



Neighbors Helping Neighbors | Communities Care For Homeless Populations Throughout Coronavirus Outbreak

#Inthistogether

As communities combat the Coronavirus outbreak, HUD is highlighting stories of communities coming together to help their neighbors in need.

Barre, Vermont – The Church of the Good Shepherd is known for serving the homeless in their community. The church usually offers a hot breakfast twice a week, runs a shelter, and works with local partners to help connect individuals facing homelessness to resources. However, COVID-19 interrupted many of the services the church offers, so they worked alongside the state to help provide temporary hotel vouchers for the homeless they serve. The parishioners didn't stop there, they next developed a plan for transitioning the homeless onto a path of self-sufficiency. *"We said, 'Now we've got a month when people will be in hotels,'" Rev. Earl Kooperkamp said. "Can we get people to fill out apartment applications, use the \$1,200 [from the CARES Act] for security deposit, and get people into apartments? If so, we've got the opportunity maybe not to end homelessness completely, but to clear out the Good Samaritan shelter."* The parish is also working to provide long term resources, such as furniture donations and counseling. [Read more from Episcopal News Service](#)



[Photo courtesy Episcopal News Service](#)

Boston, Massachusetts – Connor Schoen, a Harvard University student, started the Breaktime Café to create professional opportunities for young adults experiencing homelessness. After COVID-19 closed the café's kitchen and left a group of young adults who had already been trained without work, Schoen's organization looked for ways to apply their resources in the community. With the help of a partnership, they began producing meals for healthcare workers, local shelters, and others in the community who are food insecure. *"There is a real need among people who live at shelters. There are also community members who tested positive for COVID-19 and can't leave their homes, but also can't prepare meals for themselves,"* he said. *"COVID-19 has disproportionately affected communities of color and low-income Americans, and this motivated me to innovate new strategies of uplifting and empowering these communities."* The Breaktime Café team has been able to serve 15,000 meals, deliver 300 meals a day, and hire 10 young adults at risk of facing homelessness. [Read more from Harvard University](#)



[Photo courtesy Connor Schoen/Harvard University](#)

Atlanta, Georgia – Organizations across the Atlanta Metro Area continue to help residents in need during the coronavirus pandemic. The Atlanta Dream Center, a faith-based nonprofit in the metro area that assists individuals out of sex trafficking and homelessness, is distributing COVID-19 street survival guides with testing locations and preventive information for homeless individuals. They are also delivering between

200 and 500 meals each day to homeless individuals and case management to help them transition out homelessness. [Read the full story from the Marietta Daily Journal.](#)

Vancouver, Washington – Family Promise, a nonprofit that assists homeless children and their families in Washington State, normally operates a day center at the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church and relies on a network of 13 local churches to help house and feed the families overnight but the coronavirus pandemic turned their normal routine over. *“When you have families that are unhoused and you have a stay-at-home order, what do you do?”* asked Linda Winnett, Director of Family Promise of Clark County. *“We basically had to move our families into motels. That was the biggest change we made. With the churches and the day center unable to do physical distancing, we chose to go with a motel. That’s what we do when we have any communicable thing – if a family member has the flu or if there’s a measles outbreak. It’s the best way we have to respond.”* Thanks to local grants, including a \$9,000 emergency services grant from the Camas-Washougal Community, donations and church volunteers, the group has been able to help house and feed the families during this pandemic. [Read the full story from Camas-Washougal Post-Record](#)



[Photo courtesy of Camas-Washougal Post-Record](#)

