



COVID-19 ARTICLES AND RESEARCH / FRONT PAGE FEATURE / GENERAL / APRIL 22, 2020

Shifting Focus: 27 Businesses and Organizations Working to Feed New York City



By Annette Nielsen

We first started talking about featuring organizations and businesses that are stepping up during this extraordinary time back in March. While you could always find press on laudable work during pre-COVID times, it feels even more important now to accentuate the positive initiatives led by tireless, innovative and generous members of New York City.

As this crisis exposes the cracks in our already-fragile systems and has an impact that goes well beyond the most vulnerable, we want to highlight some of the amazing food businesses and organizations working to feed the city by facilitating access to important financial resources, keeping people employed, and strengthening our food system. These businesses and organizations address food insecurity and issues related to nutrition for school children, college students, families, the elderly, and those who have changed their way of operating by nimbly pivoting to tangential operations with a reduced workforce.

The Center is always eager to discuss these essential topics, and now we're doing so primarily in virtual settings. Please read about the heroes doing this heartwarming work, many in person and on the front lines. We know we haven't included everyone in this assembly, so, if you know of an organization or business that should appear in this space, please let us know by emailing info@nycfoodpolicy.org.

List of Organizations/Businesses (in alphabetical order)

Campaign Against Hunger

City Beet Kitchen

City Harvest

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LIC Relief
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NY Common Pantry
Queens Together
Red Rabbit
ReThink Food
Teens for Food Justice
Westside Campaign Against Hunger

The Campaign Against Hunger

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? TCAH is especially committed in times of crisis to ensure our mission, which is to meet the needs of the most vulnerable among us and to be sure that their voices are heard in any relief efforts. COVID-19 necessitated several changes in our operational scope. We implemented "curbside" distribution with enhanced safety measures to protect our staffs and clients' safety and provide equitable access to food by impacted New Yorkers. We also implemented online shopping so that clients can shop for groceries in the comfort of their homes, thereby limiting one-on-one interaction. To ensure continuity of services, we have launched a help desk to assist clients in navigating online applications for social service benefits such as SNAP and free tax preparation.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? The pandemic has further exacerbated the plight of thousands of already-struggling New Yorkers, and with thousands plunged into unemployment, the need for food has grown tremendously throughout the city. We are being called upon by elected officials, ACS, NYCHA, the YWCA, among other partners, to provide food to individuals who are normally outside the scope of our operations. To meet emerging community needs, we have mobilized our resources to distribute thousands of bags of nutritious food to seniors sheltering at home and to the newly unemployed, so that they can meet the basic needs of their families.

We are sustaining our operations through the generosity of donors, partners, and longstanding friends along with foundations who have come alongside us to ensure that families who struggle with food security do not go hungry during this crisis. While we are receiving support, the need continues to increase daily, which means that we constantly run

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out of food items as individuals who have never joined the lines wait so that their children and elderly parents do not go hungry. We are currently serving 7000 families weekly, a number that we estimate will soon increase to 10,000. Our employees have gone above and beyond the call of duty, packing upwards of 1500 bags of groceries daily to ensure that families can put food on their tables. Our staff remains committed to meeting the needs of families who rely on TCAH. In just one month, we distributed enough food for approximately one million meals, an unprecedented number considering that TCAH normally serves three million meals annually.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that “normal” look like? How different will things be in a year? We estimate that the disproportionate economic and social impacts of COVID-19 will be felt long after the curve is flattened, as millions of New Yorkers try to go back to work. As many businesses shutter in the aftermath of COVID-19, compounded by an economic recession, we expect that the meal gap will widen exponentially and that many families who did not previously rely on food pantries and soup kitchens will need assistance in the upcoming months. We are working on the ground to meet needs; however, we do not have the infrastructure to impact our communities as much as we would like. Space is a challenge for TCAH. We are currently located in three separate spaces that can no longer accommodate our operational size and capacity. We are willing to work; however, we need the proper tools.

What is the silver lining? The silver lining for us involves being more prepared as a city should another disaster occur, and being able to relocate to a larger space to house our operations so that we can meet city-wide needs.

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City Beet Kitchens

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

We remain committed to our mission as a social and community-minded non-profit food service and catering company.

Our business model has had to adapt quickly and drastically to the new world that we find ourselves in. Usually, our operation is two-pronged: institutional-based services and events-based services. Our institutional branch prepares and delivers over 2000 meals a day to our own network of shelters and affiliates in the fields of homeless services, LGBT+ organizations, veteran assistance, and substance abuse support programs. On our events side, we cater private and corporate events with tailored menus and fresh, local and sustainable food choices.

Since late March, we have found the demand for our institutional services has increased by 275 meals a day which is significant for our operation. We also require our kitchen, administrative and delivery personnel to double down their efforts while strictly adhering to food safety, sanitation and social-distancing protocols.

Our events side has had to rethink drastically as our core business of fundraisers, functions, meetings and gatherings of all sorts has disappeared. While we were able to shift much needed personnel to the institutional side, we have also launched several Covid-19 response efforts which have been heartily embraced by our client base. We've streamlined our menu and are preparing individually packaged meals for first responders, healthcare workers and other essential personnel. We're also offering a donation-based program, wherein individuals can sponsor meals for organizations of their choice. There has been an outpouring of support from our benefactors, donors, volunteers, etc. On all levels, we're seeing people wanting to help-out and offering to pitch-in – this has opened up new avenues for our team to provide creative and effective solutions to do good.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees?

Right now, we need all the help we can get. While much of our administrative personnel has been able to work from home, we rely heavily on our team members in the kitchen and in the field (many of whom have been putting in long hours to keep up with the demand and to follow health and safety guidelines carefully).

We have been able to secure a couple of grants that help in supporting our operation, and we've also been able to move some of our staff around laterally.

We're doing the utmost to protect our employees as well as, by extension, our clients. By virtue of our position within our parent company, Project Renewal, we have been lucky to have our

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needs for masks, gloves and supplies met, but like everyone else, we continuously need large quantities of them.

This week, we finalized a program providing all staff members working in the field a per-shift-bonus as a token of appreciation. Without their efforts, many of our clients would have nowhere else to turn to and we serve their most basic needs. So, it remains important to us that our staff be rewarded for the invaluable work they do during this crisis, even if it's as simple as making sandwiches.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year?

"Normal" sounds like the most farfetched utopia right now; for now, we just hope that we can get back to a city where people can move freely about without fear.

We have a conservative outlook and think that many of these new guidelines and restrictions will be with us for the foreseeable future. Even in the best possible scenario, after the curve flattens and the pandemic comes to a standstill, the economic impacts will be severe and long lasting. We anticipate having to meet the needs of many more folks who will require food programs or assistance to some degree.

As food service providers, our organizations should come together and think of more ways to effectively and efficiently work together, share resources or knowledge and find ways to deal with this "new normal" collectively. This crisis has highlighted how much weight our organizations truly carry in a fully-functioning society to be able to meet the needs of the vulnerable among us. Comparatively, on a global level, it is shocking to assess how much work both the private and non-profit sector does – and, in a perfect world, we hope this will ultimately influence public health and food policy for the better.

