



Manna Food Project responds to COVID-19, opting for a drive-thru pantry and other safety measures

March 17, 2020

HARBOR SPRINGS, MICHIGAN—Northern Michigan has seen an increased need for emergency food assistance, and Manna Food Project stands ready to answer the call. Manna is also committed to do its part in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, so the following preparedness practices have been put into place to help protect the well-being of our staff, volunteers, and people facing hunger during this public health threat.

In an effort to promote “social distancing” during this time, Manna will limit access to and time spent at our facility by:

1. Temporarily closing its client-choice food pantry—opting to distribute pre-assembled food boxes to clients with an assortment of shelf-stable, fresh, and frozen foods.
2. Requiring partner agencies to place pre-orders for all food items—limiting the number of agency representatives allowed during pickups.
3. Canceling all volunteer groups and regularly scheduled volunteer opportunities—relying on staff and select volunteers for ongoing operations.

“This morning, our normal food pantry was replaced with a drive-thru service to minimize person-to-person contact,” says Kim Baker, Manna’s executive director. “It went surprisingly smooth. We served 67 local families, representing 219 individuals. Our plan is to continue this curbside service until the COVID-19 threat subsides.”

Even though schools are closed, Manna continues to distribute “Food 4 Kids” backpacks to preschool programs and schools in Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet counties that still are able to get them into the hands of at-risk students.

“With the recent closure of restaurants and other local businesses, the need for emergency food will certainly increase. So we’re asking our community to continue to donate food and provide financial support to help us meet the need,” says Baker.

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Manna Food Project, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, helps feed the hungry in Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet Counties. Manna is a partner organization of the national Feeding America Food Bank Network and operates a food bank and distribution center, a food rescue program, a food pantry, and the “Food 4 Kids” backpack program. For more information, call 231.347.8852 or visit www.mannafoodproject.org.