

Issue 2  
April 2020



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### *A Message from Hope*

As everyone is aware, we are being tested in the Hickory Nut Gorge and around the country as a result of Federal, State, and local governmental “Stay Home” orders and “Keep Your Distance” recommendations, issued to help curb the spread of Coronavirus - and reduce the threat of COVID-19. This wide-ranging pandemic and steps to end it have changed all of our day-to-day lives, both personally and professionally. With far too many people out of work and children out of school, the needs for Outreach services have greatly increased. With so many within the service area impacted by loss of work, uncertainty of government assistance, and worries about the wellbeing of their children and loved ones, Outreach has been adding new clients each day and remains fully committed to providing assistance to those in the Gorge who need help. And with that commitment, and in order to do our best to preserve the health and safety of our clients and volunteers, we have changed our clients’ self-shopping food pantry model to a drive-up “curbside service” of pre-packaged boxes.

As another consequence of steps to control the Coronavirus, and after a long, difficult, and thoughtful tele-meeting discussion, the Outreach Board of Directors has made the difficult decision to cancel the Spring Arts & Crafts Festival scheduled for Memorial Day weekend. While Outreach, our vendors, and thousands of attendees are and will be disappointed, the Board unanimously agreed that this is the right decision to protect vendors, volunteers, and visitors - along with the community of Lake Lure.

The Spring Arts & Crafts Festival is the largest fundraiser each year for Outreach, so we are seeking alternative fundraising opportunities. Please read more in this newsletter about opportunities for your alternative support of Outreach’s mission.

Despite the challenges we confront by doing our part to help end the spread of COVID-19, we believe that things will get better. It may take a little while, but our lives will go back to normal. Sometimes challenges like this seem insurmountable, but we are so lucky to be supported by a community that always looks to help those who need us the most. Thank you to our individual community members, our churches, businesses and community foundations - and for all that all of you do to support Outreach and our clients.

*“This community is showing its support in so many ways. Donating masks for volunteers and clients, shopping for food, donating money to keep our mission alive. We are so fortunate to live in this generous community that always steps up for us”*

- Linda Ratschan, Outreach Manager

### *Temporary Changes at the Food Pantry: Coronavirus Update*

The onset of the COVID-19 infection brought pretty much everything to a grinding halt at Outreach and gave us pause to reassess and modify our processes to serve clients. Beginning in early March, changes were made to support clients and volunteers. Outreach will continue to monitor the situation, adhering to federal, state and local recommendations.



#### *Facility*

Outreach has taken steps to increase the frequency and types of cleanings in the Food Pantry, wiping down surfaces, shelving and door handles on a regular basis. High touch point areas are sanitized on a regular basis and at the end of each day. All external packaging is sprayed with a sanitizing solution as products come in from MANNA Foodbank or any of the local grocery stores.

#### *Clients*

Outreach clients remain in their cars and they receive “curbside service”. Volunteers prepare food boxes and deliver them to the cars while maintaining social distancing protocols. Outreach is able to supply specific types of products when available. This includes vegetarian, gluten-free and sugar-free options. Our clients have been extremely appreciative of this approach.

#### *Volunteers*

All volunteers wear face masks and gloves on a regular basis, consistent with CDC guidelines. Works spaces have been set up to allow for six feet between each volunteer. Of course, we ask volunteers not to come in when they are not

feeling well, have a fever or have an underlying illness.



#### *Food Pantry Products*

With COVID-19, a number of products have become very difficult to come by. We generally receive 200 pounds of meat with our bi-weekly delivery from MANNA Foodbank. Because of pent up demand and challenges with the food supply chain across the country, MANNA has been unable to provide most of the meat we need. As a result, we are purchasing meat, among a number of other products, at a significantly higher cost. The increase in expenses is straining an already limited budget.

#### *Cancellation of Fundraising Events*

We were deeply disappointed to have to make the difficult decisions to cancel our annual Shrimp and Grits Dinner Fundraiser and the Spring Arts & Crafts Festival. We know how much locals, vendors and visitors from all over the country love attending both events, and at Outreach, we feel a deep sense of community when we hold the events. However, our priority is to put everyone’s health and safety first. We hope to see you all at the Autumn Festival in October!