Woodland, California – More than 100 students are either facing homeless or housing insecurity in the Woodland, California school district. After schools closed in March due to the coronavirus outbreak, Rosie Caraveo, the District’s Foster and Homeless Manager, set out to ensure these students wouldn’t fall behind in their education. Meals are still being provided via safe pickup at lunchtime for any children who received a provided lunch each day. Additionally, Caraveo ensured that all students were given a

laptop for distance learning. She and her staff visited each student to make sure their technology was working properly. She found many of her students in local motels, thanks to a collaboration with Yolo county's Health and Human Services Agency. *"We did learn that we need to make sure that every homeless family has access to the resources in order to learn at home (chromebook, hot spots, traditional paper assignments, etc.),"* Caraveo explained. *"We need to ensure that our families receive more training on how to use technology as a learning tool. We will be scheduling online training sessions for parents via our parent resource staff."* [Read the full story from the Woodland Daily Democrat](#)

Stockton, California - To alleviate overcrowding at hospitals, city of Stockton found a way to provide care for those facing homelessness who are sick with coronavirus but do not require hospitalization. The Gospel Center Rescue Mission's newly renovated house opened specifically to serve this group of individuals in their community. *"It's heaven sent,"* said Joan Singson, who is on San Joaquin General Hospital's population health team. *"We're talking about individuals who may be positive for COVID-19, but don't really have the symptoms that require them to be at a hospital."* The house includes many safety features and preventative equipment, including a plastic screen that separates COVID-19 patients from staff or anyone assisting them. [Read the full story from Fox 40](#)



[Photo courtesy of Fox 40](#)

Portland, Oregon – A local Portland hotel has opened its doors to the homeless members of the community that are experiencing symptoms and need to quarantine

due to the Coronavirus. Some local shelters do not have the space to keep people separated in accordance with CDC guidelines, and the Jupiter hotel saw an opportunity to help. *"This story highlights exactly why small businesses are so important to the community and why they need our support, especially in times of need, they are our backbones. We have the ability to solve problems quickly and swiftly,"* said Nick Pearson, who manages the Jupiter Hotel. [Read the full story from KATU Portland](#)



[Photo courtesy of KATU](#)

Rancho Santa Margarita, California – In California, fifteen-year-old Shaivi Shah is leading an effort to assemble and deliver hygiene kits to homeless shelters in Los Angeles. *"It's important for people to step in and just do whatever they can, even if it helps just one person."* said Shah. So far, she has delivered more than 150 low-cost sanitation kits to three Los Angeles shelters. [Read the full story from CNN](#)



[Photo courtesy of Shaivi Sha via CNN](#)

Jacksonville, Florida — In Jacksonville, Florida the city's Downtown Homeless Task Force is launching Healthmobile, a mobile health bus that will provide medical care to the local homeless population in the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak. The bus will travel to urban areas and provide care with medical staff on board. *"Every single life has value,"* Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said Monday. *"Everybody deserves to be treated with dignity, and we all ought to be trying to help each other. And that's what this additional project speaks to."* [***Read the full story from WJCT***](#)



Garden City, Idaho — The Riverside Hotel has opened thirty hotel rooms to medically vulnerable individuals and families with children who previously were staying at Interfaith Sanctuary, a homeless shelter in Boise. *“The shelter’s executive director, Jodi Peterson-Stigers, said the hotel’s willingness to take in those especially in need has given them a greater sense of security at a time when the possibility of catching COVID-19 looms,”* the Idaho Statesman reported. *“Peterson-Stigers said she’s thankful that people in Boise always find ways to support and help each other. When she was concerned for the safety of the families in her care, she put out the call for help and Riverside responded.”* By temporarily staying in hotel rooms, former shelter residents are able to avoid the commonly shared spaces of a homeless shelter and put CDC social distancing guidelines into action. [Read the full story from the Idaho Statesman](#)



[Photo courtesy of Darin Oswald via KIVI-TV ABC 6 Boise, ID](#)