What is the silver lining?

As is often the case in a crisis, the silver lining is a strengthened sense of community – the outpouring of support from our community and the dedication of our staff members is what makes us stronger together. We believe that we are and have been successful in providing the services we want to provide and to live up to our motto – Doing Good, Deliciously.

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website: <https://www.citybeetkitchens.org/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/citybeetkitchens/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/citybeetkitchens>

City Harvest

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

City Harvest has always stepped up to feed New Yorkers in times of crisis, and now is no different. Designated an essential service by Governor Cuomo and New York State, City Harvest has mobilized to feed children, families, seniors, and all New Yorkers in need during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Even before the crisis, 2.5 million working-age New Yorkers were struggling to make ends meet, and now many more are experiencing crippling financial hardship. We are committed to feeding everyone who was relying on us before the crisis, and to meeting the increasing need as we face the devastating economic impacts of COVID-19.

Since our founding in 1982, City Harvest has focused on sourcing nutritious fruits and vegetables for our network of agency partners. Last year, more than half the 66 million pounds of food we sourced was fresh produce. However, to help meet the current increased demand for shelf-stable items, we have begun purchasing non-perishable food items in bulk. Additionally, to help our agency partners more safely accept and distribute food to their clients, we have been repacking donations into individual bags prior to delivery. Previously, many agencies had the capacity to accept bulk donations on pallets.

Since the start of the COVID-19 response, we have distributed more than 8.2 million pounds of food through our agency network, which is about 400,000 more pounds than what we distributed in the same time period last year. City Harvest will rescue and deliver 70 million pounds of food by the end of our fiscal year on June 30, 2020—six million more pounds than we projected at the beginning of the year.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Our fleet of 22 trucks continues to be on

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the road, rescuing and delivering food for community food programs across the city. We continue to adjust our ongoing operations in accordance with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and to meet the need.

As of April 17, 86 community food programs to whom City Harvest regularly delivers have been forced to completely shut down, resulting in a loss of more than one-third of normal agency operations. However, we still see large increases in demand for food, meaning that there are fewer places for New Yorkers in need to turn for food as the crisis continues to escalate. We have been working closely with the agencies that remain open to ensure that they have enough food to meet the growing need. We have also been working to connect those who have closed due to a lack of staffing with other volunteers.

Additionally, we have kept our nine Mobile Markets open so that communities in all five boroughs of New York City can continue to access free, fresh produce. All markets have been adjusted in accordance with social distancing recommendations, and all produce is pre-bagged so that community members can safely and efficiently pick up food. We have also successfully delivered more than 350,000 pounds of food to 13 Emergency Food Distribution Sites, 10 of which are receiving 4,000 to 12,000 pounds of food per week to distribute in high-need neighborhoods, particularly those where community food programs have shut down, including Brownsville, Brooklyn; Harlem, Manhattan; and Long Island City, Queens.

What is the silver lining? City Harvest is extremely fortunate to continue receiving a steady stream of food from donors across the city. We are actually sourcing more food on the local level than we were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local food donations continue to rise—in the past week (April 13 to April 19), we sourced 540,000 pounds of food from local food donors, which is 39 percent more than the same week last year. Many restaurants and businesses that have been forced to close have partnered with us to get more prepared meals to soup kitchens and food pantries in need. We have also had volunteers help us in incredible ways. Overall, we continue to see many New Yorkers step up to help their neighbors in need.

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Citymeals on Wheels

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? Our mission remains the same – Citymeals is nourishing homebound elderly New Yorkers. And that population is growing with Covid-19; more older New Yorkers are isolated at home now, unable to shop or cook for themselves. The demand for food has increased dramatically. And we have focused on scaling up our emergency response, packing and delivering 450,000 emergency meals for older New Yorkers in need across the five boroughs.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? The Citymeals team is working remotely, with the exception of staff at our Emergency Meal Distribution Center in the Bronx. We doubled that warehouse staff to keep pace with our emergency response. Initially, we had as many as 40 volunteers a day working there, and now we have the same number out delivering meals across the city.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? I hope there will be some semblance of a "new normal" by summertime. But Covid-19 will still have a significant impact on daily life, and it's critical that we keep the most vulnerable at the forefront of our efforts and provide an ongoing response. Going forward, we need to be more cognizant of and prepared, at the city, state and federal levels, for emergencies like this.

Things will be very different in a year, I imagine. And we know it will take the economy significant time to come back. So there will be more need than ever for Citymeals and other hunger organizations. Our home-delivered meal program has already increased by 10 percent, and we anticipate that growth will continue. This vulnerable population needs and deserves our care and investment. And Citymeals will capitalize on what we've learned thus far so that we are even more prepared in the future.

What is the silver lining? The many supporters who have rallied to support our mission. Almost 3,000 volunteers gave more than 10,000 hours of time to pack and deliver meals in the first month alone. They embody our ethos of neighbors helping neighbors. There is so much goodness and willingness to help in New York City.

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Dinner & Dialogue

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

We are now using Zoom to create Virtual Gatherings, which are opportunities to come together over food and talk about important issues. Some themes we have discussed over the last few weeks are resilience, fear, helping and rituals. In addition, along with our non-profit partners we are creating worksheets and video workshops for our participants. Regarding corporate events, we are developing virtual team-building models and have been submitting proposals to organizations.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Virtual events are less costly to organize, so there are fewer expenses. Since I am the only employee, I have been taking on other consultant work during this time.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normal and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? I would say any kind of normal will not happen for about six months. I think we will be doing in-person events in a year, but we will also be continuing with the virtual workshops.

What is the silver lining? Creating virtual content is adding a whole new element to the business. I am not sure I would have tried this if I had not been forced to. In addition, it is giving me time to better utilize social media and work on my website and blog.

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FieldTrip

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

Through this we wanted to help the community. When I say community I mean our community in Harlem, Bronx and upper Manhattan. We knew we couldn't afford to close, so we found a way to stay open while helping our community. It helped us better understand how FieldTrip can continue to do this work as it expands to other similar communities in the future. We know that this is something we want to continue in terms of how we do business.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees?

Our biggest source of income has been the support we've received from across the country to help us feed the healthcare workers and families in need. We have also been fortunate to receive a couple of grants from other organizations doing this work. As a result of staying open and pushing through with a new model of operation, we have been able to bring back 70 percent of our staff, most of whom are getting more hours of work than they had before this crisis. The biggest change we've made is, like everyone else, having to work only from a takeout and delivery only model.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year?

Right now, we are working toward an opening of June 1, based on what NY leadership is projecting. We think the new normal will look different in the sense that gathering to eat in-store might not happen right away. New modes of operation and interaction will need to be in place. In a year, we should have built a comfort level with our new normal and learned how to navigate life better despite that reality.

What is the silver lining? The silver lining is that in helping ourselves stay open, we modeled a business strategy that has helped other businesses in the community stay open by following suit. My team has become much stronger from this experience, and I know we will all find a way to adapt and forge ahead because that's what we have to do.

