



Spring



Chattanooga Community Kitchen

2020



Help from the Heart of the City

The Community Kitchen Wants You!

The COVID-19 Pandemic has certainly changed the world around us dramatically over the past few months. Of all the changes, we miss our regular volunteers the most! Your faithful involvement is needed now more than ever - you make a true difference.

We've got plenty of protective equipment and are hopeful that you're ready to return to work; if so, please sign up online (homelesschattanooga.org) or reach out to our volunteer coordinator today (volunteer@homelesschattanooga.org, 423-756-4222). We look forward to seeing you again soon.



Serving, Adjusting, Caring

The months of March, April and May sure looked a little different this year as the entire country has been on lockdown. Despite the changes in our city, however, we've never been busier. April saw a more than 32% increase in demand over March. And while our services continue, our operations are almost unrecognizable.



One of the most visible changes is how we serve meals. In mid-March, we began serving meals in carryout boxes distributed at the front door. At the same time, we started delivering daily meals to area camps.

Meanwhile, our clothing program closed to all sales and became a give-away only program, just as it was over twenty years ago. The Day Center transitioned into a walk-up only service for individuals to check mail, meet with case management, get supplies for showers and receive other critical items.



Additionally, most of our regular volunteers were unable to serve due to personal health considerations as well as the lockdown. As a result, our dedicated staff members adapted quickly, with case managers working in the kitchen, in clothing, and in targeted outreach activities designed to assist people with no home as they tried to shelter in place.

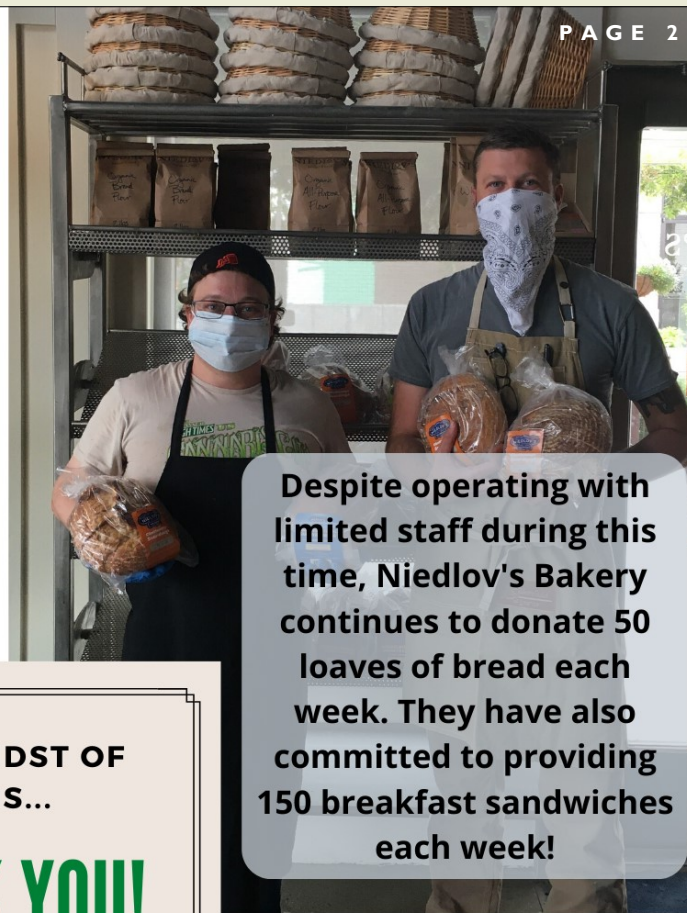


Of course, case management has taken a significant turn for the different as well, with in-office visits reduced and telephone or outreach visits increased. On top of these operational adjustments, we've added programming to better serve those affected by COVID and to house even more people than before. And we could not have done it without you.

Thank you for your meaningful support!



With the addition of 150 sack lunches to our normal 500 or so meals a day, volunteers have been preparing sack lunches at their homes and churches and delivering them to the Kitchen.

