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HARVEST NEWS

We are dedicated to relieving hunger in metro Detroit and preventing nutritious food waste.



RESPONDING TO COVID-19 AT FORGOTTEN HARVEST

One year later, food rescue organizations are truly seen as first responders.

Since the start of the pandemic in southeast Michigan, Forgotten Harvest has served more than 700,000 children, families, and individuals in need of emergency food. The amount of food distributed is an astonishing 38.76 million pounds between March and December of last year.

Here's a chronological overview of how we responded — and what to expect in the coming months.

COVID-19 HIT SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties are some of the hardest hit in the nation. Early on, Michigan had the 8th highest rate of confirmed cases.



PRODUCTION SHIFTED FROM PREPPING BULK ITEMS TO PREPACKING FOOD BOXES

Forgotten Harvest quickly shifted its focus from repacking bulk items to building food boxes with consumer-ready product. Because our Oak Park facility was too small to accommodate food box production with adequate social distancing, we relocated production operations to a 100,000 square-foot facility in Royal Oak that allows for socially-distanced volunteer work.



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LETTER FROM KIRK



Because of the coronavirus pandemic, many people lost their jobs. Students were moved to online learning and lost access to school meals. Seniors with fixed incomes were unable to attend food pantries. Individuals and families were stuck at home with positive COVID-19 cases —

all creating a wave of emergency food need we had never before experienced.

The silver lining of this crisis is that Forgotten Harvest was able to respond quickly to urgent community needs. We adapted to meet the needs of the community because:

- We had already done the hard work of understanding who we are as an organization and how important we are to the community.
- We took seriously our role as first responders with the infrastructure in place to quickly pivot so that children, families and seniors didn't have to go hungry.

- We coordinated with community partners — Gleaners, Detroit Institute of Arts, TCF Center, Wayne County Community College, DTE Energy and so many others — to address the seriousness of the situation, not in a silo but holistically as a community.

Behind this work, including the rigorous protocols put in place to keep our staff and those we serve safe, was a great sense of urgency that fueled our ability to get up every day to do the job of getting food to an extraordinary number of people in need.

With gratitude, I thank our staff, community partners, food donors and dedicated volunteers who have all tirelessly worked to meet our mission to relieve hunger and reduce waste.

Kirk Mayes
CEO, Forgotten Harvest



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OAK PARK SUPER SITE

Distributing the equivalent of 30,000 meals a week to Oakland and Wayne households

When many long-standing food pantries closed due to the pandemic, Forgotten Harvest had to determine how to continue serving the community with food resources. And it needed a way to do that with zero contact to protect the safety of clients, volunteers and staff members.

In response to the food pantry-closure crisis, Forgotten Harvest opened 17 Super Sites within two months. One of those sites is located at the Oak Park City Recreation Center on Oak Park Boulevard. It opened on April 8, 2020, and is still operating at overflow capacity into 2021.

Forgotten Harvest is grateful for the collaboration with the City of Oak Park.

The Oak Park Super Site welcomes individuals and families every Wednesday

from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. using a no-touch, drive-thru model and the help of volunteers. Clients remain in their cars and provide a few pieces of information, such as name, address, and USDA-required demographic information. The number of household members determines each family's food allocation. Food is loaded into the trunks of the vehicles.

Although it primarily serves Oak Park families, we draw significant numbers from Detroit and Southfield too. It has helped families from more than 30 different cities in southeast Michigan. The pantry distributes 38,000 pounds of food to 700 families each week.

For information on volunteering, please visit forgottenharvest.org/volunteer and see page 3 for details on volunteering during a pandemic.



VOLUNTEERING DURING A PANDEMIC



While volunteers are needed more than ever, volunteering at Forgotten Harvest has changed significantly during the pandemic.

First, many corporate groups, school groups and other groups who used to volunteer are no longer able to do so; so we are now relying more on individual volunteers.

Second, new safety measures now include wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, and cleaning work areas frequently and thoroughly, including the use of a professional cleaning service. “We want people to feel comfortable that we are doing what we’re supposed to do to help fight this virus, so they can still come in and volunteer,” says Nicole Peeples, volunteer manager.

Third, volunteers no longer operate out of the Oak Park facility on Greenfield Road, but in a much larger rented warehouse space in Royal Oak that can safely accommodate up to 30 volunteers while maintaining safe distancing. People are also needed to assist at Super Sites that Forgotten Harvest still operates, including those in Oak Park, Romulus, Romeo and Warren.

WHEN VOLUNTEER NEEDS ARE GREATEST

January, February and March typically see a drop in volunteer numbers. We also expect shortages at our drive-thru Super Sites because of the cold weather. More than 1,200 volunteers are needed each month to meet the demand for emergency food.

OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER

Royal Oak Warehouse Repack - Volunteers are needed to pack emergency food boxes that will be distributed throughout Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. Opportunities are typically offered Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Pop-up Drive-thru Super Sites - Volunteers are needed to help with the distribution of emergency food boxes throughout Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties (dates and times are posted on the website). This is an outside volunteer opportunity. Volunteers help collect information, direct traffic, and place boxes and groceries into trunks.

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

Signing up to volunteer online is easy at forgottenharvest.galaxydigital.com/need. Groups of five or more should directly contact Nicole Peeples at npeeples@forgottenharvest.org.

FORGOTTEN HARVEST GIVES HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

For the 2020 holiday season Forgotten Harvest, in partnership with the Kroger Co. of Michigan, delivered 6,000 meals to those in need throughout our community. Hope for the Holidays provided food relief to the one-in-six metro Detroiters facing food insecurity by providing special holiday themed food items like turkey and pork loin, fresh items like milk, cheese and frozen green beans, and shelf stable items like stuffing mix, pasta and cake mix, along with recipes utilizing these ingredients. These holiday meal kits were built by dedicated volunteers and distributed at six of Forgotten Harvest’s partner agencies.

“We are proud to join forces with Forgotten Harvest and provide healthier food options to our communities in need,” said Rachel Hurst, Corporate Affairs Manager The Kroger Co. of Michigan “This is a great event that shows the true meaning of the holidays — to give.”





MOBILE PANTRIES CHANGED TO A DRIVE-THRU MODEL

Forgotten Harvest mobile food pantries converted from people standing in line, selecting products, and putting them into a satchel, wagon or grocery cart to a drive-thru system where volunteers load food into car trunks. The new model limits the interaction between volunteers and the people receiving food to avoid exposure risks to either party.



SUPER SITES LAUNCHED TO MEET NEED

As small brick-and-mortar pantries closed due to safety concerns and our volunteer numbers shrank, Forgotten Harvest leaders turned to the region's food insecurity maps to pinpoint communities that would be hardest hit. Using that information, 17 Super Sites were established in locations that stretched across southeast Michigan — from Romulus to Romeo, New Haven to Orion Township, Detroit to Holly.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT

Demand is up – Not surprisingly, the economic fallout from COVID-19 means we're serving more people in need of food. For example, in September of 2019, we served 42,000 people; in September of 2020, 76,000 people were served. Across the board on average, distribution is up around 40%, and it has increased monthly since the coronavirus hit.

School meal gap is significant – Forgotten Harvest responded to the unexpected closure of schools in March by giving away five lunches for each child per household when families showed up at drive-thru pantries during the summer.

Forgotten Harvest on the Go – We are tracking and targeting high-need areas with drive-thru mobile pantries; we will continue to be flexible to reach the most impacted areas of southeast Michigan.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

Everything is free of charge – Forgotten Harvest food is always distributed free of charge.

The need for volunteers – Volunteers are needed at mobile distribution sites and in the Royal Oak packing warehouse. Our senior and corporate volunteer force reduced their participation, leaving an even more significant need for volunteers.

Super Site distributions continue – Municipalities, faith-based organizations and other organizations have taken over the operation of 13 of the original 17 sites; Forgotten Harvest is managing four, with new ones planned to meet emerging needs, such as one in Brightmoor, an impoverished neighborhood in northwest Detroit.



Dedicated staff – The entire Forgotten Harvest team, including drivers and warehouse workers, have proven their dedication time and time again to meet the need for emergency food in our community.

WHAT WE EXPECT IN 2021

Cold-weather challenges – Forgotten Harvest is investing in tents and heaters to accommodate more outdoor food distributions.

Virtual schooling means actual income loss – Many people who are in need of food are not working in order to stay home during the day with their kids. "Imagine the choice of either facing a judge because of truancy issues because your kids aren't in school or working," says Krista Poole, client services manager.

More community partnerships – Work of this magnitude, responding to an extreme health and economic crisis, is not done in a silo. From municipalities, businesses, cultural institutions and faith-based organizations that have offered parking lots, funding and referrals, Forgotten Harvest's partners have been key to expanding the emergency food network quickly and efficiently.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

VOLUNTEER

Opportunities abound at our Royal Oak Warehouse and at Super Sites across southeast Michigan. Find volunteer options at forgottenharvest.org/volunteer.

DONATE

Every \$25 donated provides \$175 worth of groceries for area families in need. Donate easily on our website at forgottenharvest.org, or mail a check to Forgotten Harvest, 21800 Greenfield Road, Oak Park, MI 48237

HELP A NEIGHBOR

Individual-to-individual, neighbor-to-neighbor, friend-to-friend, it's crucial that we all listen to and respond to those who need help.

