

Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
Week of July 6 – July 10, 2020: Week in Review

A full week following the holiday and we were busy! It was a warm one especially on Thursday for the drive through distribution. The news from the Governor's last press conference was rather daunting especially for Cuyahoga County. But, we know that no matter the news – local, state or national – we have work to do to make sure that good nutritious food is distributed by us as well as our 808 active partner agencies. So, let's take a look at all that was accomplished and what we have on the horizon.

In total, since we activated our disaster plan in March, we have distributed 16.47 million pounds of food to our partner agencies and our clients, an increase of 2.7 million pounds over the same period last year! More food is being distributed than at any time in food bank history, and the need remains high.

This week's Muni Lot distribution saw 1600 households come through the line which meant we served an estimated 4,800 people. In addition to the National Guard, we had 20 volunteers who braved the heat and bright sun to help direct traffic, check in households and help load cars. Once again, beautiful boxes of produce, dairy and cooked meat thanks to the USDA Truck to Trunk program – while this program is aimed at helping to provide emergency food assistance during the pandemic, it is also providing financial support to the produce, dairy and meat industries and avoiding unnecessary food waste during this time of tremendous need. Instead of dumping milk and plowing under wonderful produce, this program has producers and distributors boxing up great product and providing it to a variety of non-profit organizations across the country including us! We are so fortunate to partner with Sanson and Miceli Dairy Products Company – to name just two entities -- who've been providing product that we've been giving to families in our community. Also, several of our partner agencies have received this product so the reach of this Truck to Trunk program is wide and deep. This coming week, we'll also be providing wonderful boxes at the second drive through distribution to be held at Lakeland College on July 14 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. These drive through distributions have been a godsend to so many families and individuals. Since March 19 through July 2 – we've served 32,810 households and almost 98,000 people at distributions here at the Food Bank, the Muni Lot, Parma High School and Lakeland College. And, we plan to continue these for the foreseeable future!

This week has seen an increase in volunteer shifts here at the Food Bank. We had 56 volunteers on site including evening shifts. The shifts range from 3 to 4 hours long. Longer shifts help with productivity and we have learned that volunteers feel they get more done. And, their observations have proven accurate – this intrepid group of 56 packed 774 cases of fresh 2% milk this week or 30,960 pounds! And, they also assembled 2,592 backpacks! We've posted on our website all of our volunteer opportunities for the month of July and August will be up there shortly. Our volunteers are an integral part of who we are and what we do. And, they've been excited to return as well. Go to our website for more information on volunteering. <https://www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give-help/volunteer>.

Masks – we've got plenty of reusable masks thanks to the wonderful drive started by Channel 3 and Betsy Kling. Last count, we were over 13,000. We are making masks available in our Marketplace and we've also provided 600 masks to Hunger Network. We are thrilled to have enough masks of all types for our partner agencies and their volunteers and clients if needed. As we are learning -- wearing a mask helps you and everyone around you!

Our summer feeding program is rocking – just last week, our kitchen prepared 11,185 lunches and 6,410 breakfasts for this program. And, since this pandemic began, we've distributed 98,616 backpacks through July 2!

We'd be remiss if we didn't note that the spread of cases in Cuyahoga County has skyrocketed and the concern is that it is due to general high community spread. The County is at Level 3*. If the numbers don't go down in a week, we'll be at level 4 which is the highest level and not good news for any of us. Watch your distance, wear a mask, wash your hands and be careful!

"It always seems impossible until it is done." Nelson Mandela

Focus on possibility and who can help and how. Mary LaVigne Butler, VP of External Affairs