Responding to the Coronavirus: Shelf-Stable Meal Bags are on The Way

By Karen Pearl, President & CEO

Dear Community,

Last week I announced that as part of our business continuity planning for the coronavirus, we are providing shelf-stable food for our clients so that they have food in their homes in the event we are unable to deliver to them.

Though a large number of shelf-stable products was hard to come by on short notice, our Executive Chef Daniel and our suppliers came through sourcing thousands of healthy components. On Sunday, dozens of Bloomberg volunteers packed out the first round of bags for delivery this week.

As a team, we are working on our supply chain and contingency planning for all scenarios.

We continue to monitor the situation hourly, and our team is dedicated to making the best possible decisions for the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, clients, and donors.

Our amazing volunteers have truly stepped up to the plate, many doing more than one shift in a day to help us prep, cook, pack, and deliver meals. We are always impressed by and so grateful for the enormous dedication of our volunteers, but especially during this uncertain time, we thank you.

While we take on the enormous effort of delivering a week’s worth of shelf-stable items to clients in addition to their regular meals, we truly need your help. Purchasing and building 4,600 special meal kits in a week is no small feat, and this effort has added $250,000 of expense to our budget. If you can give time or funds, please consider doing so.

Here’s how you can help:

- **Sign up for a volunteer shift.** We need extra volunteers in all departments, but especially van assistants to help with deliveries, and individuals doing meal prep in the kitchen, helping in the office, and packing shelf-stable meals.
- **Donate to sponsor our shelf-stable meal bags.** Each bag contains enough shelf-stable food components for one week of nutrition. These components include tuna fish, applesauce, beans, peanut butter and more.

While we thank our thousands of volunteers for their dedication, we do ask that you continue to practice the strictest of food safety measures and, if you feel sick at all, please stay home and do not come in for your shift.

We remind our community of the following steps we can all take which will limit exposure to the coronavirus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. In the kitchen, we suggest singing the chorus of “Happy Birthday” to yourself twice.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if no soap and water is available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick, to protect yourself, co-workers and others with whom you’re in contact.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces.
- Keep your immune system strong. This includes getting a flu shot to help you from getting the flu, getting enough sleep, and eating well.

We will continue to keep you updated, and if you have any questions or concerns, please email us.
Every day we wake up committed to providing the greatest care to our clients. One client, who was discharged from the hospital last week, reflected on how much this means to her.

“I can’t thank you enough for everything you do. Thank you for the extra [emergency] food. I especially want to thank the driver. He is a kind and caring person.”

In extraordinary times like these, we feel so grateful for our community that makes our operation run. Thank you for your ongoing generosity and support.

Sponsor Shelf-Stable Meal Bags

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