

**Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
April 6, 2020**

It's Monday and we have a very busy week ahead of us. But, a few reflections on this past weekend. A sunny and glorious day on Saturday. And what a telethon on Saturday evening! Channel 19 along with the CAVS and I-Heart Radio – WTAM and WMMS -- hosted a 3 hour local star filled show and Clevelanders did what they do best – shared their pride in the CLE and gave generously to the Food Bank and United Way. So nice to see our local sports celebs and other media personalities – thanks to Rock Hall for recruiting celebs. Lots of nice shout-outs for the Food Bank and great coverage of what we do.

All indications are that this pandemic is going to continue for a while. And, for the Food Bank that means we have to continue to keep things moving in high gear. Unemployment claims filed this past week are at an all-time high and as we noted, more than 1/3 of the individuals attending our most recent drive through distribution were first time recipients of our services. We are mindful of the role we play in serving our community. We are stewards of the wonderful donations that we are receiving to help with providing food as well as essential providers to help with this disaster. They say there is strength in numbers and that is so true in this time and in this place.

We are looking at our capacity to provide home deliveries to seniors and homebound individuals. At this point, the National Guard has been handling all of these errands with grace and mercy and we are looking at close to 500 deliveries in the coming weeks. The message bears repeating – **if you know anyone in need of food or assistance, please have them talk to one of our dedicated Client Help Center Specialists at 216-738-2067.** In addition, our Food Truck is stationed outside our front door for folks walking over to our facility. Our new hours of operation for the truck for this week (April 6) are Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 am till 2:00 pm. Next week (April 13), the truck will be providing food on Monday and Friday from 10 am till 2 pm.

Our requests for Backpacks continues to skyrocket. This week, we are at 7062 and we just received a new inquiry from Breakthrough Schools. As a result, we continue to ramp up the number of backpacks prepared each week. The expenses associated with the backpacks are not reimbursable under any of the government programs so we rely on donations to purchase the special product that goes into each pack – product that is child-friendly and accessible to children. If you can help, go to www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give

This coming Thursday will be our second drive through distribution at the Muni lot. The hours are from 2:00 pm until 6:00 pm and we are expecting more households than at last week's distribution. Our IT and Data teams are working on a pre-registration program to help with obtaining data from each household prior to Thursday. This is expected to be ready in the next day or so and will help cut down the time in line and more important, minimize the need for obtaining information face to face on Thursday – this is important from a safety standpoint as we are committed to maintaining social distancing. We're anticipating building 7,500 emergency boxes for this week and we know that a good amount of those will be distributed on Thursday.

In addition, our Agency Services team is working closely with our food resource centers throughout our 6 county service area to determine the possibility of distributing emergency food boxes at those sites. We'll keep you posted as we work through logistics and details. All of these extra boxes need to be stored and we are running out of space. Our Operations Team is researching and searching for off-site warehouse space ... stay tuned.

So, today was a busy day – not unlike every other day of the week. We are good and mindful that the safety and health of our team is number one priority. Masks will be distributed in the morning along with our daily temperature checks! Get comfortable with the uncomfortable! Stay strong ...

Focus on possibility and who can help and how.

Mary LaVigne Butler, VP of External Affairs