



Network News

SPRING 2020



FAMILIES NEED YOUR HELP IN THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

We hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy during the COVID-19 crisis. We have never been more grateful for your kindness and generosity. You have stepped up your giving and inspired and fueled us to fulfill our core commitment to the community. This newsletter will provide you with a snapshot of what your donations are doing to deliver food, love and hope to our neighbors.

Supporters Quickly Respond to Crisis

The Food Group swiftly implemented new health and safety guidelines for preparing and distributing free and low-cost foods throughout the community during the COVID-19 emergency. We quickly designed new ways to serve those who most need our help and collaborated with our partners and public health experts to ensure our programs are viable and effective.

Food shelf and meal program partners. With increased support from our donors, we delivered more than **1.8 million pounds** of food to our food shelf and meal program partners from our warehouse between March 1 and mid-April. Stuart Iseminger, food shelf manager at NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center, said, "The Food Group has been a rock during this challenging time. I was overjoyed today when their truck pulled in unannounced with milk and fresh produce!"

Twin Cities Mobile Market recently merged with The Food Group. TCMM is delivering free groceries in bags of twenty meals. In partnership with host sites, more than **20,000 pounds** of food have been delivered, focusing on low-income senior apartments.

Fare For All created a no-touch, drive-through model in locations that can safely host an event, focusing on our customers outside the metro area. As of mid-April, more than **1,100 households** have been able to purchase meat and produce, and more distributions are happening each week.

Big River Farms rolled out a COVID-19 safety plan and trained the farmer teams on new procedures. Planting and plowing have begun, and **260 fruit and vegetable farm shares** have been sold! The farm staff are planning how the farmers will get their crops to market in the current environment.

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who is contributing with their dollars, time and expertise to fight hunger and strengthen our community during this extraordinary time.

More details about the impact of your support are on p. 3.

Note: Some of the photos in this issue were taken before the CDC recommended wearing masks at all times. Our safety standards continue to develop based on state and federal public health guidance.

Unprecedented Acts of Kindness

A Message from the Executive Director



"Unprecedented!" How often have you used or heard that word in the past few weeks?

These are indeed unprecedented times. The focus has crystalized to one topic: the COVID-19 pandemic. Its impact cannot even be measured as its ripple effect on our lives continues.

Yet also unprecedented is the heroic response I have witnessed in this community of people coming forward to help others in both small and large acts of kindness. I am deeply grateful for the abundance of compassion and generosity happening every day. Here are just a few of those I salute for your extraordinary efforts.

- Folks picking up food at the food shelf for their neighbors who feel unsafe leaving their home.
- Farmers, laborers, drivers, grocers and store clerks—all essential workers in providing our food.
- Volunteers—giving your precious time to make sure others have what they need. I'm deeply grateful every time I see you arriving at our door!
- Donors—you are giving without our even having to ask. What amazing kindness and generosity!
- Our food shelf and meal program partners—stretched more than ever before but somehow finding the dedication and energy to do what needs to be done.
- The person on my block who put food in her Little Free Library to share with neighbors.
- Those who deliver home cooked meals to friends they know are struggling to make ends meet.
- People who share food and conversation over video calls, because even in times of social distancing, food can bring us together.
- Our team at The Food Group—digging deep and working harder than ever before to deliver on our promise of fighting hunger and nourishing our community, even in truly unprecedented times.

As we navigate new daily realities, let's continue to tap into all the positive energy we can summon and keep moving forward together!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sophia".

Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director



YOUR COVID-19 SUPPORT IN ACTION

March 1-April 23

1,519,075

Emergency
Meals
Provided



**108%
INCREASE**

In outgoing
deliveries to
food shelves



**13 NEW
PARTNERS**

Accessing
emergency
food for their
communities



**1,171
HOUSEHOLDS**

served by
drive-through
Fare For All
in rural
communities in
six counties



Fare For All uses a no-touch model
for sales so drivers can stay in their vehicles.



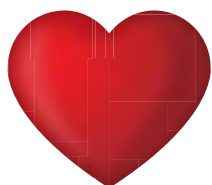
Volunteer teams of up to ten people are filling daily
shifts in the warehouse.



Sample of the emergency food packs volunteers are
assembling.



Volunteers are following new health and safety guidelines
as they prepare emergency meals for delivery.



THANK YOU, DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS
Your support is bringing healthy food to urban,
suburban and rural agencies and community sites.



Six Ways You Can Make a Difference

- **Send a check** payable to The Food Group and note COVID-19 in the memo
- **Make a contribution** at thefoodgroupmn.org/donate
- **Update your estate plan** to include The Food Group. (Check the box on the enclosed reply form to learn more.)
- **Create an online virtual food drive** at GiveMN.org/thefoodgroupmn. Contact Talia Miracle at tmiracle@thefoodgroupmn.org or 763-450-3869 if you need help.
- **Volunteer** in the warehouse preparing food for distribution (in small teams to meet health and safety guidelines)
- **Send a note of encouragement** to include with emergency meals or to thank volunteers (see enclosure)



Volunteers repack bulk food donations into household-size portions.



How Your Donation Feeds People

Every dollar helps!

Local food shelves are experiencing record levels of requests, and the need has not reached its peak. Your support will deliver nutritious, culturally connected foods to those most affected by the virus, the stay home guidelines, and the economic downturn. Your donation provides free emergency meals to families with children, adults and seniors.

With the Match **100** (See insert for details)
Your \$25 donation provides ~~50~~ meals

As a food bank, we can stretch your dollars to maximize your impact with our bulk purchasing power. Your gifts provide our network of food shelf partners with exactly what they need to best serve their diverse communities.

Provide hope and nourishment to those most vulnerable

You can truly make a difference. Your support will equip everyone with the nutrition they need to remain healthy when we all need it most!



**THANK YOU, CORPORATE
AND FOUNDATION PARTNERS!**

BANK OF AMERICA 

