



## Neighbors Helping Neighbors | Community Partners in HUD's Region X Respond to Needs Created by Pandemic

**#Inthistogether**

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

**Sandpoint, Idaho** – Amid the coronavirus outbreak, Leo Hunsaker was looking for a way to help those impacted by the virus. He has a special heart for people who are struggling because Hunsaker himself experienced homelessness for several years. “[I] got to the point where I was sleeping on park benches going to convenience stores and stores like Walmart and going to their trash at night to get food to eat.” He decided to help by forming an organization he called Come Together North Idaho. In its first 37 days the organization helped over 5,000 people with needs ranging from baby wipes and care packages to grocery and gas carts to even providing the homeless thirty days of shelter in a motel. [Read the full story from Bonner County Bee](#)



*Photo courtesy of Come Together North Idaho*

**Juneau, Alaska** - In early April the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Tribes established an Emergency Operations Center to monitor and manage their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. By early August more than 20 Villages in southeast Alaska with some 35,000 residents had partnered with the Tlingit and Haida. *"What we have is a regional tribal ops center so we can offer assistance to all the tribal communities,"* says the Council's emergency manager Corey Padron. [Read the full story from Juneau Empire](#)

# Tlingit & Haida



*Image courtesy of Sacred Ground Café, Juneau*

**Coos Bay, Oregon** – Recently, the Coos County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to donate a parcel to Operation Rebuild Hope, a non-profit organization dedicated to serving veterans in southwest Oregon. Operation Rebuild Hope now has a site to locate 3 homes for homeless veterans donated by Relevant Buildings, an Oregon City firm that transforms former cargo containers into sustainable, energy-efficient homes of up to 900 square-feet. "We're in a housing crisis," said Carl Coffman, the firm's owner, told The Coos Bay World, "and this gives us the opportunity to show that there are ways to make housing affordable." [\*Read the full story from World\*](#)



*Photo courtesy of The World*

**Yakima, Washington** – There's a good chance that the apples and pears, sweet cherries and peaches, Concord grapes and even Washington state wine on your dining-room table come from the Yakima Valley, one of the most productive and richest agricultural areas in the world. From spring planting to the fall harvest temporary workers play a critical role in getting that bounty to market. But during the coronavirus, workers needed protective gear to keep them safe. Fortunately, local Valley seamstresses have united to sew thousands of masks and support the workers. *"I feel like I'm doing a little to help this community, and I challenge myself to see how many I can make,"* said Celina Garza, a volunteer with the Yakima Immigrant Response Network. [Read the full story from Yakima Herald Republic](#)



*Photo courtesy of Evan Abell*

**Bethel, Alaska** - When Native Villagers from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta fly to and from Anchorage there is a good chance they'll have to change planes in Bethel, the largest community in western Alaska. When flights are delayed or bad weather rolls in, travelers usually spend the night at the air terminal awaiting a flight the next morning. During the coronavirus outbreak, policy has changed to help keep people safe. "We assume that the COVID cases are coming from outside our region and the point of entry is the Bethel airport." To cut the risk of transmission to the city's 6,500 residents public safety officers now picks up stranded travelers and transport them to a hotel for a free night's stay. They're driven back to the airport the next morning. [Read the full story from KYUK](#)



*Photo courtesy of Aida Loehr in Oddball Pilot*

**Nampa, Idaho** - The 'Traveling Table' is the result of a northern Idaho community coming together to help their neighbors in need during the coronavirus pandemic. Inspired by the idea of a young girl, this mobile food pantry started with a donated FedEx Truck. Every month Traveling Table volunteers load up to 2,500 pounds of food from the Idaho Foodbank and the Western Idaho Community Action Partnership and deliver and distribute it to families in need at a neighborhood church. *"People have told me that they're grateful that we're here,"* said Rae Krick, a dietitian with Terry Reilly Health Services and co-chair of Nampa's Healthy Impact Coalition. [Read the full story from Idaho Press](#)



