**Food for thought**

**Fighting Hunger One Meal at a Time**

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**We’re Here to Help You!**

These are uncertain times for so many households and the RRVF is here to help! We believe everyone should have access to healthy food.

We are currently offering family size prepacked food boxes that include meat, produce, dry goods, dairy, canned fruit and vegetables, and bread. When our seasonal garden at South Rockford is open, clients may receive fresh picked vegetables, fruits, and herbs.

Be prepared to register by having your household information ready. We will need names, address, and birthdays of all those living in the same location.

There are two distribution sites in Rockford, both are open Monday-Friday.

- **1100 Broadway**
  - 10am-Noon
- **421 S. Rockton**
  - 1-4pm

Distribution methods are always changing in order to provide you a safe and germ free environment. Social distancing is practiced.

If you find you have more month than money, we’re here waiting to help you!

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**How Can You Help?**

The RRVF loves a good challenge and over the last 45 years we have met them head on. Recent challenges had us scrambling for a couple of weeks after the State of IL required social distancing, and the stay at home order for non-essential workers. Initially there was an average of 18% new clients a day that were in need of food.

During this time we are still able to meet the needs of our client base! This thanks to our generous donors, invaluable volunteers, local grocery store donations, and hard-working staff. We are purchasing food from food brokers to provide healthy food boxes for the clients.

As I look toward the future I recognize that our 45 years of service to this community has given us tremendous experience to weather a crisis. We will use our knowledge, partnerships, and expertise to provide emergency food provisions to the families that need our services, whether it be tomorrow or 18 months from today.

We will remain good stewards of your donations! Because of you, clients will receive nutritious food that will sustain them and their families during a time when there is more month than money.

*Kim Adams Bakke, Executive Director*
Every Dollar Makes a Difference!

While the grip of COVID 19 appears to have reached a plateau, or to be on a seemingly downward trend in some areas of the country, at the time of this writing Winnebago County was recently declared as a “hotspot” by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Since COVID-19’s unwelcome entry to the area in March, its effects have at different times increased the number of our weekly clients that we provide food to by nearly 20%. As many of you already know, of the more than 6,000 clients that we provide emergency, nutritional grocery items to each month, 33% are children and another 10% are Seniors 65+ years of age.

As the number of our clients increase, so does the strain on our finances to continue meeting their nutritional needs. As we are the only community-based food pantry in our area, we rely solely on grants, donations and fundraising efforts.

As such, we are humbly asking for donations at this time in order for us to continue meeting the nutritional emergency needs of families in our communities. The “biggest bang for your buck” is a monetary donation, as our purchasing power is greater than the consumers.

Board of Directors, Rock River Valley Pantry

The Impact This Crisis Has Had On Me

I’ve never had to use a pantry before, I never thought I’d be in this position.
Recent phone call received by staff

The school lunches have been great. But, I need help with some essentials.
Linda

Keep wearing your mask and gloves as we need you here to help us through this virus.
Teresia

Everything that we got today is great! This is really going to help me feed my family.
Ronald

Thank you for the food and for the pet food. Without the pet food I’m not sure I could’ve kept my dog.
Rosana A

Thanks To Our Supporters!

From big to small, every donation has made a difference to the RRVP and the clients we assist. If you are a new donor, thank you for recognizing the need in the community. If you’ve donated previously, thank you for believing in us.

We wish there was enough space to recognize everyone that has made a difference either by making a food or monetary donation, raising community awareness of the need, donating PPE’s, or volunteering to pack and distribute food.

We are looking forward and planning for tough times for our community for months, maybe years to come. We are exploring new ways to distribute food, new food resources, new partnerships, and new efficiencies. We plan on being here in the future so that no one is ever without emergency food provisions.

The Impact COVID-19 Had On The RRVP

In April, our Client Use statistics included:
- 438 adults 65 yrs. and older
- 1,140 children
- 436 new households
- 1 out of 4 households were new

We had an opportunity to form new partnerships with the Rockford Police Dept. & Molina Health Care, Oak Street Health, social workers with OSF-St. Anthony’s Medical Ctr., and the Rockford Housing Authority to ensure necessary food is delivered to homebound citizens.

We recently modified our distribution from Client Choice to prepacked food boxes and have restricted access to our buildings. Fortunately, we are still able to provide for our clients that so desperately need our help.

What’s Next...We’re Moving Forward

The RRVP is planning for two of its annual programs including the Peanut Butter Rally which will help us provide Peanut Butter & Jelly to all families during the summer months, and our annual Thanksgiving In August campaign which raised funds for us to provide traditional Thanksgiving meal food box for our families come November.

Our 32 raised bed garden has been planted with early season crops and most recently tomato plants. Volunteer gardeners will maintain the garden and Pantry clients will harvest their own produce in order to eliminate any transfer of germs. We anticipate more than 2,000 pounds of produce to be picked.

Food Distribution will continue and we will once again adjust our distribution system. We look forward to having our clients enter the building, register, and receive food instead of waiting outside for a food box. Providing a safe environment for volunteers, clients and staff will be a priority.

Our new fall fundraiser, Hunger is Real, a movie themed dinner and auction event, is planned for October 2, 2020 at the Radisson. The committee will be in need of donated items for the raffle and auction tables. We are really hoping that we can host the annual event as it is the only large fundraiser that the RRVP holds, with the proceeds helping to offset program services. Watch for more info to come on this event, or a virtual event to raise funds later this fall.