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How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

God's Love We Deliver provides nutrition therapy by cooking and delivering medically tailored meals to people in the New York City metropolitan area who are living with severe illness. This last year, we delivered two million meals to 8,200 clients, children and caregivers. This year, we will cook and deliver many more than two million meals to approximately 10,000 clients.

Almost everything about our medically-tailored meal program has changed as a result of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing meals to those people in NYC who are most susceptible to getting – and dying from – COVID-19 is more important than ever during this unprecedented crisis. As many of our clients are elderly and all are living with severe medical conditions, our home-delivered meals are critical to their ability to stay at home and out of the hospital.

NYC has been the epicenter of the pandemic, and the intensity began early on. There were challenges immediately, and we have been compelled to innovate virtually every day. With guidance changing almost on an hourly basis, and much of it not targeted to the food-delivery industry, we have created new protocols interpreting that guidance in real-time in order to keep volunteers, staff and clients safe.

In one week in March, we had more than 1,000 volunteers cancel their shifts. Our volunteers more than double our staff each year, and we rely heavily on them for food production and delivery, So this trend was a major concern. We had to weave CDC guidance and social-distancing measures into our production structures to keep the kitchen running, our vans on the road and our clients protected. Recognizing the need for distancing, we also put in place work-from-home protocols for many non-operations staff in order to limit crowding in our facility.

We were concerned that during the containment phase we might be shut down or unable to deliver, so in the first weeks, we mobilized a huge volunteer effort to package and deliver 4,600 bags of a week's worth of shelf-stable food to our clients. This weekend, we are packaging and delivering 140,000 more shelf-stable meals to give our clients some peace of mind in case delivery is interrupted.

God's Love specializes in reaching the most vulnerable with "last mile" delivery. We switched to "no contact" deliveries early on and stepped up all sanitation protocols. This proved challenging, as we had to access adequate personal protective equipment and items like hand sanitizer. Thankfully, we have received many generous donations, but it was very difficult for a while.

As senior centers and care facilities across the city shuttered, we experienced a huge uptick in referrals – four to five times the usual number each week. Since the beginning of March, we have welcomed 1,000 new clients into our program. We are cooking and delivering 22 percent more meals each day, and there are more and more referrals to process. We have endeavored to work closely with the City, our coalitions and other healthcare partners to ensure that those who truly need our service get it and to make sure we do a warm handoff to other services for those who do not.

As more and more people reached out to us from the community, we adapted a streamlined menu, overseen by our team of registered dietitians, to get the maximum production out of our kitchen while maintaining the dietary requirements of our compromised population.

So, almost everything has changed – from our menu, to our protocols, to our delivery model. But the one thing that has not changed is our community, and our commitment to clients. God's Love is no stranger to crisis. In fact, we were founded at the height of one – the HIV/AIDS epidemic – and it is amazing to see our community rallying again to serve those who need us most. We always say that we deliver meals, nutrition, health, dignity, hope, and love, and this is truer than ever during this crisis.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees?

In addition to the many changes discussed above, we are all getting more comfortable with new technology: for meetings, referrals and communication. The culture at God's Love is very important to our mission and to the love that comes through our service. With half our staff now offsite, communication has become ever more important.

Operating amidst the pandemic has, unsurprisingly, taken a tremendous toll on our staff. Many are home to take care of their loved ones or have children who are now out of school. We have had to hire temporary workers to fill some of these gaps, especially drivers who can deliver. And, given the increase in referrals, we have also hired temps who work directly with clients doing intakes and nutrition assessments. In addition, there is an emotional toll that results

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from caring for those most susceptible to the virus and trying to meet the needs of more and more people each day.

To acknowledge this situation, we have done several things to support our workforce. In advance of new state and federal guidance, God's Love made our leave policies more flexible and added extra sick days should people need them. We have implemented bonuses for all operations staff who have continued to work on site as well as bonuses for additional work. And, almost 6 weeks into our response, we are pre-delivering two additional weeks' worth of shelf-stable food to clients to allow our building to close for a week and our staff to rest up for the road ahead.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? At this time, we hear a lot about our "new normal," and I think it is important to note that nothing about this situation is normal! While I hope that some things return to "normal" – like the ability to buy toilet paper – I really hope that we don't return to the status quo.

COVID-19 could serve as a huge wake up call about the structural deficiencies of two major systems that deeply affect our clients: public health and the food system.

This crisis has highlighted how much we as a nation have depended on community-based nonprofits to "do" public health. The pandemic has shown these organizations to be experts in population health, and it is important during this time to rely on their expertise and experience – especially when the focus is on keeping vulnerable populations healthy and at home. On the other side of this crisis, this realization cannot be forgotten, as it so often is, and needs to guide policy going forward.

Furthermore, this vital social services safety net needs to be funded, resourced and, perhaps most importantly, connected to the healthcare system. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the disproportionate effect that where you live, breathe, eat and play has on health outcomes. These are the social determinants of health, and God's Love has been among the visionaries across the country working to connect healthcare and community care systems. We have innovated through technology partnerships, referral-tool creation and data-exchange to create systems of care that help people stay healthy and in their homes. But it has been an uphill battle. The need for acceleration in resourcing these systems is ever more apparent in the face of the pandemic and must continue as we move into a post-COVID world.

COVID-19 has also revealed how disjointed our food system is and the need to think about nutrition and its impact on public health, not only from the supply chain side – as we see tremendous food waste from the shuttering of non-essential businesses and our farms and plants in possible crisis – but also the feeding side. Every major department of local and federal government has jurisdiction over some area of food, making it difficult to organize and mobilize during emergencies to feed populations at risk. These silos result in fragmented funding, and the cycle reinforces itself. For example: MTM agencies and our critical intervention often get left out of the planning calculus in emergencies, as we are not part of most established federal funding streams. This must change. In such a fragmented landscape, there is the added challenge of connecting the food system to the emergency response from the medical, social, and governmental fields.

My hope for the real "new normal" is that we make desperately needed changes to these structures, so that we are not confronted with the same issues in the next crisis.

What is the silver lining? It is hard to find a silver lining in this shocking situation. If we see some of the changes I note above, then perhaps we can call that a silver lining. Similarly, the urgency of responding with speed and quality during this time has resulted in a number of innovations that may be good to institutionalize once we are out of the crisis. But they do not erase the suffering and loss that has resulted from the health catastrophe that is this pandemic. And yet our community has grown closer – if that is possible – rallying to respond meaningfully to emergencies, much as we did during our founding. The collective effort is a reminder of how connected we are to one another at all times, not just in crisis, and how important a sense of belonging is to humans. Almost as vital as food.