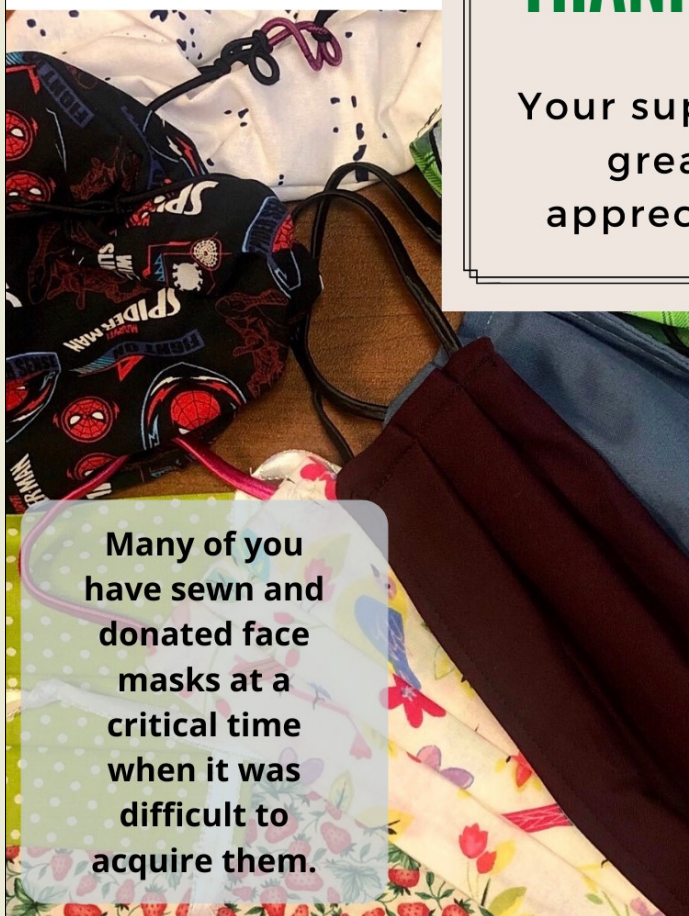


Despite operating with limited staff during this time, Niedlov's Bakery continues to donate 50 loaves of bread each week. They have also committed to providing 150 breakfast sandwiches each week!

IN THE MIDST OF
CRISIS...

THANK YOU!

Your support is
greatly
appreciated.



Many of you have sewn and donated face masks at a critical time when it was difficult to acquire them.



To celebrate protection and good health during this time, Rabbi Craig Lewis encouraged Facebook friends to get active. He donated \$1 for each mile they ran, 5 miles biked, or 1/2 mile walked. "Truth is, I planned on giving and I planned on working out, but I thought the two went well together."

A Young Mother's Story: Street to Safety

A young mother recently arrived at our family shelter with no idea what to do. Just eighteen years old, she and her baby boy had been staying with a friend until the utilities were turned off and the home became unlivable. With no family support and no idea where to turn, she came to the Kitchen for help.

This young woman had never held a job; she'd lived at home while finishing high school, but did not know how to navigate the work force, manage child care, find housing, and make it on her own.

But as she settled in to the Maclellan Shelter for Families, she began to slowly trust our staff. Through life-skills classes and direct case management, she learned to navigate the systems. As she gained confidence, she learned about transportation, about child care, and that housing was a real possibility.

Soon after her arrival, we connected her to other partners such as Exodus Ministries,

which would help her find a job at a new restaurant. Still, she was a bit apprehensive about daycare.

Kathy, our family shelter manager, encouraged her to visit a center that was known for its quality care. After a tour, they agreed to work with her while she worked out the cost.

In the meantime, she was awarded a housing voucher and approved for an apartment!

Before moving in, another partner, Homes and Havens, decorated



and furnished her new home, so she could move in the day she signed her lease!

She has continued working, keeps in touch regularly, and is grateful for the kindness and guidance from our staff.



Off the Charts!

IN APRIL 2020, WE SERVED OVER 18,000 MEALS. THAT IS NEARLY 30% MORE THAN AVERAGE.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO CONTINUE MEETING NEEDS DURING THIS TIME.

A Note From Our CEO



Jens
Christensen,
CEO

Sometimes people talk about established organizations as if they're describing a giant ocean liner – consistent, reliable, important...but difficult to change, pivot, or, especially, turn around.

Ocean liners have incredible momentum. I once watched a ship's captain trying to climb aboard his vessel as the liner cut through ice, unable to stop. The thick ice seemed more liquid than solid as the vessel shaved waves of frozen water to either side of the bow. The captain waited at the edge of the newly cut ice until finally he had but a moment to grab onto a swinging ladder and climb aboard. It seemed the ship, with its momentum, was more in charge than the captain.

