

July 24, 2020



## Neighbors Helping Neighbors | HUD Region V Helps Communities In Need During Coronavirus Outbreak

**#Inthistogether**

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

**Cincinnati, Ohio** – The community center at The Villages of Roll Hill, a HUD-supported Multifamily property, provided 1,200 meals to families in need during the COVID-19 national emergency. *“The children took home four bags of meals and four milks. On Tuesdays, they take home three,”* said Lisa Hyde Miller, co-founder of Childhood Food Solutions, which is one of the groups providing assistance together with United Methodist Church (UMC) Food Ministry out of Latonia, Kentucky, La Soup and Kroger. Other groups are also chipping in to help their community. [Read the full story from WLWT](#)



*[Photo courtesy of WLWT Cincinnati](#)*

**Chicago, Illinois** — Chicago Housing Authority resident Tyra Jackson Williams became a homeowner in March through the housing authority's Choose to Own (CTO) homeownership program. In the same way a voucher is used to offset a portion of rent, the CTO program allows qualified public housing families or those participating in the HCV program to use a portion of their rent payments to accumulate equity and offset a portion of their mortgage. HUD Regional Administrator Joseph P. Galvan said, *"National Homeownership Month has a special meaning this year as we face the COVID-19 pandemic. HUD remains committed to helping hard-working Americans and has several tools available for those who may be experiencing financial difficulties. I would like to congratulate Ms. Jackson Williams on her accomplishment as a new homeowner and thank her for her dedication as an essential worker."* [Read the story from the Chicago Crusader](#)



*Photo courtesy of the Chicago Housing Authority*

**Chicago, Illinois** – A Safe Haven, which is a designated EnVision Center in Chicago, is addressing the COVID-19 pandemic by expanding its facility to house an isolation wing offering 100 beds to patients who are homeless. The organization is partnering with a HUD Continuum of Care grantee, Heartland Alliance, and with Rush University Medical Center, for supportive services. *"I strongly believe we have a very small window of time in which we can prevent the widespread transmission of COVID-19 among people who are living on the streets and in shelters. Once the disease begins to spread in these groups, it will likely accelerate really fast and be uncontainable, creating a crisis not just for the homeless but the entire community,"* said Neli Vazquez Rowland, president of A Safe Haven. [Read the](#)

