areas of our community.

Our kitchen continues to produce and turn out wonderful meals: Kids' bagged lunches totaled 1,121. Agency hot meals came in at 1,572. For Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging senior meals partners, we provided 8,343 frozen meals, 6,243 hot meals and 802 cold and boxed meals. Thanks to our amazing kitchen staff!

We are serious about keeping our staff healthy and in line with the best practices for workplace safety including masks. We want to help our partner agencies do the same. Many have asked if we could provide them with masks. We know masks are in high demand and short supply. If you know of a possible source of disposable masks for everyday use – please let Jeremy A know as he is trying to source them.

We thought this quote – sent from one of our wonderful supporters – is a beautiful way to end the week.

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to make a difference that you have lived and lived well.”                      Ralph Waldo Emerson

***Focus on possibility and who can help and how.***

*Mary LaVigne Butler, VP of External Affairs*