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Great Performances

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? As the Coronavirus began to shutter the city, we began to retool the kitchen for the unexpected. Within days, we started to produce and deliver the first of 40,000 weekly meals for

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the Department for the Aging (DFTA) to housebound elderly who are no longer able to go to their local senior center for meals and company. In this time of emergency, we are feeding the most vulnerable New Yorkers and keeping our family at work.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Our core team remains in place, and we are now focused on the work we are doing for the city and spending time preparing for the future. We are committed to coming out of this chapter together. We're also using this time to do all the projects we struggled to get to before March 13, when our world changed. Hopefully, we will continue to find creative ways to keep the ovens and lights on until we can resume normal business operations.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? Our best guess, from an events perspective, is that we'll gradually see a return to normalcy late summer into fall. It's difficult to guess as there are still more questions than there are answers, and we need to better understand the science behind transmission, improve our testing programs, and develop a vaccine before we'll really see things return to normal.

We think that travel will change, as will the density of gatherings. People want to stay safe. And we'll probably see higher health and safety precautions, like masks and restrictions on direct contact with common objects and things we don't often think about, such as buffet spoons, coffee spigots, door knobs and cash machines.

As much as we want to anticipate the end of this current environment, we have to be patient and wait a bit longer – and maintain a practical optimism!

What is the silver lining? The silver lining is that we've had to work more closely together because we've had to physically be more apart. We've been practicing more flexible thinking, really stretching ourselves with out-of-the-box practices that will continue once we're able to resume business as usual. Learning new ways to communicate via conferencing has stretched all of our technical capabilities, and it's been incredible to watch our partner venues like Asia Society and Jazz at Lincoln Center hold successful virtual galas and concerts. We've also gotten closer to some of our customers and clients, which has been a gift at this challenging time. Being socially distanced has really reinforced our need to connect.

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Green Bronx Machine

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? We have gone from a classroom model to a 100 percent digital model, supporting our learners and teachers via Zoom, on-line instruction and teleconferencing. Additionally, we are committing serious time and resources to insure that 100 percent of our most vulnerable seniors and families receive weekly door-to-door food deliveries. We have made ourselves available to students and faculty with dedicated online and phone access. We are planning to distribute more than 100,000 seedlings to community gardens and those interested in growing victory gardens across the Bronx as well as to plant our food-for-others farms in early May. We are providing daily reading and vocabulary-building exercises online via social media and have mounted a drive to ensure that 100 percent of our students have access to technology and the internet.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Green Bronx Machine has always been a lean, local operation. Unlike other organizations, we have no six-figure salaries or large staffing costs, and we are proud of our model and volunteers. We budget carefully in line with our strategic planning and ongoing revenue streams. During the COVID crisis we have initiated an online fundraising campaign where the purchase of a tee shirt translates into the delivery of a bag of groceries. The biggest change we have made has been the temporary closing of our classroom farm and operating hub – the national health, wellness and learning center at CS 55 – to an offsite and remote location. Green Bronx Machine intends to retain valued employees via our strategic planning process, which took place before the onset of the COVID crisis.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? While we are not physically with our students and colleagues to the extent we would optimally desire, we are still providing full-time services while ensuring that the most vulnerable families receive basic services. Each and every day we are working smarter to evolve our pedagogy and our impact on the challenges of this crisis. The new normal looks like more

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families having access to healthy food and more residents, students and families growing their own food.

What is the silver lining? We believe in the humanity and empathy of our community and appreciate and celebrate the heroes who are emerging daily.

Social Media Channels where we can find you?

Website(GBM) | Facebook(GBM) | Twitter(GBM) | Instagram(GBM)

Facebook(Ritz) | Twitter(Ritz) | Instagram (Ritz)

Green Top Farms

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

Our mission has always been to support our local farmers, and now these farms, which have short supply chains, have turned out to be the most dependable option during the pandemic. So they are now supporting all of us when we need them most. When this began, our business model changed overnight from corporate catering to home delivery. We then began raising funds to feed New Yorkers on the frontlines and those at the highest risk through our **FARM TO TABLES IN NEED** program, and through partners like World Central Kitchen and Frontline Foods.

Our mission has not really changed, but our business model definitely has. We still prepare food as simply and honestly as we can, while supporting local farmers and taking care of our workers. Our business has transformed from feeding people communally to feeding them individually, whether at their home or through our farm-to-tables in need program.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Taking care of our people has been priority #1. How do we protect our team from something that no one else in the world has been able to stop? After weeks of stressing over this, our conclusion was, we can't. True to most other things in life, we can only do our best and control what we can control. Sanitizing the facility, providing masks, and taking temperatures are part of that, and they do more than just protect us physically; they also ease the psychological stress associated with work during a pandemic. We have provided bikes to a few employees, and found rides for others so our team can avoid public transit. Our walk-in box and dry storage are now open to our team to grocery-shop, and if we don't have something they need, we order it. We have also instituted a temporary hazard pay.

We are selling packages of prepared foods in bundles that are either omnivorous or allergen-free. We are also raising money from our community directly to cover the costs of preparing and delivering individual meals to non-profit partners around the city such as New York Common Pantry, Queens Feeds Hospitals, and, more recently, World Central Kitchen, run by chef Jose Andres. The biggest change we've made is that our clientele has shifted from office workers to hospital workers and our hungry neighbors. We are blessed with a loyal, veteran staff whom we have worked hard to keep safe and help however we can, including providing groceries from our inventory and hazard pay.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? This crisis is different in that it's conclusion is unpredictable and without a timeline. One thing we can count on as cooks and farmers is that people need to eat; but will people eat together in the same way? Perhaps the future of group dining is not in corporate cafeterias or restaurants, but on Zoom. Either way, there will be no shortage of demand for the people who feed us. Hopefully people come back to work to a grateful society, eager to fight for them.

Our new normal has already arrived, we have quickly started feeding homes and individuals instead of offices and large groups. Offices will be open in a year and people will be eating together, but they won't be eating as much family style.

What is the silver lining? As we adapt to supply-chain issues, our motto—"eating what's coming off the farms"—has never been more relevant. While coronavirus might mean we can't be as choosy about what we're eating, it actually presents us with an opportunity to eat better. We firmly reject the notion that the only way to feed people in this crisis is through processed calories produced by large companies with huge supply chains. If anything, as large plants like the one in Sioux Falls start to close, family farms are proving exactly why they are the cornerstone of a sustainable food system.

The silver lining is that the illness is forcing our communities to come together to take care of each other, and that bond can never be broken.

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Social Media Channels where we can find you?

Website | Instagram

Harlem Grown

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

After the initial shock of the pandemic came the social distancing, then the closure of schools. After offering online programming our greatest need is fresh, healthy food for our children and their families. So we launched our “Harlem helping Harlem” campaign.

We fundraise and partner with local restaurants and purchase HOT meals that we deliver to our most needy families.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? As a non profit we value our staff and are paying them and maintaining their healthcare. Those who can work from home are doing so and the others are working three-hour days (11AM-2PM) twice a week and receiving their full wages.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that “normal” look like? How different will things be in a year? We operate on our “farms” and in schools, so when things are lifted we will slowly resume programming with a few adjustments. Smaller groups and safe food handling will definitely be implemented.