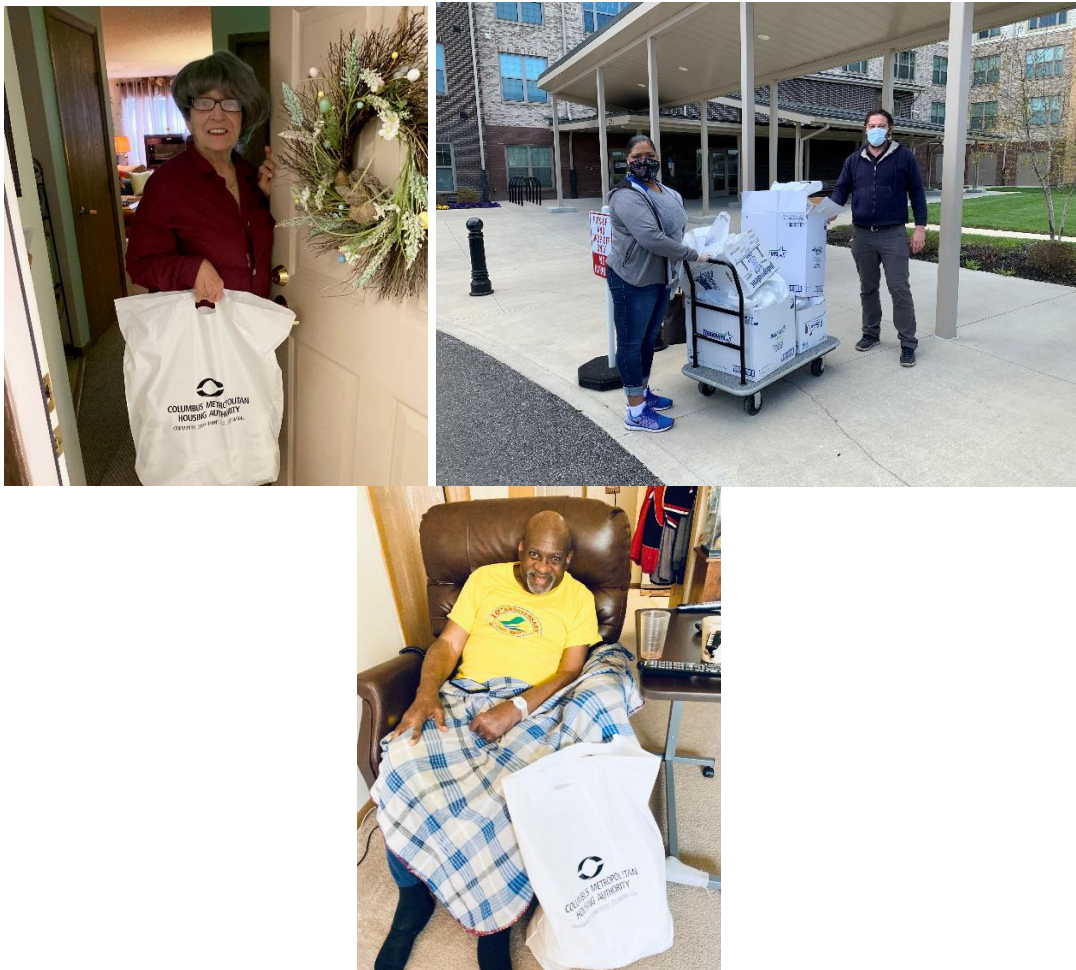


[\*full story from WBEZ.\*](#)



[\*Photo courtesy of A Safe Haven\*](#)

**Columbus, Ohio** — The Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority, which operates the RISE EnVision Center, provided more than 600 wellness bags to residents and essential property management personnel at all six of its senior housing communities. Presented in partnership with many community organizations including the City of Columbus, Dream Center, and Kroger, each wellness bag contained healthy essentials such as paper towels, toilet paper, and liquid hand soap. The bags also contained a \$25 gift card to Kroger and instructions for signing up for a free shuttle ride to their local store during senior shopping hours. To remind residents that they are supported during this time, each bag also included a “stay in touch” letter from their respective service coordinator. All bags were packaged and delivered to each resident’s door by Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority volunteers.



*Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority provided wellness bags to senior housing communities.*

**Cook County, Illinois** — The Housing Authority of Cook County is partnering with Chicago-based Top Box Foods to provide delivery of healthy, affordable groceries to south suburban public housing residents in “food deserts.” Volunteers delivered the first boxes of fresh produce and other items last week to more than 700 residents in the Illinois communities of Chicago Heights, Ford Heights and Robbins. The Housing Authority of Cook County awaits an official EnVision Center designation. [Read the full story from The Daily Southtown.](#)





*[Photo courtesy of The Daily Southtown](#)*

**Detroit, Michigan**— Life Remodeled, a nonprofit corporation based in Detroit and an EnVision Center lead partner, held a food distribution event at the Durfee Innovation Society, where one of the Detroit EnVision Centers is also located. Life Remodeled teamed up with Gleaners Food Bank and Brilliant Detroit to distribute boxes of nutritious food to those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was held in accordance with strict health safety guidelines in the parking lot of the Durfee Innovation Society. According to Chris Lambert, CEO of Life Remodeled, “More than 40 cars lined up an hour before the event even started.” The event successfully provided food for a total of 300 families in less than three hours, providing much needed relief to many area residents.



*Photos courtesy of Mike Polsinelli, HUD's Detroit Field Office Director*

**Flint, Michigan** – Despite the State of Michigan's extension on evictions bans, Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) is encouraging renters and homeowners to have conversations with their lenders and landlords about delaying foreclosure or payment deferrals. *"The best way for them to deal with this crisis is to immediately contact their lender or their landlord and start that communication. Without that, it will get worse for that individual, so call, tell them what's going on, work with your lender or your landlord, and then reach out to one of our counseling agents for additional help,"* said Mary Townley, MSHDA Director Home Ownership. *"They will tell you what your rights are based on the eviction moratorium that's out there and also help you evaluate your budget and your financial capabilities, so that you can pay that arrearage of rent that you may have accumulated,"* Townley continued. [Read the full article from ABC 12 News.](#)





