

Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
Week of April 27 – May 1, 2020: Week in Review

The first of May – at day's end, it's proving to be a nice day – sunny and dry! I notice out my window that a lot of the trees are starting to green-up and the dogwood is going to be sprouting pink blossoms in the next few days. Spring truly means new life, a fresh start. That's what we are hoping for in May and the months to come. The Governor's messages this week have been cautious yet optimistic. We know, however, that the coming months will be tough on the families and households that have been affected by the economy as it crashed around them. We will be here to provide food, assistance, and hopefully a connection to an agency in their neighborhood. And Friday signals the end of another week and hopefully two days of rest for all of us. Rest is well deserved as we've had a busy week!

Yesterday's drive thru distribution went very well – in fact, one of our staff said “We had our smoothest Muni Lot distribution to date.” Despite the rain we kept the line moving with over 2,100 households served, which is more than 6,500 people. A little rain can't wash out the spirit especially when there is good music! We were rockin' out thanks to the Rock Hall's Music Van. Some of our Guard members were dancing as they loaded trunks – they are a wonderful and talented group! We are trying to find the happy medium with planning for attendees as the number of families in attendance fluctuates quite a bit week to week. But, one thing that will never change is the beautiful produce and good food that is provided.

As we begin to train partners for our summer feeding program, we're brainstorming and planning and thinking about how we are going to pack all those lunches. We will be calling on our volunteers to come in to help and with that, we've got to plan to make sure that we do so with the safety of our staff and volunteers in mind. Practicing social distancing will be critical from check-in to orientation to working the project. We will ensure that they have the proper PPE and guidance to perform the work safely and keep them safe as well. It rings true every day – getting “comfortable with the uncomfortable.”

Big shout out again to Greg Lawrence, the owner of the Lakeshore Coffee House in Euclid. He provided coffee and food for our distribution again yesterday. And, today, we were treated to a delicious lunch catered by Lago and provided by an anonymous donor. People in our community take good care of us and we are so grateful!

Our kitchen continues to produce and turn out wonderful meals: Kids' bagged lunches totaled 1,162. Agency hot meals came in at 1,273. For Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging senior meals partners, we provided 8,351 frozen meals, 6,429 hot meals and 625 cold and boxed meals. Thanks to our amazing kitchen staff, many seniors and kids have good food – and as Jedene would say, “The food is made with love!”

A few facts from our data team: 21% of the product brought into our facility since March 15th was purchased food. In the same time period last year this was 8% of the product we brought in. And we had to throw in a baseball reference: we've distributed over 42,000 food backpacks for kids in our area since the crisis began: more than the seating capacity of Progressive field. Oh how we want to see our Tribe play ball!

We know life will continue albeit differently and also know that the Food Bank will continue to serve as a critical resource for our community. This is an unprecedented time for all of us and we must seize the opportunities presented to us to make things better.

Consider this to start your weekend: “The time is always right to do what is right.” Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

Focus on possibility and who can help and how.

Mary LaVigne Butler, VP of External Affairs

