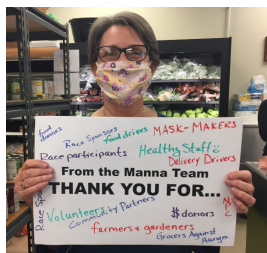




# Manna Works

Uplifting News About A Caring Community

(Summer 2020)



Dear Friends,

How our corner of the world has changed since March 16 when Governor Wolf ordered the COVID-19 shutdown across Pennsylvania. On that date, Manna decided to continue serving all in our community needing food for as long as we could. Serve we did, as you will see in this newsletter. Utilizing the North Penn Commons lobby, a

distribution system was implemented for to-go meals and groceries that maintained physical distancing to keep staff, volunteers and clients safe. Moving into the Green Phase, we will continue to safely serve the 1,700 households in our region who have turned to us throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before we even asked, the community offered help and has continued to stand with Manna. Generous financial donations and grants, food drives and individual bags of groceries, homemade cloth masks and other PPE, and marvelous volunteers made Manna's ability to provide food to our neighbors possible and signaled to us that the community is with us for the long run.

In the midst of the challenges of the pandemic came the tragic killing of George Floyd and the national call to address the injustice of racism. Manna's work evaluating our programs through a racial equity lens will continue with greater urgency, as we have seen the increase in households needing assistance during the pandemic coming primarily from racial and ethnic minorities. Together with hope and purpose, we invite you to help us build a more equitable Manna and community for all.

With deep gratitude,

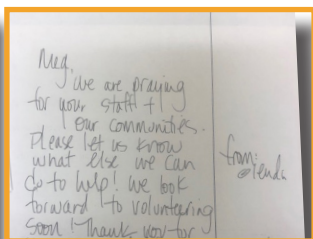
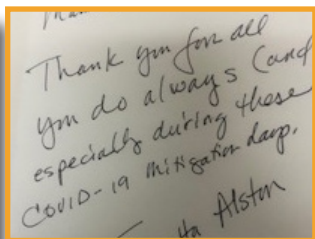
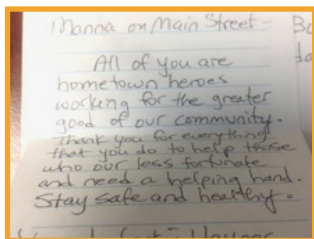
Suzan Nieger Gould  
Executive Director

## Manna's Generous Donors

Over the last three months, we have seen an outpouring of support through financial and in-kind donations. These donations have come from individuals, families, schools and businesses, and they enable Manna to continue to support those who need meals, groceries, or emergency financial assistance.

- Approximately once each week, a community member purchases fresh produce from a local store for our emergency grocery bags.
- Dock Mennonite Academy requested an online donation page and sent the link to the school community to support Manna and our efforts.
- This year, Nationwide Insurance in Harleysville was unable to hold their annual, in-person walk to support Manna. The company instead held a virtual walk, and associates made donations using their unique donation page.
- Another longtime supporter of Manna, the North Penn Rotary Club, donated a total of \$4,000 towards our annual Race to End Hunger and to support our COVID-19 efforts.

These donations, sometimes made only once and sometimes made on a weekly basis, make a world of difference. They help us provide more to-go meals and allow us to send fresh fruits and vegetables home to our clients. Thank you to our many donors. No matter who you are or how often you give, we are grateful for you and your generosity!



## The New Common Grounds

On May 27, Common Grounds trainees engaged in their first online culinary class. For all involved (who were already several weeks into their cohort when we pressed pause in mid-March), it was a big learning curve! Our trainees have risen to the challenge, cooking at home through weekly deliveries of recipes, supplies and equipment dropped off by the Common Grounds team. Trainees participate in multiple classes and staff check-ins each week by Zoom, with the goal of a virtual graduation on June 26, 2020.

