CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOODS PROVIDE COMFORT AND HEALTH

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Nicole is a personal care assistant, caring for frail seniors and adults with autism, living paycheck to paycheck. Nicole says COVID-19 has made it harder to feed herself and her son. “It definitely has gotten a lot more difficult. The rising prices have really taken a toll.”

Nicole found help at one of our partner food shelves, Department of Indian Work (DIW), a program of Interfaith Action, that partners with American Indian families to revitalize culture, education and wellness.

The Food Group hosted a special packing event to celebrate long-time partner FINNEGAN’s 20th Birthday! Volunteers helped pack 4,224 lbs of food and bagged 500 lbs of black beans, enough to feed 330 people! Cheers to 20 years! Finnegans donates their Minnesota sales profits to The Food Group.

Kelly Miller, DIW director, displays Red Lake Nation Wild Rice

Nicole and her son appreciate the Culturally Connected Food from The Food Group

IN THE NEWS

Here is a sampling of recent media coverage of our work. For links to the complete articles and a full archive of coverage, go to thefoodgroupmn.org/news/pressmedia.

September 5, Pioneer Press: Nutritious and culturally specific in a time of need
September 11, Star Tribune: The Food Group responds to fresh demand
September 11, CCX Media: The Food Group in New Hope Hosts All-Day Packing Event on Saturday
September 23, Sun Post: Sign me up to serve!

Donations support free food distributions

As part of your partnership and response during these difficult times, your contributions supplied food to more than 4500 households through 29 emergency food distributions in neighborhoods affected by both the reduced access to food following the killing of George Floyd and the ongoing economic impact of the COVID-19 health crisis. We were invited by community-based organizations to co-host distributions at eleven new sites. Families received 20 pounds or more of emergency food at each distribution, including culturally connected food items for East African, Southeast Asian and Latinx meals. These were new free food distributions made possible by new partnerships, in addition to the free food we distribute through our network of food shelf and meal program partners throughout the year, all supported by your donations.

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Your generous donations have provided 5,301,230 emergency meals since March. Thank you!
As I mark my first anniversary as Executive Director, I feel honored and humbled to serve in this role. These past twelve months have brought a global health crisis, racial unrest, and higher rates of hunger in the Twin Cities than we’ve seen in many years. But they have also brought unparalleled support from you, our donors, community partners and volunteers.

I hear incredible stories every day about the impact of the work you are allowing us to do in the community. From a pop-up food distribution in South Minneapolis to a drive through Fare For All site in Red Wing, you are ensuring that our neighbors have access to the healthy, culturally relevant food they need now more than ever.

There were times this year when it seemed impossible to keep up with the increasing community demand. We have almost doubled the amount of food coming in and out of our warehouse these past several months. But your support and partnership has kept pace with this growing demand and for that, I am beyond grateful.

Volunteers pack emergency food kits
In response to this heightened time of need, The Food Group hosted a food packing event with volunteer teams safely spaced and masked! Thank you to our volunteers and donors for being part of the solution and making sure our neighbors have the good food they need. We could not have done this without your support!

WHAT’S IN THE BOX?

- **The Latinx-inspired box:**
  - Tuna
  - Rice
  - Pinto Beans
  - Mixed veggies
  - Mixed Fruit
  - Hominy
  - Corn
  - Black Beans
  - Vegetable Oil
  - Mandarin Oranges
  - Tomato Sauce
  - Masa Flour

- **The East African-inspired box:**
  - Applesauce
  - Mandarin Oranges
  - Macaroni
  - Mixed Veggies
  - Milk
  - Pasta Sauce
  - Tuna
  - Rice
  - Black Eyed Peas
  - Green Beans
  - Garbanzo Beans
  - Tomato Sauce
  - Mackerel Fillets

- **The Southeast Asian-inspired box:**
  - Bamboo Shoot
  - Chicken
  - Peaches
  - Vegetable Oil
  - Quail Eggs
  - Jasmine rice
  - Bean Thread Noodles
  - Water Chestnuts

Distributed 12,834 culturally relevant boxes (July-Sept) with 11 pounds of nutritionally balanced food per box

**CARES Act includes giving incentive for 2020**
Signed into law on March 27, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act includes provisions to encourage charitable contributions of cash. It allows taxpayers who do not itemize their returns to receive a tax deduction of up to $300 for cash donations to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations during calendar year 2020. Taxpayers who itemize returns may now deduct up to 100% of their 2020 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). The Food Group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Please consult your tax advisor with questions.

**Year-end charitable giving through your IRA: Two Options**
If you meet certain guidelines, you may use your IRA to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to The Food Group. QCDs can be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the year.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 (PPA) permitted individuals to roll over up to $100,000 from an individual retirement account (IRA) directly to a qualifying charity without recognizing the assets transferred to the qualifying charity as income. On December 18, 2015 the President signed the PATH Act making this special provision permanent. (source: Council on Foundations www.cof.org)
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And now we plan for what is to come. And the truth is, that is incredibly hard to predict. We know that food needs are only rising, while federal and state support for low-income families is decreasing. We know that winter is coming, and in Minnesota that means higher utility prices and the need for warm clothing. We know that many families are coping with distance learning, reducing the amount of school meals children can access. Even amid this uncertainty, I remain optimistic. Feeding our community is something we know how to do. And with your help, we will continue to rise to meet the challenges ahead.

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With gratitude,
Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director

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Nicole found help at one of our partner food shelves, Department of Indian Work (DIW), a program of Interfaith Action, that partners with American Indian families to revitalize culture, education and wellness. Nicole especially appreciates the wild rice that DIW food shelf gets through The Food Group. “It’s that time of year to make chicken wild rice soup. I just love eating it, it’s delicious! It helps keep me grounded and connected, instead of feeling so separated from everything else that’s going on in the world. It helps to find that unity and support,” Nicole says. The wild rice The Food Group sourced is grown in Minnesota by the Red Lake Nation, so offering it to our partners also supports local indigenous food producers. Where we invest your donations matters and reflects our values.

Your contributions allow us to go the extra mile to access foods that are key ingredients of a healthier, familiar diet for families accessing food shelves. Thank you!