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Subject: COVID-19 Update | Food on the Frontlines

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COVID-19 Update | March 25, 2020



Dear Jason,



The Hunger Coalition is seeing double. In the first week since the COVID-19 outbreak touched Blaine County, we provided groceries for an all-time record high number of families — 260 or twice as many as usual. This is heartbreaking, but not surprising.

The economic impact of the coronavirus hit hard overnight and will echo well into the future. Last week, we spoke with families whose breadwinner was laid off, families whose hours were cut, or who had to take time from work because a loved one was showing symptoms. There were many people we had never helped before and some who were returning to our pantry after years away. **Despite the uncertainty, there was more talk of gratitude than fear.**

With twice as many families needing food came twice as many people offering to help. Whether it was a call for money, time, grocery bags, or shelf-stable food items, our community responded in spades. **In fact, there are several local people who've organized fundraisers on our behalf. Volunteers rocked masks and gloves to bag spinach outside and walk food boxes out to cars. Our Bloom Bins are full of healthy, non-perishable food items that have been essential as so many of our food suppliers are maxed out.**

As I write this, The Hunger Coalition is continuing to provide curbside food boxes to all families who are struggling to afford food. Each day, we adapt our operations to keep our staff, participants, and volunteers safe. With the current isolation order, we are trying to keep our team healthy by limiting the number of people we are in contact with. As a result, we've paused as many volunteer roles as possible. **The safest, most hygienic way you can help now is by clicking [here to make a monetary donation](#). If not in dollars, we're [posting other needs as they arise on our facebook page here](#).**

The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak hasn't been easy on anyone, but it's times like these with people like you that we're confident our community will only grow stronger. Thank you.

In Gratitude,

Jeanne Liston, executive director



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT DELIVERS

The Hunger Coalition collaborated with Blaine County School District to ensure all children who relied on school meals and our supplemental school food programs will continue to have access during the mass closures. The School District is running a lunch delivery service [to the areas listed here](#) or [here in spanish](#). The [Hunger Coalition's Snack Packs](#) will be included in food boxes at our food distribution for every family with children.

From the school district: "Children DO NOT need to qualify for free and reduced lunch. This is open to anyone, no questions asked. In fact, this just might be the new place to be ... just don't socialize or congregate and remember to keep your social distance."

Thanks to our friends at [Blaine County School District](#), [Blaine County Education Association](#) and [Sodexo USA](#) AKA Julia Scarborough for making sure local children are well nourished in this time of crisis.

Gratitude

Sending an extra special thank you to Blaine County for investing an incredible \$25,000 in our COVID-19 emergency response. If our service numbers stay at around what we saw last week, we could potentially exceed our fiscal year food budget (ending June 30) by the end of this month. The additional funds are much needed and much appreciated.

Our deepest thanks goes out to everyone who has stepped up and made a donation since the crisis hit home. **There have been an extremely humbling number of you who donated dollars, time, or resources and because of your generous response, we're confident we will see this pandemic through.**