

For more updates on the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's response to COVID-19, please visit www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give-help/donate-food-funds/covid19

**Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
March 25, 2020**

Although yesterday was overcast and gray skies, here at the Food Bank, we were hustling along to get our neighbors fed. We hosted our second drive through food distribution and enjoyed having some additional capacity courtesy of our Governor and the Ohio National Guard.

An update on our guests - the members of the Ohio National Guard and the Ohio Military Reserves. Did you know that members of both groups have considerable experience in logistics, delivery and distribution? It was like they were made to order for our work. One of the first projects they worked on was packing emergency food boxes in our repack area. They've made considerable progress toward our short term goal of packing 6,000 food boxes a week - they are averaging about 380 boxes per hour or 2,660 boxes a day! On top of this, yesterday they also completed an order of 3,300 backpacks for kids. They are fast and consistent and we are so appreciative of their help. They are also being utilized throughout our distribution center. And, they are being very mindful of all the safety requirements in place at this time - temp taking, keeping a safe distance from each other, hand washing, etc.

They also assisted at our drive through food distribution - directing traffic, marking lanes, distributing boxes of food and reminding folks to say in their cars as the food boxes were put into their trunks. Congressman Dave Joyce also joined us to help and we took his temperature, just like we do for anyone else who comes to our facility to assist. Despite his busy schedule, he stayed for the entire distribution, and we are so grateful for the time he spent with us.

The demand for food yesterday was extraordinary. We served more than 4,000 individuals from nearly 1,500 households. More than 50% of the clients were children and seniors. Two-thirds were new to the Food Bank and one-third were new to our network of partners, i.e. have not needed emergency food from any Food Bank, food pantry or mobile pantry in the past few years. That was sobering, to say the least. While the lines were unbelievably long (so long in fact, we had two news helicopters hovering overhead to report on it!) our team was serving an average of 20 people per minute.

See news coverage of the distribution here: <https://bit.ly/2Ujx9u7>

As we acknowledge the growing need in our community and our efforts to meet it, we are mindful of the need of many homebound individuals who can't travel for the drive through distribution. We have received calls from close to 300 individuals - many of whom are seniors - needing home delivery. Starting today, the National Guard will help us deliver meals to clients who have no other options. We continue to remind our community that food assistance help is just a phone call away. Call the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's Help Center at 216.738.2067 for all questions regarding food assistance and to find the nearest pantry to where you live.

We continue to keep track of our partner agencies and thus far, 149 have closed. However, many agencies who are open are in need of volunteer help so we are working to notify many of our volunteers of these opportunities to provide an extra set of hands.

Our HR team reminds us daily of our duty to keep and stay safe. We are grateful for their guidance as we know that as a team, we must adhere to guidelines from our Ohio Health Department and the CDC. Because we are an essential provider, the Food Bank can remain open; but, we are still required to follow the Governor's safety guidelines. This is one time that being a rule follower is "best practice."

We are continuing to fundraise to cover our rapidly rising costs and we are grateful to our community for continuing to be generous. We're reminded of the old adage - "it's a marathon, not a sprint" and that is so

For more updates on the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's response to COVID-19, please visit
www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give-help/donate-food-funds/covid19

true right now. We must continue to provide for our regular operations -- almost 1,000,000 pounds of food in a busy week. People are scared and we want to make sure we can meet the need to the best of our ability while keeping the safety of our team at the forefront. www.Greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give

As we watch the news, it sometimes is hard to listen. However, each day for the GCFB team is another opportunity to step up and be of service to our hometown - we live here and we know that working together, we'll get through this. We'll be stronger. I noticed today that the robins are out in the yard - I do believe they are the first sign of spring. So, think ahead as buds begin to form - it will be a new season with all that spring brings.