



## **Manna Food Project continues distributing food to those in need, increases reliance on local food sources**

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HARBOR SPRINGS, MICHIGAN—Until the COVID-19 situation passes, Manna Food Project will continue its drive-thru food pantry service, while serving the growing needs of its 50-plus partner pantries, community meal sites, and human service agencies in Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet Counties.

“Today, Manna served 82 families, representing 236 individuals,” says Kim Baker, Manna’s executive director. “And those numbers don’t include dozens of emergency food boxes we’ve given out over the past two weeks. Given recent business closures and early seasonal employment layoffs, more and more families are relying on food assistance to keep afloat.”

Though schools remain closed, Manna continues to distribute “Food 4 Kids” backpacks to preschool programs and schools in Northwest Michigan that are still able to get them into the hands of at-risk students. By working closely with superintendents and food service managers, most schools have maintained their regular backpack distribution each week.

To help meet the growing need for food assistance, Manna continues to depend on its national and statewide partnerships—like Feeding America, Meijer, Walmart, Aldi, and others—but also on newly formed relationships with local producers, restaurants, and businesses.

“Just this week, Burnette Foods, Inc., a third-generation family-owned business in Elk Rapids, stepped up to the plate,” says Baker. “Bill Sherman, president of Burnette Foods, arranged for Manna to pick up 8 pallets of canned fruits and vegetables. We will make all of this available throughout our network.”

Other businesses, too, are helping Manna with food donations. Odawa Casino, Stafford’s Hospitality, Starbucks, Jimmy Johns, Bob Evans, and many, many others are donating items.

“And through these challenging times,” says Baker, “we’re doing all we can to safeguard our staff, volunteers, and those in need of food assistance—limiting access to our building and maximizing sanitation. Lower Peninsula Cleaning, owned by a Manna volunteer, now wipes down surfaces, doorknobs, workstations, and restrooms twice each day, and our food pantry is curbside service only.”

With food banks across the country reporting challenges, Manna, too, asks that individuals, businesses, and faith communities continue to donate food and provide their financial support.

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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](http://www.mannafoodproject.org).