But imagine you could harness that incredible momentum, that power, while still responding and adjusting rapidly, with dexterity, with maneuverability.

In early February of this year, fear of an unknown, novel virus began to spread across the country. News of contagion and death brought concern for safety throughout the world. By the second week of March, the illness reached Tennessee, with Hamilton County shortly behind. In the days that followed, much like in the wake of 9/11, life as we knew it began to change dramatically.

Businesses closed. People stayed home. You couldn't buy toilet paper, hand sanitizer, gloves...or even milk in many cases. For us, that meant we suddenly had few daily volunteers; it meant that supplies were incredibly limited; and it meant that our services were more important than ever before: the folks we serve have no ability to shelter in place, and many are at high risk for illness. On top of that, we experienced a tremendous jump in demand as need increased and partner agencies closed due to the pandemic. Times were strange and tough. And then the tornados hit.

The Kitchen has been open since 1982. In many ways, we're the largest provider of services for people experiencing homelessness in the area. Some might consider us an ocean liner in that way. But thanks to our incredible staff, volunteers, donors, supporters, partners and friends, we've been able to navigate these uncharted territories with the strength of a liner but the nimbleness of a ski boat, adjusting on the fly while providing critical services daily.

As you've read in this newsletter, within hours of the community shelter in place orders, we were able to adjust all meals to carry out and delivery, while pumping more meals out of our kitchen than ever before. Our shelters and permanent housing programs remained open. Our partnerships to house even more people deepened. Clothing give-away continued, mail was delivered daily, showers were provided and urgent needs were met – yet, none of it looked the same as just a few days before.

Case managers helped cook and prepare meals. Volunteers made masks for our staff and guests, while also making sack lunches at home for us to distribute. Donors and partners joined in meeting new, emerging needs as a consequence of the changes in our community.

To all who have joined in our mission, thank you. Each of you continues to do whatever you can to ensure that our services are delivered daily and urgent needs are met. I am amazed. I'm honored to be a part of your team. And I'm incredibly grateful.

And while March certainly came in like a lion, we hope June will go out like a lamb.

In Their Own Words...



Victor Bryant
Property Manager

Our employees bring a unique set of experiences that help them relate to our guests and supporters. As a property manager at our Family Housing and Learning Center, Victor Bryant can relate to our work on both personal and professional levels.

involvement with Community Impact, a local initiative that built up low-income neighborhoods through leadership development, networking with local officials, and empowering citizens to improve their communities.

Victor, like many without prior knowledge of the Community Kitchen, thought when he came to work here that we only fed people. "I had no idea of all we did. I thought I was coming here to dish out soup!" In his first role at our donation desk, he discovered that he knew many of our volunteers, donors, and even guests, which gave him an even greater appreciation for the work we do.

"Working here has given me a broader appreciation for people and circumstances. Although my mother worked hard, I still grew up poor so I know what it's like to receive help, but I have also been an entrepreneur and know what it's like to run a business."

"I like it here. It's low stress and not competitive like the corporate world. I also appreciate the compassion and flexibility that is shown to our guests and staff." Victor is also thankful that he feels his ideas are appreciated and how we do so much with so little.

Victor also has prior nonprofit experience through

Thank you, Victor, for all you do to support and help our staff and guests! You are appreciated.

How May I Help?

Many have been curious about how to help during this time. Although we have made significant adjustments, we are still using volunteers who are well and feel comfortable helping. In the coming weeks, we hope to transition operations to allow for even more opportunities to serve while also maintaining a safe, healthy environment. We are still accepting donations (except recyclables) with our usual curbside service. Check out homelesschattanooga.org for more donation and volunteering information.



SignUp
.com

<https://signup.com/go/CLruKbE>

venmo



amazon

Check out our Wish List!

<https://a.co/8QGVXuu>



Chattanooga
Community Kitchen

P.O. Box 11203
727 East 11th Street
Chattanooga, TN 37401



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 is a 501(c)3 organization.
Qualified contributions are tax deductible.

Contact Information:

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www.homelesschattanooga.org

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CommunityKitchen](https://www.facebook.com/CommunityKitchen)**



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



Thank you for making our work possible!