DONOR HIGHLIGHT

Since our founding, Forgotten Harvest has prided itself on being an organization for the community and by the community. Lisa of New Boston, Mich. is a prime example of that statement in action. A nine-year supporter of Forgotten Harvest, Lisa, her husband, and their three children kept their focus on neighbors in need, even when faced with their own unexpected adversities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"My husband worked for a travel and hospitality company that was and still is affected by COVID-19," Lisa said. "He was put on furlough in the spring and was receiving unemployment and COVID-19 relief money."

As the pandemic stretched through the summer months, it became apparent that work in the travel industry would not be returning at full capacity in the near future. Luckily, Lisa's husband was able to find a new job in early fall. Shortly afterwards, Lisa was organizing bills when she noticed a retroactive relief payment had come in from her husband's time off from work. With her family's important payments



already taken care of by their new income, Lisa and her family decided to donate the extra money to those in need.

"This year, it seemed like food was what people needed most in our community," she said. "Seeing so many people in food bank lines for the first time, that's really what struck me. Why put it in the bank if it can go to them instead?"

Lisa was especially drawn to Forgotten Harvest's mission of relieving hunger and preventing nutritious food waste. With our food rescue program, a \$1 donation provides \$7 worth of groceries to people in need. This generous gift from Lisa and her family provided a meaningful impact to those we serve.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

The following letter was sent to Forgotten Harvest in thanks for what we do in the community:

To Forgotten Harvest Staff and Volunteers,

I just wanted to send a sincere thank you and show my gratitude and appreciation for the food pantry program you offer the community. I am a social work student, and I have been volunteering to pick up and deliver food to those at risk, with medical needs, the elderly, etc.

Every week your dedicated volunteers eagerly process my requests for the many families I deliver to. Some days it may be only five or six but other days my list may include up to 18 individual families. No matter the number of families I am there for that day, your staff and volunteers always go above and beyond to make sure all family needs are being supported and met. The compassion, devotion and empathy of your volunteers in any weather speaks highly to the organization and the various diverse volunteers that you employ.

Just to mention a few of the many grateful reactions I see each week ...

"I remember when it used to be like this and people took care of each other." – 94 year old

"Oh look, how wonderful! It is like Christmas every week!" – 85 year old

"This is such a blessing to my family. With all that is going on in the world, this is one stress I do not have to face. Thank you!"
– 45 year old, immune-compromised



Of course, each and every individual is incredibly grateful and accepts each weekly gift with such humility and gratitude. I am the one who gets to see the joy, excitement, tears and overall sigh of relief that each new distribution brings to these families. The families do not consider these "boxes" as one woman says, these are "love gifts, sent from the hearts of many." So, I wanted to thank you for your hard work and dedication to the community and the selfless work you do as volunteers and of course the staff.

May God bless you!
Susan M.

DOUBLE THE AMOUNT OF YOUR CHARITABLE DONATION

Companies like JPMorgan Chase, American Express, Apple, DTE and others offer matching donations for the charitable gifts made by their employees. Some companies like GM and 3M even offer a charitable gift to match employee volunteer hours. Some of these opportunities require that you go into a website or file special forms to document your gift, and you may not even know they are available!

According to Match Pro, only 7% of donors at companies with matching gift programs actually submit a match request. Although the submission process varies within each company, the standard process is that the employee makes a gift and submits a matching gift request to their employer. The employer verifies that the nonprofit meets the corporate requirements, and confirms that the gift was made. A check is then issued to the charity.

If you made a gift recently, it might be time to check with your company today to see if your donation might be matched by their dollars!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Forgotten Harvest's fundraising events are integral in raising much-needed funds. Although our events have looked different than normal in the past year to ensure everyone's safety, we hope you'll join us in supporting these signature events! Please visit the "Events" page on our website for the most up-to-date information on the following:

Comedy Night with Jay Leno

THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2021

On Track to End Hunger

SATURDAY, JULY 31, 2021

Women's Harvest Lunch

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2021



OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

Is your company, business, group of friends, or family looking to support Forgotten Harvest? Consider a DIY Fundraiser! A DIY Fundraiser is an opportunity for you to use your creativity to raise money for Forgotten Harvest. The opportunities are endless — host a virtual trivia night, a virtual 5K walk or run, "round up at the register" with your business' sales, or create a peer-to-peer fundraiser. We also have the tools to get your own unique donation page started! Contact Laura at lbarton@forgottenharvest.org for more information.



FEATURED FUNDRAISER:

A special thank you to Doug Busch and Busch's Fresh Food Market. Their "Season of Sharing" food drive raised over \$375,000 in monetary and food donations from the community and their vendor partners to help those in need during the holidays. The generous donations support Forgotten Harvest's mission to relieve hunger and prevent nutritious food waste.



The community had several ways to get involved during the food drive, including purchasing a pre-made "Ready to Go" donation bag with 16 items for a family in need, making a donation at a Busch's checkout register, purchasing gift cards and donating bottle return slips.