

NEWS & NOTES

A monthly newsletter to keep you informed.

CCSC & COVID-19: The Beauty of People Helping People



Jackie Sherman outside CCSC's Emergency-Services Central food pantry.

Christian Community Service Center's food pantries fill with smiling faces each day because, despite all that is happening in everyone's lives during this pandemic, CCSC's pantries are places where the spirits of both those in need and those that volunteer are lifted.

Jackie Sherman, the mother of a 7-year-old girl and 17-year-old boy, smiles as she loads her food pantry groceries into her car. "The food pantry helps single parents like myself to provide for my children during a crisis," Sherman said. "Thank you."

Cathy Beathard volunteered at the Emergency Services-Southwest food pantry on March

19 and said, "I am not typically a food pantry volunteer, but helping out yesterday at the food pantry was extremely rewarding and, more importantly, extremely helpful to families who are suffering financially now more than ever."

Like many these days, Sherman's visit to the CCSC food pantry was a first for her family. Numbers of those in need are increasing. Karen Holloman, CCSC's program director - basic needs/children, said overall the food pantries are seeing at least "two to three times as many clients visiting for food assistance."

To provide groceries to the increased number of people seeking help, CCSC has modified its procedures.

"We have adapted operations to reduce the number of volunteers per shift while more quickly serving clients and maintaining social distancing," Holloman said. "In the first two days of these modified operations, CCSC fed 145 households. For comparison, in the entire month of February we distributed 600 food packages."

To feed this many, CCSC is relying on food and financial donations from individuals, member churches, and partners as well as what it purchases from distributors.

"Like everyone, CCSC faces big challenges obtaining the products it needs to feed the community," Holloman said. "Some of our vendors cannot currently meet our demand. Individual donors can fill that gap by bringing in food donations. We also need reusable grocery bags and paper bags with handles for packing groceries."

For clients, CCSC needs all the standard items it usually puts into its well-balanced food packages: canned tuna or chicken, boxed cereal, pasta, tomatoes (diced, sauce, etc.), canned vegetables, canned fruit, dry rice, dry beans, toilet paper and bar soap. Donations may be dropped off at 3230 Mercer St. Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m.-noon; and at 6856 Bellaire Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 10 a.m.-1 p.m. --go through the blue doors off the east parking lot of the building.

For operations, CCSC needs disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer to follow CDC guidelines. "Any amount of these products is greatly appreciated," Holloman said, "Even one bottle will make a difference."

To donate funds to CCSC visit its secure website at www.ccschouston.org/donations/ or send a check to CCSC at P.O. Box 27924, Houston, TX 77227.

Nolonda Jones, manager of Emergency Services-Central summed up CCSC's response to COVID-19: "Need is increasing. People who have never been to CCSC's food pantries are coming for help. Donations are what will help us through. The community's help is what will get us all through this crisis."

CCSC's Employment Programs Adapt to Corona Crisis



This week JobNet checked in with Theresa*, who is working on re-entering the job force after several years at home with her children, and Theresa was happy to hear that JobNet will be offering workshops online during the COVID-19 crisis and her job-readiness progress will not be halted.

After carefully monitoring

recommendations from local and national officials and experts regarding the COVID-19 outbreak and significant consideration, CCSC made adjustments to its JobNet and Martha's Way programming.

Effective March 18 JobNet began to primarily serve its clients via phone, email, and online tools. In person appointments may still be scheduled for limited services based on need. New and existing clients were encouraged to call JobNet to receive ongoing virtual support during this time.

Martha's Way classes were postponed until further notice so that the program's students could remain home with their children and/or practice social distancing.

"Many of CCSC's clients work in customer service, retail, caregiving and food service," said Stefanie Lopez, CCSC's program director-employment. "All of these industries are experiencing reduced hours and layoffs, producing crises for families already struggling to make ends meet.

"Our JobNet clients are eager to build their skills and find work to support their families. The current situation is challenging," Lopez added. "Searching for a job can be an isolating experience and the COVID-19 outbreak has made the challenges faced by our clients significantly more complicated.

"We are finding ways to support our JobNet clients virtually through free resources and telephone coaching," Lopez added. "Soon we will also be offering web-based workshops. JobNet clients are grateful for any support and encouragement we can provide, even if it is just a listening ear."

Theresa is looking forward to continuing to build her computer skills and wants to take JobNet's PowerPoint, Excel, and LinkedIn classes. She was also thankful to learn that she can come to CCSC for food packages. "This will be very helpful for my family right now," she said. "We are thankful."



Beam Signing – Postponement

CCSC's March 31 "beam-signing" event is canceled and will be rescheduled. Stay tuned for a future, happy celebration of our building's progress!

Thank you for supporting the building campaign.

**For more information please call 713-961-3993.
www.ccschouston.org**

The mission of the Christian Community Service Center (CCSC) is to serve the poor, hungry, disabled, and otherwise needy while respecting their religious, ethnic or cultural differences.

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