*Photo courtesy of ABC 12 News*

**Gary, Indiana** — The Gary Housing Authority, a designated EnVision Center, partnered with FAITH Community Development Center to lead the COVID-19 Food Relief Initiative. The drive-up giveaway kicked off June 4 and took place for the next four weeks. Gary residents were invited to drive up to 656 Carolina St. and have a 50-lb. box of meat, dairy and produce items loaded into their trunks. The Gary Housing Authority also distributed food boxes to its residents. A separate delivery program was coordinated for the city's senior citizens who were unable to travel to the distribution site. [\*Read the full story from the Gary Crusader\*](#)





*Photos courtesy of Kimberly Wize*

**Grand Rapids, Michigan** – The Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) in Michigan is dedicated to supporting residents during these unprecedented times. The housing commission has a site that will be designated an EnVision Center and is already a pillar in the community. The GRHC recently received a cash donation from the New Hope Baptist Church, a long-time community partner that supports the neighborhood, including Hope Community, a 24-unit rapid re-housing program

serving homeless women and their children. The congregation's donation paid rent for Hope Community families during a time when many residents experienced a significant or total loss of income.

Additionally, the GRHC continues to promote good nutrition among senior residents with the help of several faith-based organizations that assist at on-site food pantries. The pantries supplement the non-perishable foods provided through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Meals On Wheels Western Michigan continues to serve many of the elderly residents, providing meal delivery three times weekly.

Furthermore, Kids' Food Basket is providing sack lunches three times a week at the GRHC's Creston Plaza Community Center and at the Campau Commons Community Center to assist the young residents of the family housing developments, many of whom rely on the school meal program to meet their nutritional needs. [Read more from M Live](#)



*North End Community Ministry continues to donate to the Leonard Terrace Apartments food pantry to help the community.*