What is the silver lining? Silver linings are everywhere. Harlem Grown was born out of the last national crisis ten years ago and here we are now, with the support of everyday New Yorkers. When we ask, they respond. I LOVE NYC!

Social Media Channels where we can find you?

Website | Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | YouTube

Henry Street Settlement

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

Our mission has not changed; in fact we've quadrupled down on our mission of opening doors for Lower East Side residents and all New Yorkers in need. However, our programming has pivoted dramatically. Some examples:

- We're now providing three meals a day to 600 people in our four apartment-style homeless shelters and two supportive housing residences so that residents can stay in place.
- Our Meals on Wheels program has expanded by more than 30 percent, delivering 13,000 meals a week, mostly to seniors and immunocompromised people.
- We're working with the organization Vision Urbana to open a food bank in our Boys & Girls Republic community center on East 6th Street.
- We've launched a Helpline with 16 caseworkers from across the agency to answer questions about anything from unemployment insurance issues to food needs. We are hearing about a lot of food insecurity from older people.
- More than 100 volunteers are aiding staff in making 1,500 calls a week to isolated seniors.
- Our mental health counseling, arts classes, and ESOL, high school equivalency, and jobs programs are being held online.
- We're launching a bereavement group for local people who have lost a loved one to COVID.
- Henry Street has launched several emergency cash-assistance programs, including those in support of undocumented displaced workers and artists.
- To accomplish all this, dozens of workers have been redeployed from suspended programs (such as afterschool programs) to programs that are expanding.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? This question is answered largely above—we've made massive programmatic shifts. These have been supported by a combination of funding from city agencies, large foundations such as Robin Hood, support from the Henry Street Board of Directors, and individual supporters. Administrative staff are working at home, but some 200 frontline essential workers are working onsite at their jobs—or new jobs. A big change has been developing protocols to ensure their safety with PPE and rules for social distancing.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that “normal” look like? How different will things

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be in a year? We really can't guess when we'll be able to open all of our programs in their previous form. Some—such as preschool and afterschool programming—will wait until the next school year. Others, such as in-person mental health counseling, we hope to open as soon as it's safe. But we know that our community will look very different when this is over. Henry Street's neighbors are among the lowest income in the city—already living close to the edge financially—and we know that people will need workforce support, food, emergency cash assistance, mental health support, and more.

What is the silver lining? There's not much that's good about this horrific crisis. But one silver lining is that our organization has 127 years of experience, resources, partners, stamina, and compassion that have enabled us to pivot in the way we have. Our team is incredibly dedicated, committed, and versatile; people are performing in a totally selfless manner and have banded together in an incredibly impressive way.

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Holy Apostles

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

We have suspended our Volunteer Program, and our Soup Kitchen now grab and go. Our Bagged Lunch Program is now delivery, and our Back Pack Pantry Program is pick up or deliver.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? We are working with a dedicated, committed staff and a small core of committed volunteers. We have moved from sit down cafeteria style to grab and go. We have continued to operate at full steam and fulfill the high demand for our services.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? Those questions are unanswered and we are waiting for guidance on best practices set forth by State and City government recommendations. It is uncertain what normalcy will look like, depending on testing and best practices. This is like the 2007-2008 Great Recession, H1N1 (Swine Flu), Ebola, Hurricane Sandy all rolled into one with unknown consequences. The impact on our food systems, food insecurity and the meal gap could be devastating.

What is the silver lining? Every cloud has a positive aspect. What we can hope for is a real understanding of food policy and our safety net, and for emergency food providers, Federal, City and State policy makers and elected officials to be stronger, smarter and even better collaborators. It takes a village but starts within our communities. We have made progress in this area.

Social Media Channels where we can find you?

[Website](#)

Hostos Community College

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

Our mission remains the same as we continue to support our students' academic success by assisting with any social-service support they require. We continue to provide students with weekly access to our on-campus food pantry by appointment. And we provide most services remotely via phone, email or telehealth.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? The team is in constant communication with one another throughout the week. From daily text greetings to check-ins, to conference calls, we have found ways to support one another and problem-solve as a unit. Despite all the challenges, the team seems to be in good spirits and motivated to assist our students through these unprecedented times.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? We are looking forward to the future. We are hopeful that we will be able to return to some sort of normalcy by the Fall 2020 semester. We are guided by the governor and mayor's directives and will continue to follow CDC guidelines to ensure that our college community remains safe. The new normal could possibly look like continued social distancing,

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less hand-shaking and more virtual high fives and virtual hugs. We may all be wearing masks on campus in the Fall. It is hard to tell, but I am hopeful that this will pass and we will learn from this experience.

What is the silver lining? I am an optimist and always hopeful for our future. The calm will eventually arrive following the storm. The silver lining, in my opinion, is that we have proven ourselves to be resilient, adaptive and innovative. We all learned and experimented with new technology to be able to continue to support our students through distance learning. When we come out of this storm, we are sure to have learned new skills and possibly changed some of the ways we do our day-to-day business.

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Hot Bread Kitchen

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? Since COVID-19, we have fully pivoted from our goal of placing women in good jobs in the food industry to (1) fundraising for and providing emergency assistance stipends in the amount of \$450/week to our workforce alumni to bridge the gap between unemployment and access to unemployment benefits, and (2) to provide counseling on unemployment insurance applications and accessing other resources (food, housing, childcare and schooling needs) that are available in the City. This activity is captured on this [page](#) on our website and in this [article](#).

In addition, while the vast majority of the 85 plus small food businesses in our second program, the small business kitchen incubator supporting minority- and women-owned businesses— have been able to support 8 to 9 businesses who are either continuing production for grocers or for the frontline healthcare effort. In order to accommodate this, we had to revise our kitchen standards and protocols. Previously we had up to 10 businesses in our shared kitchen at one time, and now we have to arrange for them to cook one at a time and ensure deep-cleaning and other worker-safety protocols.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? We are sustaining operations through continued fundraising, accessing the SBA PPP loan, and relying on our cash reserves to maintain all staff through this time. The biggest change we have made is to move to a remote work environment, which is not the norm for an organization that runs an incubator kitchen and a culinary workforce program. We have relied on intensive phone support for external communications with the alumni in our workforce program, and phone, email, and social communications with our businesses. We have staff supporting the kitchen operation on a very limited schedule and only if they can access the facility without taking public transportation while NY State is on PAUSE.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that “normal” look like? How different will things be in a year? It feels like it will take at least a year from now to return to some semblance of normal, and that is dependent on the path of the virus; the medical responses in the form of testing availability and access and vaccine availability and access; and state and federal policies as well as funding responses. Normal will not be the same in the food industry. In an industry that already struggled with low margins, rising labor and leasing costs, lack of safety nets for both workers and small businesses, and untenable expectations in consumer pricing, there will have to be a re-imagining of business models and the intersections of policy and funding access, owner interests, and community and consumer interests, to make the industry to be more equitable for the people who work in it and stand behind it. For us at Hot Bread Kitchen that means figuring out how to ensure diversity, equity, inclusion and viable economic opportunities both for small business owners and for workers.

