

Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
Week of May 26– May 29, 2020: Week in Review

That old saying, “If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it” certainly rang true for this past week. A four day workweek flew by and we managed to get done what we’d do in a five day week and then some! We’ve seen lots of changes this week and not just within the Food Bank – our community is beginning to open slowly under the guidance of the Governor and Dr. Acton. Their advice to all of us – social distance and wear a mask. We try to affirm that here at the Food Bank each day. So, with all that in mind, let’s take a look at this past week!

We’re out of room – yes, we’ve had to move product off site. Thanks to our good friends and supporters at Northern Haserot, we took them up on their offer of storing some of our frozen product on their site. In addition, we have 4 trailers on our site that are primarily being used for storage although one of them is also used to transport emergency boxes and other product on Thursdays to the Muni Lot. If you walk into our warehouse, you are going to see lots and lots of product to fill emergency boxes and provide food for our partner agencies.

This past Thursday’s distribution at the Muni Lot served over 1,700 households and over 5,100 people. Thanks once again to members of the National Guard as well as to 13 volunteers who helped direct traffic and check in folks. We were excited to welcome this hardy group of volunteers who braved rain to make sure our community received great food. Next week, we’ll also be needing volunteers to help and Matt, our Volunteer Experience Manager has begun recruiting. We are excited that this coming Thursday, we’ll be doing a trial run bringing back a group of 10 volunteers to work a four shift in Repack. We want to integrate volunteers back into our operations in a safe manner and so, this seasoned group will help us to ensure that our practices for doing so are easy to follow and well communicated. We’ll have a virtual orientation as well as procedures for check-in and social distancing. Stay tuned as we are looking forward to bringing back volunteers into our daily lives.

We received great news about the National Guard. On Thursday, the federal government announced that it was extending the Guard’s stay in Ohio and elsewhere across the country until August 15. That is so important to our efforts to help feed our community during this pandemic. We are so very appreciative of the Guard’s help and are thrilled they’ll continue to be with us through most of the summer.

Summer feeding started on Monday, June 1 and we’re prepared to make sure there are enough grab-n-go breakfasts and lunches for our partner sites. In addition, we’ll be using the Outreach truck and our sprinter van to deliver these lunches to at least 20 sites as well as those partner sites. In addition to these summer feeding meals, our kitchen continues to produce and turn out wonderful meals during this post- holiday week: Kids’ bagged lunches totaled 1,137. Agency hot meals came in at 1,211. For Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging senior meals partners, we provided 8,464 frozen meals, 5,152 hot meals and 582 cold and boxed meals.

We have made many new friends during this pandemic and support has been showered upon us from so many sources - long time friends as well as new ones. We are in awe each day of the generosity of our community and want to share one of the most wonderful new relationships we are honored to partner with – the Jain Society of Greater Cleveland. The Jain Society is an Indian religious society and one of their guiding principles is community outreach for the greater good of the world. We had the honor of visiting their centre where we learned more about their community and religion. They presented us with a check for \$71,104 to be used for our COVID-19 response efforts and in particular, to purchase grains and other vegetarian foods. We had a wonderful visit and are humbled that they not only made this wonderful gift but also want to become more involved with us in terms of volunteering and learning more about our mission once this pandemic eases.

Isaiah, one of our wonderful Outreach staff members, received the warmest e-mail from someone he helped to receive a home delivery of food. Not only did he help provide nourishing food but she also noted that he listened to her fears and helped her through her despair. Her e-mail read in part -- *“You heard my desperation and you helped. Isaiah, it is because of you that today I received a delivery of food via the National Guard. I was even blessed with a sampling of fresh vegetables. It has been months since I have had anything fresh. Young man I greatly appreciate you.”*

Can the week end any better than that?

“What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?” Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Mary LaVigne Butler, VP of External Affairs