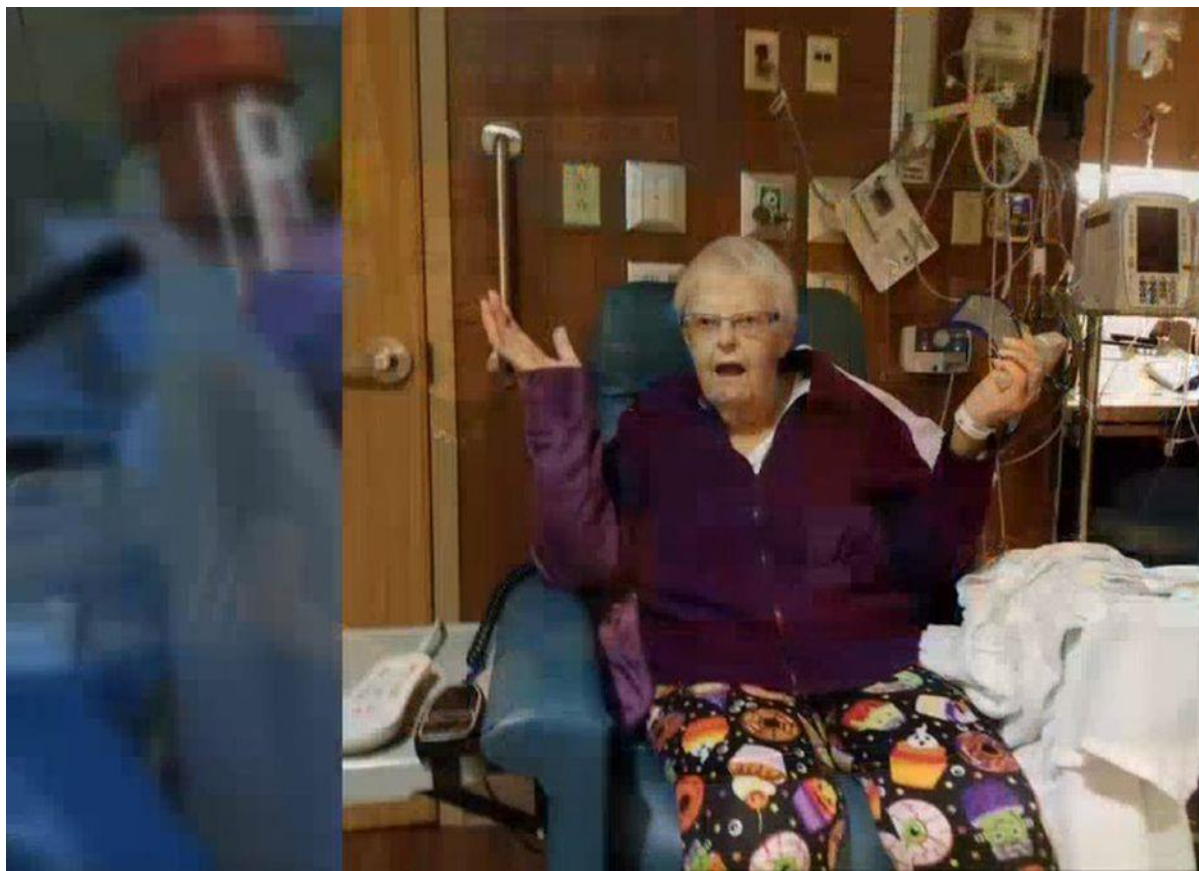


**St. Cloud, Minnesota** – The Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud was recently awarded nearly \$40,000 in Housing Counseling Grants to help people avoid foreclosure and make more informed home buying and rental choices. The Catholic Charities Financial and Housing Counseling program and HUD-certified counselors are available to assist the local community who need advice, or their questions answered about their mortgage or rent. [Read the full story from KNSI News.](#)



[Photo courtesy of Pixabay](#)

**Sun Prairie, Wisconsin** – Due to COVID-19, blood drives normally hosted by schools and business in local communities had to be postponed or cancelled. One local community in Wisconsin wanted to dive in and help. In honor of resident, Betty McMillen also known as “Betty Bingo”, it hosted a blood drive in June to assist with any shortages. Sadly, in March, Betty passed away after battling a bone marrow disorder in which her body couldn’t produce red blood cells. Betty’s daughter, Jamie McMillen told NBC15 the regular blood transfusions she received helped her at the end of her life. She reached a point where she was receiving transfusions every week and without them her mother would have suffered. *"I don't want that for anybody else and I want families to have the same chance, maybe they can get another ten months like I did with my mom,"* she said. [Read the full story from NBC15](#)



*[Photo courtesy of NBC 15](#)*

**Youngstown, Ohio** — The Rockford Village EnVision Center has been partnering with the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority (YMHA) and several other local organizations to continue to respond to the COVID-19 health crisis in its community for distribution of meals and supplies. Heart Reach Neighborhood Ministries provided weekly meal and activity packs for children. Staff and volunteers distributed more than 1,500 meals at the YMHA Rockford Village EnVision Center campus.

The Rockford Village EnVision Center also engaged federal partners, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, which donated 1,000 cloth bags. These were used to distribute more than 7,400 weekly meals for children and food boxes for families at Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority locations and neighborhoods across the greater Youngstown-Campbell area in Ohio.



In addition to issuing food and diapers weekly, the EnVision Center distributed 50 buckets of cleaning supplies to the community. Residents called the EnVision Center or the YMHA management staff to register and then came into the office to pick up supplies according to proper social distancing measures. Rockford Village maintenance staff members delivered additional buckets to senior residents who were unable to come to the management office.



*Heart Reach Neighborhood Ministries Rockford Village Site Director Kim Fowler packages meal and activity bags.*





*Rockford Village EnVision Center distributed cleaning supplies to the community.*



*The donated bags also included U.S. Census Bureau information.*

**Chicago, Illinois** – When mandatory telework went into effect due to the pandemic for all HUD staff, Midwest Regional Administrator Joseph P. Galvan took on a new role: talk show host. He launched “HUD Midwest Matters,” a series of online conversations highlighting the priorities of Secretary Ben Carson and best practices seen in response to COVID-19 throughout Region V. All episodes are posted on the [HUD YouTube channel](#)





*[Watch all episodes here, including the conversation with HUD Deputy Secretary Brian D. Montgomery.](#)*

*To find HUD resources related to the coronavirus, visit  
[www.hud.gov/coronavirus](http://www.hud.gov/coronavirus).*

*Read more stories of #NeighborsHelpingNeighbors by following  
@HUDgov and @SecretaryCarson online.*

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