What is the silver lining? New Yorkers' demand for food has always seemed insatiable and exciting. Now that these issues have been exposed on an industry that is not sustainable – defined by the fact that it cannot withstand a shock – I believe that New Yorkers, small business owners, and workers can and will come together to solve it in creative ways, because we all share a collective interest in the return and re-birth of food and community – the things that have always been a core part of the City's vibrancy and energy.

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Invisible Hands Deliver

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? We were born out of COVID-19! We bring groceries and supplies to the elderly and immunocompromised — those most at risk for severe reactions to the novel coronavirus.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? There isn't an adjustment for us per se since we never existed in a non-COVID time. Everything is remote (of course). We have no employees since everyone is a volunteer 😊 But it is incredibly important for everyone to feel valued and appreciated for their time and effort, that is the key to retention.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normal and what will that 'normal' look like? How different will things be in a year? We are thinking a lot about what Invisible Hands looks like post-COVID. We recognize this is a service that could be incredibly helpful even when we're not in the time of the coronavirus, but for now we're really focused on making it through corona and seeing what the world looks like on the other side.

What is the silver lining? Invisible Hands has shown us here how quickly and powerfully people pull together in times of crisis. COVID has brought so much fear and pain into people's lives, but the fact that we have been able to facilitate over 3,300 deliveries and amass over 11,000 volunteers speaks to how hungry people are to help. New York is quite literally the epicenter of the epidemic right now, THE most dangerous place in the world to be, and our volunteers are still out there doing deliveries every day because of how much they care about their communities.

Social media channels where we can find you?

Website | Facebook | Instagram | Twitter

Italians Feed America

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? We founded this organization as a way to help communities and the restaurant industry and to thank frontline workers during COVID-19 by using our network of food brands, food purveyors, and chefs.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? I think that NY will be able to reopen step by step starting in mid-June, but it will take 18 to 24 months to have something looking the way before COVID-19, here and all over the world.

I think we will need to apply many rules in restaurants and all public businesses and venues to avoid a new outbreak. Many will lose jobs for a long time before we have a complete relaunch, and we will need to assist them as much as we can during this period.

What is the silver lining? NY, America and humans all over the world will be stronger after this. We will also be more prepared and united.

Social Media Channels where we can find you?

Website | Facebook | Instagram | Facebook(Chef Facchini) | Instagram(Chef Facchini)

Just Food

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? Given Just Food's mission to build equitable, community-driven solutions among historically and economically marginalized communities in the region, we haven't needed to change our mission — in fact, it has become even more essential. The local food supply chain between small-to-mid scale regional farmers and impacted NYC communities is critical in these unprecedented times. We have ramped up our focus to ensure that farmers stay in operation and that community-based food models like CSA and Community-Run Farmers' Markets are active, and we continue healthy food preparation for vulnerable populations by Just Food Community Chefs.

Just Food remains active in equitable food/farm policy action to amplify the challenges and needs of our local food supply chain. We advocated to NYS Agriculture & Markets for CSAs to be recognized as a food-essential model where not only farmers are supported, but their community based sites are allowed to be operational as well.

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How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Funding for POC-led, equity-based work has always been a stretch. In times of economic recession Just Food is even more impacted. Our organization has already been evolving to become more nimble. From staff to Board, Just Food is amplifying proven community leaders collaboratively on developing a slate of new projects, partnerships, and seeking funding. We feel this is the best way to maximize community capacity and experience in order to adapt in the face of unprecedented challenges like COVID-19. Our biggest change has been reimagining how to foster community in the age of social distancing. We cannot afford to lose our connection to each other through local, healthy food and its cultural significance. In May, we are rolling out CSA and Farmer-specific webinars to build strategies to address aggregation, distribution, and membership — as well as unforeseen COVID-related expenses. We also adapted our culturally relevant Community Chef training programs—such as our upcoming training with Green Thumb gardeners beginning in May, and our Brooklyn Food Hub/policy sessions with the NYC Department of Health—to be executed virtually. We are also exploring how to support last-mile delivery of farm-fresh food to homebound communities.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that “normal” look like? How different will things be in a year? There is no returning to normal if we want to thrive in a more humane and resilient society. It is time to explore alternative economies and systems. We should focus on land and food sovereignty as keys to building a new normal that is rooted in a democratic food movement in NYC and beyond. How much our government, policies, and people commit to change will determine how this year will unfold. Just Food will continue working to foster a food-based solidarity economy.

What is the silver lining? We are fortunate to have resilient agricultural practices and forms of true democracy from Black, Brown, and Indigenous cultures —as well as emerging leaders to help inform our collective path in solidarity moving forward.

Social Media Channels where we can find you?

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? Lenox Hill Neighborhood House's kitchens and most of the programs through which we feed people 390,000 meals a year are now physically closed, but making sure our clients are food-secure remains our top priority. We continue to turn out meals for thousands of frail and homebound older adults on the East Side of Manhattan and to host a GrowNYC food-box site. We are now staging a site for the Department for the Aging's new meals-delivery effort, and staff from across our programs have been redeployed to call thousands of older adult clients each week to check on them and coordinate meal delivery. We have also partnered with the wonderful organization Rethink to provide meals to the 80 women in our Women's Mental Health Shelter.

I oversee The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, our farm-to-institution training and technical assistance program. While in-person training and technical assistance are suspended, we are now working to finalize an ambitious eLearning version of The Teaching Kitchen along with downloadable materials we have been working on since last September.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Our focus is supporting the clients most threatened by COVID-19, including the residents of our Women's Mental Health Shelter, who are over 45 and live with mental illness, the formerly homeless living with mental illness in our supportive housing residence, the 1,200 frail and homebound clients of our Geriatric Care Management Program and our 4,000 senior center members. The challenges are often extreme, as clients and staff fall ill and as City agencies struggle to respond. Most of our other programs have now moved online. Our staff are doing incredible work, and we are working to support them and to support their health and wellness through this crisis.

What is your best guess as to when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that “normal” look like? How different will things be in a year? Normal is a long way off for nonprofits – long after we reopen, the sector will be devastated by the loss of fundraising and program revenue and by ongoing cuts to government and philanthropic dollars. Lenox Hill Neighborhood House will survive this downturn as we have survived others – by focusing on our clients and core programs. In a year we will still be here, feeding people as we have done for 126 years and working to more broadly support the health of low-income New Yorkers by helping other nonprofit organizations to serve more fresh, healthy and local food.

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What is the silver lining? COVID-19 has highlighted the fragility and inequality of our food systems and will add new momentum to all of our efforts to create a healthier, more equitable, local and sustainable food system.

For The Teaching Kitchen, the silver lining is that we have been able to focus on the development of our ambitious eLearning version of the program, The Teaching Kitchen Online, which we expect to pilot this summer. And, of course, nonprofit staff across the country are now much more familiar and comfortable with online learning and meetings, which should ease our rollout. Updates about The Teaching Kitchen Online will be available on our website.

Social Media Channels where we can find you?

