

**Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
April 9, 2020**

Thursday brought a true display of Cleveland weather at its best – rain, clouds, sun, snow showers and falling temperatures – all before Noon! Thursday was our food distribution at the Muni lot so the weather showed its full glory – the wind howled and blew over a tent and the porta potties – we’re resilient so the distribution continued. As we all know, we are a hardy lot here in Cleveland so a little unruly weather doesn’t scare us.

As we prepared for the distribution, a number of daunting facts hit us hard and frankly, did scare us – both from Thursday’s news as well as the pre-registration numbers for the distribution. The national headlines show that another 6.6 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits as layoffs show no let up. In Ohio, 696,000 people have filed for unemployment insurance benefits since State officials started ordering Ohio businesses to close. And, the trends indicate that the number will continue to climb in the days and weeks ahead. This week, we asked that households intending to participate in today’s emergency food distribution pre-register. Initially, we intended to cap it at 3,000 households. When we hit that mark, we upped it to 4,000 households. In the end, we distributed just over 3,500 boxes. These numbers are staggering and are indicative of the work that is ahead of us.

As we look for the silver-lining in these dark clouds that are hovering us, consider the following:

- 25 of our regular volunteers will be joining us to lend their hands and hearts to help at the distribution. Because we’ve had the Guard in our repack area and in order to adhere to good social distancing, we’ve had to cancel our regular volunteer shifts! We are so happy to have them back with us!
- The Fundraising team has received lovely notes and e-mails from our donors thanking us for thanking them! Here is an example – *“I mean what I say and I say it from my heart. I will say again, words cannot properly describe the tremendous work you all do. Your importance in our communities is always vital. During this stressful and incomprehensible period of our lives, the Foodbank is, and will continue to be, a super bright and shining star!! I again saw stories on multiple local news channels last night documenting the Foodbank’s incredible work, in particular the muni lot food pickup today. Take very good care Sara, and all at the Greater Cleveland Foodbank. Please know I pray for all of you to have good health and wellbeing.”*
- Our local media has been providing great daily coverage and sharing the need and fact that help is just a phone call away –**anyone in need of food, should call the Help Center at 216-738-2067.**
- On Friday, DiBella’s Subs is providing lunch for Food Bank staff and the Guard – **THANK YOU!!**
- We get offers of help from so many people and organizations – our masks were handmade, an offer to help with fundraising, offers to help us call our donors to say thank you, offers of equipment for the warehouse, offers to help us deliver food ... and more!
- Look for *Thankful Thursday* where we highlight several organizations and individuals for whom we are thankful!
- **Check Out Hunger** continues at our local grocery stores – show your support to the incredible staff at the stores who stock the shelves, help bag our groceries and support our work!

Each of these daily Updates shows the dramatic increase in demand we've experienced over the last few weeks, distributing hundreds of thousands of pounds of additional product to our partner programs. The growth in our four drive thru distributions is exponential. This demand is expected to increase as is evidenced by the unemployment numbers noted above. Over the next six months, our expenses will far outpace our budget projections - we must continue to help our community deal with the growing need - it is our responsibility to do so. We will need to raise \$1.9 million additional dollars to meet the increased expenses resulting from this pandemic. We have a long way to go to achieve this needed revenue. **If you can, please go to www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give**

Watching the never ending line of cars drive through was tough - it will get better.