



# Chattanooga Community Kitchen

Help from the Heart of the City

## 2021 Winter Newsletter



### Up for the Challenge

We can all relate to the challenges that 2020 brought with cancellations, social distancing and adjustments made to our daily lives. While many things changed last year around the Community Kitchen, the dedication of staff members and volunteers remained the same as we made necessary adjustments to serve others in a safe manner. Take a look back with us to see how your support helped us continue to meet basic needs while also offering a clear path to self-sufficiency for the people we serve. Thank you for your involvement!



### Fast Day Success

We are grateful to you and our chairs Sam and Tina Currin for a successful 30th Annual Fast Day Campaign. Your support and their leadership helped us exceed our \$750,000.00 goal, giving us a solid start to the new year.

## Shelter-at-Home

Remember the shelter-at-home orders from early in the pandemic? What do you do when your home is a tent with no adequate means for food? We bring food to you! Right away, we established an outreach program to deliver hot meals to area campsites each day.



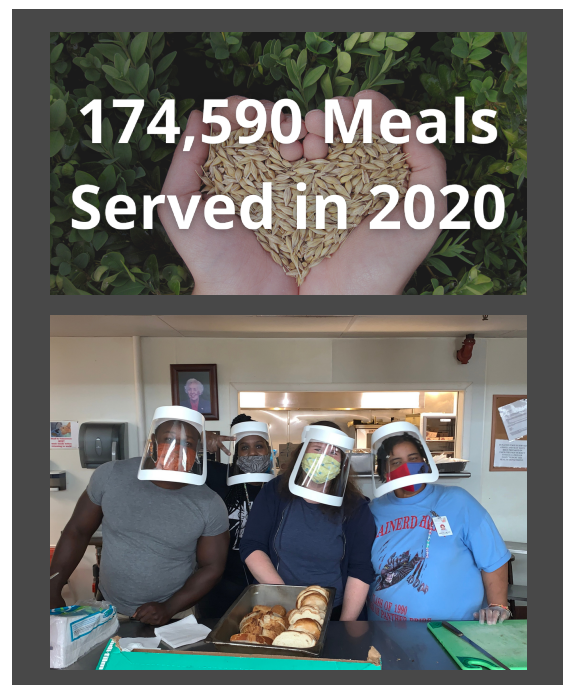
## Bake-at-Home

Volunteers who had concerns about serving at the Kitchen found ways to help from home. Many families and groups continued to provide much needed desserts, sandwiches and care kits to be used in meals, for outreach efforts and as tools of encouragement for those in need.

## NEVER MISSED A DAY

Although we transitioned to carryout meals in March 2020, by fall we reopened the dining room with limited seating. Many folks prefer the convenience, and carryout meals remained an option.

Filling gaps where volunteers once served has been a challenge. At the onset of the pandemic, case managers and other staff members stepped up to serve meals and prepare the daily meals that we delivered to area locations. Fortunately, some volunteers have rejoined us in the kitchen while others continue to support by providing catered meals and other needs. Interested in volunteering? We could use you! Sign up at [homelesschattanooga.org](http://homelesschattanooga.org) today!



FOLLOW @CHATTCOMMUNITYKITCHEN ON INSTAGRAM

# New Outreach Opportunities



While the pandemic changed how we do business, how we responded made a big difference.

Immediately, we increased our outreach efforts, delivering meals to area encampments and working to keep people from congregating in enclosed spaces however we could. Natalie Parks, one of our case managers, reflects, "COVID took away a lot of the distractions...it was also an eye opener to a lot of the problems that have already been epidemics in our society."

While some volunteers were uncomfortable being onsite, others stepped up to assist in preparing items that have proven helpful to those living in camps and other underserved areas. We're grateful to the groups that have been very helpful in organizing our food pantry and creating outreach food boxes.



**Over 600 individuals experience homelessness each day in the Chattanooga area.**

"LIKE" CHATTANOOGA COMMUNITY KITCHEN ON FACEBOOK

# Socially Distant Shelters in a Pandemic

As you might imagine, providing emergency shelter in a safe, socially distant manner during a public health crisis can be a challenge. But thanks to careful planning, strong partnerships and your support, we have been able to provide a safe environment not only from sickness but also from life on the street.

Fortunately, last year's warming shelter concluded in early March before the pandemic hit. But, we had to make critical decisions in order to offer a safe season this year. In the end, we returned to the root of the shelter with weather conditions being the major factor determining the opening of shelter. As of February 2, the warming shelter, a partnership with the Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition, has been open 34 nights with an average of approximately 30 individuals each night.

Additional safety measures include daily rapid COVID tests. Those testing positive or known to be contacts of a positive individual are diverted to quarantine or isolation as needed. We appreciate our partners as we work to provide safe shelter options and inform the community about nightly openings.

On top of the cold weather warming shelter, our Saint Catherine's Shelter for Women, Saint Matthew's Shelter for Men and Maclellan Shelter for Families all remain in operation.