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LIC Relief

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? LIC Relief was formed in direct response to the impending economic and food insecurity issues that were inevitably going to arise from COVID-19. We formed ahead of the curve, before schools and businesses closed.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Our Board and shift workers are 100 percent volunteer-based. We use 100 percent of the money raised to pay restaurants to make meals for those in need in a community-based eco-system model. We help keep the restaurants open and employees paid while sending out more than 4,000 meals a week to NYCHA residents. We also have a non-perishable food pantry that is open Monday through Friday from 3 to 7pm for people to pick up what they need. See the latest coverage on the restaurant part of our operation [here](#).

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normal and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? I think a short-term sense of normalcy will happen mid-May when they start to open businesses. Beyond that, this has long reaching repercussions. Many small businesses will never recover and unemployment will skyrocket through the beginning of 2021.

What is the silver lining? I think a silver lining is showing our city, state and federal government the cracks in infrastructure and where we "went wrong" regarding delayed responses to the pandemic.

Social Media Channels where we can find you

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Lifeline Food Packages/The Connected Chef

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? Since the outbreak of COVID-19 our business has shifted from in-person cooking classes and workshops to offering a full schedule of virtual offerings for families. We began with a set of donation-based offerings that included a family cooking class and children's robotics and have since moved to a low-cost (\$11 per class) model that includes a full menu of adult and kids classes.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Honestly, we are struggling right now with very minimal income to see us through. We have applied for disaster funding and various loans through the Small Business Administration and other avenues. In order to stay afloat, we have shifted from an employee/employer model of business to a more cooperative model where our educators receive a percentage of profits from the classes they teach. I'd have to say that shifting all our programming to a virtual platform is by far the largest change through all of this. We are hoping that by using this cooperative model for our staff and extending our reach beyond NYC, we will be able to capture a larger audience with our virtual programming.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? I don't think things will ever completely go back to the way they were, but feel that by September we will be able to safely move away from social distancing. I am hoping that people will understand that even when the numbers of those infected decrease, we will still have a long way to go. I believe that, as a result of this, much of our life will remain virtual in various ways, but I'm hopeful that the connections we focus on will be deeply authentic and healing. I

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also don't think businesses will put such emphasis on in-office work any longer, and I feel our approach to education will shift dramatically.

What is the silver lining? As with many traumatic events, I have seen communities get closer and recognize what is truly important. I hope that perspective remains. I hope this allows us the opportunity to move away from such a production-driven society. We have had inequity in our healthcare and food systems for decades, but this crisis has highlighted those inequities unlike anything in the past. It's my belief that there is no more ignoring it. It is important that we are supporting vulnerable communities right now and following the leaders within such communities. My hope is that their voices are heard and that we allow the space for real, equitable solutions. This crisis has activated the humanity in us all on a deeper level and I don't believe one can ignore that.

Social Media Channels where we can find you?

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NY Common Pantry

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

We have moved all services outside to practice social distancing, removed choice from our pantry model and provided pre-packed bags.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? We have put our employees on a staggered schedule, eliminated most volunteers except for one or two, and are focused on our core programming – the food pantry and hot meals program, as well as senior feeding. We have hired temporary employees as necessary to supplement staff. Our biggest changes are removing choice, serving outside, eliminating congregate seating and the loss of volunteers. We have partnered with a number of other social service agencies to deliver food to food-insecure populations, because we recognize that the virus has prevented many from being able to come to our pantry. We are recognizing the sacrifice our essential employees are making, giving them extra pay for shifts when they are on site and providing them with work-from-home time and safety equipment in an effort to reduce exposure. We recognize the critical role they are playing.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? We believe we will not be able to return to normal as we knew it until there is a vaccine. Our service-delivery model prior to this required close interaction among people. We don't envision returning to that model in the near future, so we are examining what safety equipment and social-distancing measures we will need to put into place as we come back in order to keep focusing on the safety for our staff and clients. We will be using technology to reintroduce choice only through pre-ordering online, and we have to expect some loss of efficiency in our delivery model as our primary focus will be on keeping people safe. We will also be looking to implement a mobile delivery model as a way to address some of these concerns.

What is the silver lining? The good will of our supporters, industry, agencies, community members, and government in joining together and with us to confront this crisis. Many groups have developed innovative techniques to get food to those who are food insecure and are working with pantries, so we are not alone with this problem. It shows us that there is a path to ending food insecurity when we all focus and work together on this issue.

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Queens Together

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

When the virus began, we were planning on filing for 501(c)(3) status this coming June. Our organization was going to support small food businesses (restaurants and such) across Queens, NY. Our mission is to create a powerful voice out of many small ones. Our goals were advocacy, education, community service, discounted services and public relations.

We decided to jump in and create Queens Together. Our current mission: "Nourishing front-line healthcare professionals, essential workers, and those facing hunger while providing a lifeline to our neighborhood food businesses across Queens."

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How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? We are 100 percent volunteer-driven and donor-funded. Every dollar supports our stated mission.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? Normal may return in some way by August, 2020. Normal will be food businesses open but evolved to more of a ghost kitchen model with strong neighborhood connectivity — i.e. community service, fan-driven funding of the business, neighbors remembering who stepped up and who didn't. Fewer high-end food places open. Less of everything open.

A year from now there will be a new world for small business. New ways of connecting and socializing. I hope that quality time and community-centered support do not go away over time.

What is the silver lining? There are some true silver linings to this crisis. My own personal silver lining has been a return to serious daily cooking for loved ones, real quality time with my wife and son, more in-depth talks with friends and loved ones, long walks, real peace and quiet. Working remotely has allowed me all of these things plus the ability to create Queens Together with some amazing people. I have more time to help others.

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Red Rabbit

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? As school closures were announced, Red Rabbit pivoted its primary business overnight and mobilized its 100-plus employees and resources to immediately provide food for those who desperately need it, including children, older adults and families. Red Rabbit has been cooking and delivering food for over fifteen years and recognizes the importance now, more than ever, of continuing its mission to serve students and families delicious food with dignity.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? The majority of Red Rabbit's staff is working on the front lines of this outbreak, ensuring that communities continue to receive the food they desperately need while schools are closed. Our people, and their safety, are our priority. We are protecting our team members at every step, and in addition to following CDC guidelines, we have set up shuttles to and from our kitchen, we screen every person who enters our buildings, stop all cooking every two hours for PPE changing and kitchen sanitation, and are scheduling daily safety training. The Red Rabbit team is a passionate group of individuals who believe in Red Rabbit's mission. We are inspired on a daily basis by our team's commitment to serving the community and the work they are doing to reach people in neighborhoods that are not easily accessible.

Additionally, Red Rabbit is partnering with the Global Community Charter School and the Hot Bread Kitchen to use their large kitchens for meal preparation in order to ensure that our team is able to continue serving the community.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? Considering the long-term economic impact of stay-at-home orders, Red Rabbit is prepared to continue working to provide emergency food to communities across the New York metro area. Our partners rely on us to ensure the safety of their children and families, and we will take every precaution to continue to ensure they are safe in the coming months. We are preparing for the day when the states reopen schools, and anticipate changes in the way our partners distribute food, the size of cafeterias and backup options for remote learning. However, the number of people in need of food assistance is continuing to rise, and we will do everything in our power to make sure these people have a fresh and comforting meal to eat.

