

For more updates on the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's response to COVID-19, please visit www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give-help/donate-food-funds/covid19

**Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
April 1, 2020**

Somehow, April Fools' Day just seems a bit ironic this year. The sun is now out and it looks like we've had another busy day. Although we could be resting on our success of yesterday's distribution, we know that hunger doesn't take a break or suffer fools lightly!

Given Tuesday's distribution, we are now thinking about how many emergency food boxes we'll need next week and for the weeks to come. Tuesday, the Food Bank distributed 2,700 emergency boxes and we expect that number will go up next week. In addition, we are also taking a look at the number of boxes that are needed for clients in other parts of our six county service area, with an expectation that the need for them will continue to grow.

We distributed 350,000 more pounds of food last week than the previous week, and we are starting to run out of room at our current food distribution center. We have a trailer on site but, before much longer, we will be out of space. So, we are looking at storage options as well as sourcing supplies and insuring that we have the resources to pack the emergency boxes and bags of food for children that our community will need. We are still finalizing details but are likely to do another drive thru pantry next week, again at the Cleveland Muni lot.

We've been asked to distribute information about the coming election and the process to secure vote by mail ballots. We work with various organizations that help register people to vote and will certainly assist as we can with this important request. Starting soon, this information will go out in our emergency boxes.

The number of first time new families utilizing our services continues to grow - yesterday close to 36% of the families served. And, we expect that to continue in the coming weeks. We know that there are still many individuals who need food. If you know someone who needs assistance, please share that **our Help Center is available to help - call 216-738-2067**. We can tell them about our next drive thru distribution or, even better, a partner agency in their neighborhood who can provide them with food.

During all of this, we can't forget the children who need food to help them learn at an extremely tough time. Their daily routines have been interrupted and the fear of not knowing about their next meal is real and scary. In partnership with CMSD schools, we are now providing 4,200 backpacks a week to children who pick up grab and go lunches at 22 sites. CMSD alone is distributing more backpacks now than our regular weekly distribution going into this COVID-19 response period. We are also providing 1,400 bags a week for school children in Parma, one of our most underserved communities. In total, for this week we are sending out 6,458 bags of food through our Backpacks for Kids program.

All of the above drives home the need for financial support of this work. Our community has been generous to the Food Bank and is finding unique and fun ways to do so. Channel 19 will be holding a telethon this coming Saturday evening and the guest list of local celebrities is growing -- <https://www.cleveland19.com/video/2020/03/31/clevelands-michael-symon-joins-news-covid-relief-telethon-because-he-always-supports-home/> Our March Facebook report showed that many of our supporters held Facebook fundraisers to celebrate milestones in their lives and graciously named the Food Bank as the recipient of their generosity. No matter how you do it - please know that we are honored, humbled and thankful for your support. Things are going to get tougher and the need will continue to grow - so, if you can help, go to www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give We've attached our social media toolkit - please use it!!

As the day draws to an end, we find ourselves thinking a lot - about all sorts of things. We know that something new will come along tomorrow that will challenge us, baffle us, and give us that extra ounce of

energy to carry on and get “comfortable with the uncomfortable” and continue our critical service for those in our community who need us.

Focus on possibility and who can help and how.