

Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
Week of April 13 - 17, 2020: Week in Review

The week started with sun and ended with snow – but what a way to end the week. We had one of our smoothest distributions ever. Our warehouse is a hub of deliveries – a normal day is 5 to 6 and on Friday, we had 13 coming in. And, we were honored by a most generous grant from the Jack, Joseph and Mort Mandel Foundation in the amount of One Million dollars. Yes, it was quite a week! As we've said before, our community takes care of each other and the trust that has been bestowed upon us is humbling and rewarding. Let's look at the stats for the week as we, along with many helping hands and partners, did some amazing work!

Our Help Center's work to connect people in our community to resources continues to be amazing: we had close to 1500 calls, with average hold times ranging from 30 seconds to two minutes. 70 clients were served from the Food Truck and 486 home deliveries were made with the help of the Guard.

Our kitchen continues to produce and turn out wonderful meals: Kids' bagged lunches totaled 1,056. Agency hot meals came in at 1,352. For Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging senior meals partners, we provided 8,955 frozen meals, 5,927 hot meals and 795 cold and boxed meals. And, somehow the Kitchen managed to provide lunch to staff and the Guard one day during the week!

This past week our fleet averaged over 948 miles a day making sure that our partner programs had the food they needed. Our operations team kept the warehouse humming with incoming orders which saw our inventory levels rise. Since March 15th, we have distributed 430,000 more pounds of food than we did last year in this this period, with 211 fewer partner agencies open to assist. We are filling in gaps through direct distribution wherever we can, and working to meet the needs of clients turning to us for the first time.

We hosted our third drive through distribution at the City's Muni lot and we had a new group of volunteers – the State Highway Patrol helped during registration. Because they were all in uniform, a few people accidentally mistook this to be a regular check by the patrol and one woman even began to pull out her license and registration. But the officers were quick to remind everyone that we aren't here to check tags and registration -- “We're just here to give you food.” The boxes included shelf stable product as well as beautiful, fresh produce, courtesy of The Sanson Company. Together, more than 3,000 families – and more than 9800 – people received food at the distribution.

Shout out to Blue Cross Blue Shield who provided lunch for staff and Guard – thank you! Giant Eagle continues to amaze and have us in awe – they hit their \$1.1M goal for Check Out Hunger and they continue to go at it. What a wonderful partner! Mike Petrone's two-hour Facebook Live concert raised \$5,600 for the Food Bank's COVID-19 efforts.

Our amazing External Affairs team reminds me of a squad of Energizer bunnies – they keep on going and going! From fundraising to media to volunteers and advocating on behalf of our clients, we just watch them go! And, our donors and supporters continue to be generous and kind and give with their hearts and encourage us each day!

A special shout out to our very own Gloria Andrews who is a ray of sunshine to and part of our fabulous Repack team. This year, Gloria is celebrating a milestone birthday and is having a Facebook fundraiser for the Food Bank - as of 4/16, she's raised over \$3,400 and is still going. Thank you, Gloria for your daily smile, energy and amazing birthday celebration!

We sometimes have to pinch ourselves as the days fly by and we are all living a different reality. When we started going into Disaster mode, Jess, a member of our senior leadership team, talked about getting "comfortable with the uncomfortable." Tonight, we rang the bell and celebrated the generosity of the Mandel Foundation and looked around the room and realized how lucky we are to live and work in such a wonderful community.

Thank you Greater Cleveland - from all of us at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank - together, we're going to be stronger!

Focus on possibility and who can help and how.

Mary LaVigne Butler, VP of External Affairs