San Francisco, California — After San Franciscans were ordered to shelter in place, the City by the Bay's hotel industry pulled together to assist those who don't have a place of their own. Thirty-one hotels worked together to offer up 8,500 vacant hotel rooms to the city for the area's homeless, as well as seniors in nursing home care, in an effort to isolate these susceptible populations from exposure to the Coronavirus. The industry is also willing to provide rooms for the healthcare workers on the frontlines if they require isolation away from their families while working with COVID-19 patients. *"We believe that if we have upwards of 30,000 empty hotel rooms in San Francisco and we have thousands of people on our streets and living in dangerous congregate living scenarios that are able to take of themselves in individual rooms then we should move them into those rooms,"* said San Francisco Supervisor Hillary Ronen. By ensuring the homeless, at-risk older adults, and healthcare workers have access to individual spaces, San Francisco is doing their part to 'slow the spread' of the Coronavirus in their highly populated community. [*Read the full story from the San Francisco Examiner*](#)



[Photo courtesy of the San Francisco Examiner](#)

Cambridge, Massachusetts — After Harvard University sent its students home due to Coronavirus risks, many local Cambridge businesses felt a void in customers. The city stepped up to find a win-win solution for all involved. Manny Ramirez, a co-owner of Black Sheep Bagel Café, is one of the participants in the city's newly created program which allows restaurants and shops to sign a city contract for offering meals to the area's homeless shelters. *"I think it's a really unique approach, that's a win-win for everybody, especially our residents that are homeless,"* City of Cambridge spokesperson Jeremy Warnick said. *"It's giving back to the local restaurants and the city in terms of finding a way to support these key populations and key groups."* Store owners like Ramirez are playing an important role in supporting many of the community's most vulnerable citizens during this uncertain time, meanwhile working to keep small businesses like his own afloat. [Read the full story from The Boston Herald](#)



[Photo courtesy of Angela Rowlings via Boston Herald](#)

Madison, Wisconsin — In an effort to protect those at high risk for contracting the Coronavirus, Dane county is working with local hotels to shelter those populations facing homelessness. So far, the county has allocated more than \$150,000 for the rooms and to provide meals to the residents. In addition, local agencies are providing supportive services to the homeless. *"Dane County is committed to helping our most vulnerable residents receive the support and shelter they need during the novel Coronavirus pandemic,"* said County Executive Joe Parisi. *"We hope to limit the spread of COVID-19 in families experiencing homelessness and individuals at risk."* [***Read the full article in the Wisconsin State Journal***](#)

Columbus, Ohio — Governor Mike DeWine of Ohio last week activated the National Guard in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. As many as 400 members of the Ohio National Guard are busy serving. *"Everyone you see here are part of the fabric of our community. And right now, everyone in our community needs help,"* said Steve Skovensky, who serves as executive director of supportive housing for the YMCA. [***Read the full story from the Columbus Dispatch***](#)



[Photo courtesy of The Columbus Dispatch](#)

New Haven, Connecticut – To alleviate crowding in homeless shelters, the City of New Haven has rented 14 hotel rooms to serve those facing homelessness who are at risk of contracting the Coronavirus. Additionally, the city is utilizing a high school that is not currently being used to set up a ‘self-isolation’ center for homeless in need. *“We’ve been going full speed ahead for maybe six days now and it’s so important that we work together,”* said Mayor Justin Elicker. [Read the full story from the Yale News](#)

Baltimore, Maryland – [Our Daily Bread](#) is Maryland’s largest hot meal program, serving more than a quarter of a million meals to those experiencing hunger in Baltimore City each year. The organization is continuing to serve homeless populations in their community during the Coronavirus, but they’re taking extra precautions to make sure employees and visitors avoid health risk. *“We’re making sure people stay safe,”* said Kevin Creamer, who serves as a program manager at the facility. *“We’re implementing social distancing in the kitchen and the lines, but we’re making sure people stay fed.”* [Read the full story from WJZ here](#)