What is the silver lining? The heartbreaking ripple effects of this outbreak have brought our community together more than we've ever seen. In addition to working with schools, as we did prior to the outbreak, we have now partnered with numerous organizations in the New York metro area that are doing incredible work to provide meals to the communities they work with. Two of those organizations include World Central Kitchen and City Harvest. We are also incredibly grateful for our partnerships with Global Community Charter School, Public Prep, Coney Island Prep, Variety Boys and Girls Club and the Hot Bread Kitchen.

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ReThink Food

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

Our model has changed significantly since the outbreak of COVID-19. We primarily used to receive food donations from small- and medium-sized restaurants and corporate kitchens. With all of those partners closing and the fate of the restaurant industry still in question, we have pivoted to relying on larger donors including grocery stores and other food purveyors. Eventually, we will work with government agencies and farms to further solidify our supply chain not only to feed more people, but to help prevent the supply-chain breakdown we are seeing with the collapse of the restaurant industry.

We also launched our new initiative, the Restaurant Response Program, which provides grants to restaurants that would otherwise have closed due to COVID-19. These grants allow them to sustain operations and provide meals to New Yorkers. We have also expanded operations at our headquarters, hired restaurant workers who had been laid off due to the outbreak, and partnered with several restaurants to create meals for us to distribute to various community outlets.

Finally, we launched the ReThink Cafe, our donations-based cafe in Clinton Hill, as another outlet for New Yorkers to receive a meal.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? Due to the large number of restaurants that have closed, there is a great pool of trained culinary professionals in the city right now. By scaling our operations and starting new initiatives, we have been able to work with these amazing people to support these programs. The projects I have touched on before are our biggest changes, and, honestly, it is the inherent dedication of these people who want to help that keeps the organization moving forward.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? That is the million dollar question! Time will tell, but I am not sure there ever will be a "back to normal." Neither the restaurant industry nor the supply chain will be normal for some time. ReThink has always adapted to the needs of the food system, and whatever the new normal is, we will change to fit its needs.

What is the silver lining? Now more than ever, ReThink is essential to New Yorkers, to restaurants and the food system.

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Teens for Food Justice

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC? Our mission to fight food insecurity and its resulting health implications within low income communities, particularly those of color, remains the same and is particularly relevant in the COVID crisis. However, three of our four farms had to be shuttered when the schools closed, so we shifted to other means of bringing fresh produce and healthy food to the neighborhoods we serve. By harvesting all of the produce growing on those farms and through the ongoing generosity of the local alternative agriculture community, we have been able to bring close to 5,000 pounds of fresh produce to Bed-Stuy and Brownsville over the past four weeks. Other connections have brought shelf-stable foods to our food distribution partners, and we are now in discussion with partners for healthy prepared meals as well.

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? We were very fortunate to receive a PPP loan, which covers our payroll for the next eight weeks. We have also received support from individual donors.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? Normal operations will not restart for us until schools reopen, and that timeline is currently unknown. However, we are working with our school partners to continue our curricular day and after-school programming remotely and are working on a virtual version of our annual youth leadership conference, which would take place in June. We are ready to bring all of our farms back online and resume educational programming as soon as school is in session, and it is our hope that the new projects that are currently on hold will move forward.

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What is the silver lining? I believe we have learned from this crisis how extraordinarily fragile our food system is and that it has underscored the importance of having a hyper-local food chain, particularly for produce, in communities that are most at risk. I would argue that widespread municipal investment in a system comprising outdoor and indoor urban farms, such as those TFFJ builds in schools, is a way of mitigating this problem next time there is a crisis. Such investment would be accompanied by planning that would ensure that these farms could continue to operate safely, for both the crops and the farmers, and maintain that critical local source of supply.

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Westside Campaign Against Hunger

How has your mission and/or business model changed since we have seen COVID-19 in NYC?

Our mission has not changed, but the tools and tactics we use have. Our mission, the West Side Campaign Against Hunger, alleviates hunger by ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to a choice of healthy food and supportive services with dignity.

- Our business model has been altered drastically.
- Our longstanding, best practice, nationally known, choice model pantry has moved to the street and become a pre-bagged, farmers' market-style set up. Additionally, with decreasing visitation by seniors (a 50 percent drop in pantry visits in the last month) we have built our delivery model to get food to these community networks. Through visibility on the street and due to the pandemic, we have seen exponential growth in new customers visiting our site.
- Our mobile efforts have dramatically expanded with new food-drop sites such as Bellevue Hospital, Children's AID and more.
- Our social services team, which provides support to all our 22,000 customers via benefits screening, benefits access, and sign-ups has become fully virtual.
- Our Culinary Pathways program has been suspended.
- Our volunteer program, which last year brought more than 1700 individuals to volunteer with us, was suspended and then reinstated after three weeks, but with very focused, COVID-related constraints (18 to 50 year olds, social distancing).

How are you sustaining your operations through this time? What is the biggest change you've made? How do you hope to retain valued employees? To sustain operations, WSCAH has implemented drastic safety precautions focused on increasing sanitation practices (hand washing, increased cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, gloves, masks, hair coverings), enforced social distancing for all staff, volunteers, and customers to eliminate any potential close physical contact between individuals.

- WSCAH has increased work-from-home flexibility whenever possible and increased time off for front-line workers.
- WSCAH has brought on contract staff to support front line food distribution, sanitation, and fundraising operations.
- WSCAH has spent funds on operational efficiencies to bolster service and support staff, including more PPP equipment (gloves, masks, safety signage), pallet jacks, rental vehicles, and tents for outdoor service.
- WSCAH has spent funds on additional pay to staff for their efforts, has brought in stress reduction support, coaches for team leaders, has implemented 5 times a week 15-minute all staff huddles (now decreased to 3 times a week), and has created front-line staff rotations in order to provide extra time at home.

What is your best guess on when NYC and/or your organization or business will return to some semblance of normalcy, and what will that "normal" look like? How different will things be in a year? WSCAH and many other organizations involved in emergency feeding have been in an "emergency" for 40 years...that's not normal. This new normal, we assume, will continue well into autumn 2020.

The emergency-feeding sector will continue to see increasing need month over month well into 2021 due to the economic downturn and the deeper scars it will inflict upon food insecure households. This will lead to further demands for social services, further closures of financially unstable emergency food providers and added pressure for the sector to work in concert in order to support the community through city/state advocacy, supply-chain management and technology-usage for customer engagement (digital choice, social service support, and data tracking across sectors).

What is the silver lining? WSCAH is separating organizational myth from organizational mission. We have seen the ability to drastically pivot our operations and still do all that is necessary to

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fulfill our mission. The silver lining is having an incredible team of changemakers come together, see what is possible and, therefore, be ready, willing and able to make even greater change for the future.

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