*Photo courtesy of Brian Myrick*

**Eugene, Oregon-** With hand sanitizers in short supply on store shelves early in the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors (JWN) organization realized they could help. The organization manufacturing 200 4-ounce bottles of hand sanitizer using a World Health Organization recipe. The bottles were then delivered to the homes of residents served by Cornerstone Community Housing and Homes for Good, the city's housing authority, with a bag of groceries supplied by Northwest Community Credit Union and FOOD for Lane County. *"It is no surprise to me that Paul and other members of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors are stepping up on behalf of people in need during the COVID-19 pandemic,"* says Jacob Fox, who serves as director of the Homes for Good Organization. [Read the full story from Eugene Weekly](#)



*Photo courtesy of Joe Cone, Eugene Weekly*

**Sammamish, Washington** - When the COVID-19 pandemic first struck, 13-year-old Liem Kaplan told his mom he was worried about how it would impact the homeless. But instead of just worrying, he went to work. He started by contacting people via Facebook, asking people to donate masks that he would then deliver to homeless providers. To date, more than 5,000 masks have been donated. *"We haven't had to buy any masks because people like Liem have just been donating them,"* said one provider. And now he's formed the GivingHope Project that's delivered more than 1,200 bagged lunches and hygiene kits to the homeless, one of whom one calls Liem his "13-year-old angel." [\*Read the full story from Q13Fox\*](#)





*Photo courtesy of QFox13*

**Gustavus, Alaska** - When COVID-19 hit Alaska, the community of Gustavus, the town of 442 people suddenly found itself cut off from normal air and barge services that supplied it. That did not deter Tosh Parker, owner of “Toshco” the nickname for Icy Strait Wholesale, the town's only grocery store. Tosh decided he would stock the store himself, setting sail in his 96-foot barge on a 14-hour to Juneau, the state capital and the closest Costco, his store’s long-time principal supplier. There, he stocked up on \$20,000 worth of groceries and goods to re-stock his store’s nearly bare shelves. “Tosco” was back in business. [\*Read the full story Hustle\*](#)



*Photo courtesy of @zzcrockett*

**Boise, Idaho-** *"I just started crying,"* Kelly Covington told The Idaho Statesman, after reading a letter from the City of Boise, telling her the \$420 in rent due on her apartment for the month of April had been forgiven. She'd been in *"a heavy panic,"* she said, because her hours at her job as a breakfast hostess in the morning and airport shuttle driver in the evening had been cut. *"If it wasn't for the city of Boise doing this,"* she said, *"I'd probably be down at the shelter for a time."* The City sent the same letter with the same good news to the renters of 300 other houses costing it about \$122,000 a month. A *"small price to pay,"* noted The Statesman. [Read the full story from Idaho Statesman](#)



*Photo courtesy of the Idaho Statesman*

**North Bend, Oregon** - Three restaurants in Coos Bay & North Bend,- Buzz, Restaurant O, & Top Dog Coffee Company- teamed up to launch "ARK" - the At-Risk Kids Project - to provide free meals for young people who may be experiencing hardship during the coronavirus outbreak. *"The best thing that came out of this is we're getting updated information and finding out what's really going on with these kids,"* ARK's coordinator said. *"We've put in extra effort to make sure everyone has the same opportunity."* [Read the full story from World](#)



*Photo courtesy of The World*

**Tacoma, Washington** - Thanks to the work of the Tacoma-Pierce County Habitat for Humanity, Angela Torres, a 55-year-old laid off forklift operator is now living in a 3-bedroom house of her own. It's a home she helped build with her mom and son who had been "couch-surfing" at the crowded, noisy home of a niece with four children of her own. *"This is the one thing I've always wanted,"* she said. It is the first home the organization has been able to place a family in since the beginning of the outbreak. On a Friday night in May, Torres sat outside her new home. *"Oh my [goodness], we're actually in here,"* she said. [Read the full News-Tribune story](#)



*Photo courtesy of Tony Overman*

**Olympia, Washington-** Accompanied by the Easter Bunny, on Good Friday 2020 a convoy of three trucks assembled by the leadership of the federally recognized Nisqually Tribe made surprise visits to more than 170 homes of Tribal members , delivering 180 turkeys and hams and 300 Easter baskets to tribal members and their families. At each home, they even took the time to hide some Easter eggs on the lawns. "The families were just really shocked and surprised," said one Tribal member. "We're happy to be seeing their smiles." [Read the full story from Nisqually Valley News](#)



*Photo courtesy of Paul Dunn*

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