Lake Charles, Louisiana – The Salvation Army and the United Way are partnering to continuing food service to the homeless population in Lake Chares, Louisiana after a

local homeless service provider had to temporarily close due to the Coronavirus outbreak. The two non-profit organizations teamed up to pay for and serve meals to those in need. President and CEO of United Way of Southwest Louisiana Denise Durel said, *"I am happy to announce that even with the closing of Abraham's Tent, the Salvation Army is actively feeding."* The Salvation Army will be serving food-to-go, preparing 15 meals a week, and they will be working with United Way to determine breakfast times so that it coincides with the busses that run in that area. [Read the full story from KPLC.](#)

Las Vegas, Nevada – The Inspirada residential community in Henderson is encouraging residents to hang their holiday lights and decorate the exterior of their homes in an effort lift spirits in the neighborhood during the Coronavirus outbreak. The campaign is known as *"Light Up the Night"* and will run through April 30.



[Photo courtesy of Chase Stevens/Las Vegas Review Journal](#)

Las Vegas, Nevada – Also in Las Vegas, Chef Hubert Keller and his restaurant Burger Bar at Mandalay Bay donated all of their plastic gloves to Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center earlier this week. There has been an increased need for plastic gloves, among other medical supplies, during the Coronavirus outbreak.



[Photo courtesy of Burger Bar Las Vegas/Las Vegas Review Journal](#)

Phoenix, Arizona — A local resident, Mike Snitz, ordered 100 pizzas from his local pizzeria, La Piazza, to be delivered to the [Central Arizona Shelter Services \(CASS\)](#). CEO of CASS, Lisa Glow reports the pizza order will feed more than 100 people including kids at the family center. Half of the pizzas will be sent to CASS' partner organization, St. Vincent de Paul. *"I just think that it's really a unique time in our history in that we don't need to be afraid, we just need to really help other people,"* Snitz said. *"Support a local small business and deliver food to people who are in need. You win twice."* [Read the full story from AZ Central](#)



[Photo courtesy of AZ Central](#)

San Jose, California — The City of San Jose, California and WeHope are combining efforts to help reduce the spread of Coronavirus among the homeless people living in encampments by providing onsite sanitation stations throughout the city. The partnership will bring handwashing stations and the Hope Health Mobile Vehicle for virtual doctor appointments. They will also continue to provide shower, laundry and case management to the homeless community. *"We are grateful to partners like WeHope who continue to keep our most vulnerable residents' health and safety as a top priority,"* said San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo. *"This is a time for our community to stay strong, San Jose Strong. We are better together and WeHope is the perfect example of looking out for neighbors."* [*Read more about the partnership here*](#)

Brookhaven, Georgia — Before it closed its doors amid Coronavirus concerns, the Red Pepper Taqueria used its remaining food to prepare to-go bags for the local homeless community. *"Of course, it's a very real threat and scare,"* said Mina Boules, General Manager. *"A lot of people are more scared to continue to help the community, to help our lower funded people of our community such as our homeless. It's extremely important to continue to support those communities and make sure they get fed and that they're taken care of in this time, that they're not alone."* The city issued a state of emergency following the outbreak and temporarily suspended dine-in options throughout the community to adhere to social

distancing guidelines. Out of an abundance of caution, the Red Pepper Taqueria decided to temporarily close. [Read the full story from Fox 5 Atlanta](#)



[Photo courtesy of Red Pepper Taqueria Instagram](#)

HUD Resources — HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS) supports the nationwide [commitment to ending homelessness](#) by providing funding opportunities to nonprofit organizations and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families. In response to the Coronavirus outbreak, HUD launched its www.hud.gov/coronavirus website which includes a page dedicated with resources and toolkits to assist homeless services providers.

HUD continues to work closely with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) to counsel communities and states on protecting their most vulnerable citizens from infectious diseases.

Do you or does someone you know need help finding resources in your community? Visit [HUD.gov/findshelter](https://www.hud.gov/findshelter) for a list of providers in your area.

Visit HUD's [coronavirus resources website](https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus) at [HUD.gov/coronavirus](https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus) to find information specific to the Department and the work of the White House Coronavirus Task Force.