**115 Families  
Stayed in our  
Maclellan  
Shelter for  
Families in 2020**



**Top:** The new look of Winter Warming Shelter. **Left:** Londyn, a Bright School 5th Grader, collected over 2,000 laundry pods for our family shelter. **Right:** St. Catherine's Women's Shelter provides separate living spaces, proving helpful during a pandemic.

**SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER AT  
HOMELESSCHATTANOOGA.ORG**

# Unique Challenges for Clothing Program



**Top:** Unable to do their annual health fair, Chattanooga State Nurses collected hundreds of pairs of socks, underwear and hygiene items.

**Bottom:** Employee Anne Rudd assists with clothing needs during the initial COVID lockdown.

In 2020, our clothing program provided over 13,000 changes of clothing to folks in need at no cost to those people. We managed to continue operating even during the lockdown, ensuring that people had the clothing they needed! But, how? Much like the growing popularity of having others shop for your groceries, our case managers and other staff members stepped up to shop for the people coming to us for clothing.

As people would wait at the entry, staff would search the racks to fill the request. Fortunately, as restrictions eased a bit, we were able to open for a limited number of individuals to shop on their own.

Thank you for your support of the clothing program. Through generous public support, donations remained strong in 2020 and ensured that critical needs were met.

## Did you know?

Our clothing program gives away over \$300,000 in goods each year.

Shout out to Al Collins!  
Al is our Warehouse Manager who oversees donations but is also often our "go-to guy" in food services, frequently coming in early to open the kitchen for breakfast.  
Thank you, Al!



WE ACCEPT DONATIONS DAILY FROM  
7:00 AM TO 5:00 PM

# A Note from Our CEO

Mid-morning, Sunday, December 27, 2020, I felt the vibration of my phone in my pocket. As I pulled it out, the name of one of our staff members danced across the screen.

We are open every day, 24/7 in some programs, so a weekend call is not unusual. But, somehow, I immediately knew that this wasn't going to be the usual call.

Upon answering, I heard the words: "I received the results a few minutes ago. I tested positive for COVID-19."

After getting an update and ensuring the employee was okay, I paused for a few moments to process those words and consider the impact: how we'd now need to perform contact tracing, how many others might be affected, what it could mean for operations.

And then I realized just how blessed we had been.

In March, we set about making changes to ensure that our operations could continue throughout the pandemic. For us, closing was never an option. The folks we serve rely upon the Kitchen for food, for clothing, for shelter, for housing. They do not have other options in many cases. Our mission and the urgency of need converge to make our services essential to these people.

So, we made changes to consider the safety of our employees, our volunteers and our guests. We implemented PPE requirements, temperature screenings and sanitization procedures; we altered programming to limit potential contact opportunities; we even built barriers and hung plastic to provide isolation in certain areas and to provide protection for employees.

And each day, we continued providing food, clothing and shelter while also supporting participants through case management and housing.

Somehow, with nearly 50 employees, hundreds of volunteers and literally thousands of people passing through our doors, we made it almost the entire year without a single staff member suffering the virus.

We can't take credit for that protection – it most certainly comes from somewhere else. And, while other employees have since been impacted and tested positive, with your support and through faithful volunteers, dedicated employees and generous donors, we continue operating each day, having never missed a meal.

For this, I thank you.



**Jens Christensen**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Officer**



**Chattanooga  
Community Kitchen**

*Thank  
You!*



PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS  
**CHARITIES**

Thank you to Publix Super Markets Charities for funding our meals program in 2020. We appreciate your continued support.

### Altar'd State

Thank you to Altar'd State at Hamilton Place Mall for choosing us as their 4th Quarter Mission Monday partner. Altar'd State stores donate 10% of their net proceeds each Monday to a local charity. Their staff members also volunteered at the Kitchen and had an in-store donation collection.



### SquareUp Foundation

Thank you to the SquareUp Foundation for their recent contribution of over \$10,000. SquareUp operates STIR and State of Confusion locally and partners with charities to aid the hungry, homeless, and disenfranchised. They also provide grants to their team members during times of crisis.

### Moody Radio Food Drive

Thank you for your incredible generosity at the annual WMBW Moody Radio Food Drive; it helps us keep food on the table throughout the year. The 2020 drive in November brought in over 400 frozen turkeys and nearly 17,000 pounds of non-perishable food items. Thank you!





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**Instagram:** [chattcommunitykitchen](https://www.instagram.com/chattcommunitykitchen)

We value your support and regard ourselves as accountable not only to you but also to God for stewardship of the funds you entrust to us. We are audited by a recognized, local independent CPA firm and publish an audited annual financial statement. The Chattanooga Community Kitchen (Chattanooga Church Ministries, Inc.) is a 501(c)3 organization with EIN 62-1151413. Qualified contributions are tax deductible per IRS regulations.

**Thank you for being a partner in our work to change lives!**