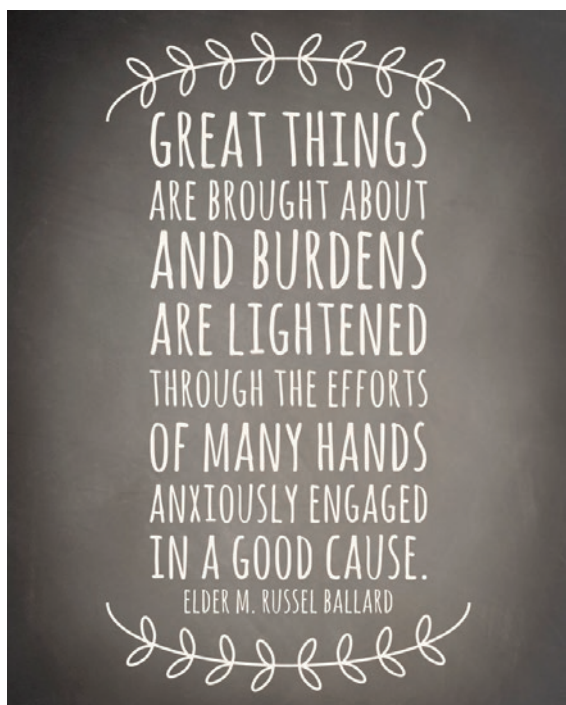
### How You Can Help

It is more important than ever that we receive support from the Hickory Nut Gorge community. Here are ways you can help!



### Volunteer Your Time

Outreach has a huge need for more volunteers. We have a variety of tasks; we can find one you may enjoy! If you are passionate about helping others and can spare three hours once a week, we have a shift for you! Contact the Outreach office for more information.



### Financial Support

Because we had to cancel the Shrimp & Grits Dinner Fundraiser and the Spring Arts & Crafts Festival, Outreach will have significantly less funds available to help our clients. Your financial donation will go a long way towards enabling us to keep the Food Pantry shelves stocked. For your convenience, PayPal donations can be made on our website.

### Help Fill Our Shelves

We have a large inventory of most canned goods. We are shopping almost daily to keep the shelves stocked with specific items. We have been unable to obtain a number of products we normally purchase through MANNA Foodbank or the discount outlets. If you would like to donate products, the items we need most are:

- Beef, beef, pork in 1 to 1 ½ pound packages
- Bottles of juice
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Paper towels, tissues
- Personal care items: shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, bar soap, deodorant

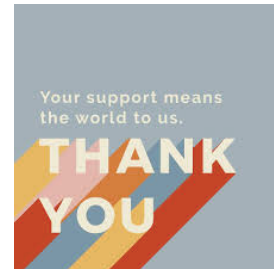


**Special Thanks**

We are so grateful to those that make financial and in-kind donations to Outreach. This quarter, we are especially grateful to the wonderful people in the Hickory Nut Gorge community for their extra support during the COVID-19 crisis.

- To the following organizations that provided grants in the first quarter:
  - Emergency and Disaster Response Fund Grant from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina for increased Food Pantry expenses
  - Rutherford County Endowment Grant from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina for Food for Kids Program expenses
  - Immediate Opportunities and Needs Grant from Dogwood Health Trust to partially fund a van for food shopping and some food delivery
  
- To the following organizations for their donations of amazing amounts of food products:
  - The Ingles Team, spearheaded by Bob Cassano
  - Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Community Center (900+ pounds of food!)
  - Friends of the Library
  - Lake Lure Inn
  
- To the following organizations for pet food products:
  - Blue Ridge Humane Society
  - P.A.W.S.
  
- To the following organizations for their generous financial donations
  - Lake Lure Classical Academy Sunshine Club
  - Fairfield Mountains Chapel Women of the Church
  - Hickory Nut Gorge Foundation – Funding to replace lost revenue due to cancellation of Shrimp and Grits Dinner Fundraiser
  - To our friends at the Mountain Breeze, for their donation of advertising space

- To all individuals, churches and businesses that provided financial support to our programs, especially during this unprecedented time
- Although some donors have moved away from our area, they continue to support us
- To all local health professionals, first responders and all essential workers that are taking care of and serving our community members



**Who We Served – Food Pantry:  
January – March 2020**

91%	White / Caucasian
9%	Black / African American
0%	Latino
54%	Male
46%	Female
62%	Children (0-17)
32%	Adults (18-64)
6%	Seniors (65+)
110	Average number of families served each month
425	Average number of individuals served each month

**Who We Served – Food for Kids:  
January – March 2020**

6	Average # of children receiving weekday school lunches
45	Average # of children receiving weekend backpacks

## *2020 Calendar of Events*

5/23 – 5/25 Lake Lure Spring Arts & Crafts  
Festival - CANCELLED

10/17 – 10/18 Lake Lure Autumn Arts &  
Crafts Festival - On Schedule



## *About Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach: Our Mission*

Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving families in the Hickory Nut Gorge community, which extends into four counties. Our mission is to help eliminate hunger and provide emergency services with love and compassion to those in need that live in our community. Outreach is solely funded through donations from generous members of our community, fundraisers, and local food drives. Outreach does not receive any federal funds. Food and other products are purchased at a minimal cost from the MANNA Food Bank (a Feeding America partner), as well as at local stores. All Outreach programs and activities are fully supported by 40+ volunteers.

Visit us at <https://hickorynutgorgeoutreach.org>