Since these trainees were nearly halfway through the program, we wanted to offer them an option to complete their training and ServSafe certification, as they had already invested so much. The Common Grounds team planned multiple scenarios and launched a virtual, 5-week close to this cohort's training in a way that would best prepare these trainees for the food industry.



"Depending on PA's reopening plans, this virtual model could be extended or adjusted to offer a hybrid training-to-employment program. We will be nimble, innovative, and trainee-centered in our plans to move forward with Common Grounds," shares Kristyn DiDominick, Manna's Program Director.

We are very proud of these trainees for making the commitment to complete their training virtually and look forward to celebrating their successes in the food industry!



# Did you know? Since March 16...



1,940  
new donors



22,532 to-go  
meals provided



215,928 pounds of groceries  
distributed to 1,700 households

## Forging New Partnerships During COVID-19

COVID-19 required us to make changes to the logistics of our programs, where we can place volunteers, and how many staff can be in the building at one time. However, it has also provided us the opportunity to collaborate with other local organization to ensure those in need have ample, nutritious food. Hedwig House and Access Services are among the organizations we are working with to deliver groceries and meals to those who are homebound or homeless.

In March, Hedwig House—an organization offering group and individual mental rehabilitation services, along with a special housing program—contacted us about providing groceries for their homebound clients. Once each week, our Market team puts together grocery bags that include non-perishable items, produce, dairy, meat and other specialty items, such as diapers and pet food. All groceries are delivered to Hedwig House staff, who then deliver to their clients.

In early April, Access Services—an organization working to empower and serve people in need of specialized supports—reached out to Manna. Access Services was concerned about their homeless clients amid the growing number of COVID-19 cases. They were able to arrange for safe hotel accommodations for these individuals and asked if Manna would be willing to provide to-go meals and groceries. We began making weekly deliveries, with the help of the Lansdale Area Family YMCA. In mid-May, Access Services reached out again, but this time they were finding more of the homeless population they were working with were testing positive for COVID-19. They wanted to know if we were interested in collaborating to provide meals and groceries to this growing population. “We began thinking about the best way to support COVID positive individuals in Montgomery County, and building on the partnership with Manna was the best way forward,” said Jess Fenchel, Vice President for Behavioral Health at Access Services. “We are excited to see how this moves forward and how our partnership can benefit the homeless population in Montgomery County.”



## Feeding The Larger Community



As we were ringing in the New Year, our culinary team was preparing to begin our newest project: providing meals for Montco Senior Adult Activities Center’s daily meals and Meals on Wheels programs in Norristown, Glenside and Ambler. We had

prepared, packaged and delivered these meals for more than six weeks prior to COVID-19 closing senior centers, but Meals on Wheels continued and meal delivery became even more critical for seniors. At the end of March, we added Chestnut Hill as a Meals on Wheels site when their current meal provider closed. On average, we produce and deliver roughly 3,000 meals each week, plus 200 for the Chestnut Hill location. Our vision, which is even more vital in the midst of a global pandemic, is that everyone might be fed, so it has been our honor to continue to providing meals to homebound seniors.



## 3,705 Hours Served

Since Manna's start in the basement of St. John's UCC, volunteers have made our work possible, and our time during the COVID-19 pandemic is no different. Over the last three months, the number of individuals we have served has nearly tripled, and the way we have served those in need has changed. But our volunteers and their commitment to our mission have remained the same. Since mid-March when COVID-19 changed our lives, volunteers have served 3,705 hours. These volunteers have bagged to-go meals, sorted through donations, distributed grocery bags, and prepared meals to be delivered through Meals on Wheels. Manna on Main Street runs with the help of volunteers, and we are so grateful to those who have served alongside us in these unprecedented times.



Manna on Main Street is committed to ending hunger in the North Penn region by providing food, fulfilling social service and education needs, and conducting community outreach. Through a food pantry and soup kitchen, emergency financial aid, counseling and referrals, and education opportunities, we serve those in need with the hope “that everyone might be fed.”

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