

## CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOODS PROVIDE COMFORT AND HEALTH



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



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

“Comfort food” is different for everyone, but it often is food connected with one’s cultural identity. For example, pasta might be comfort food for one person, while tortillas are comfort food for another. It is important to have access to familiar foods for better health and well-being, especially during stressful times. Your financial support provides culturally connected “comfort food” to allow our partners to better serve the needs of their guests and make all community members know that they are seen.

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.

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!**

(See page 3 for more detail of box content.)

**Your generous donations have provided**

**5,301,230**

**emergency meals since March. Thank you!**

# Rising to meet the challenge!

*A message from the Executive Director*



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.



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.**

With gratitude,

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

Sophia Lenarz-Coy  
Executive Director



Take a break from your day to connect with The Food Group's Executive Director, Sophia Lenarz-Coy. She will be sharing a behind-the-scenes look at our operations and answering any questions you may have! RSVP to [info@thefoodgroupmn.org](mailto:info@thefoodgroupmn.org) and we will send you a link.

## 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](http://www.cof.org))



New Hope Mayor Kathi Hemken (second from right) volunteers at the emergency food packing event.

### 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!

## Essential Food Packing Event

September 12, 2020



**100**  
volunteers



**4,200**  
boxes of essential  
food items



**63,000**  
pounds of food



**52,500**  
meals

### WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

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

- Bamboo Shoot • Chicken • Peaches
- Vegetable Oil • Quail Eggs • Jasmine rice
- Bean Thread Noodles • Water Chestnuts

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



**give** TO THE **MAX**  
Nov. 19, 2020

Help us make Give to the Max Day 2020 our best year ever! Join thousands of Minnesotans in contributing to the causes of your choice during the 24-hour day of giving. Your gift of any amount can help fight hunger and nourish community in this great time of need! You can even schedule your gifts beginning on November 1 to count toward Give to the Max. [Donate at givemn.org/thefoodgroupmn](https://givemn.org/thefoodgroupmn)

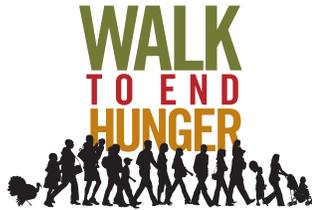
## Calendar of Events

### Walk to End Hunger Goes Virtual

Thursday, Nov. 26, 7-10 a.m.

Virtual Event

Please join us for the Virtual Walk To End Hunger, where you can walk (from home), participate virtually, or donate. This year it's more important than ever to raise money to fight hunger in Minnesota. Participating in the Walk To End Hunger is fun, easy and it feels great! The morning will be filled with entertainment, fun activities for the entire family, prizes and much more! Learn more and donate [www.walktoendhunger.org](http://www.walktoendhunger.org).



## Sponsor Spotlight:



Blandin Foundation™  
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA



FINNEGANS®  
BREW CO.



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.



### 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.

## 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](http://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!**