



South County Outreach COVID-19 Update

Yes we are open and assisting people with food and housing!

Thank you all for your ongoing support and interest during this difficult time for everyone. So many of you have sent donations, are sending notes of encouragement and have dropped off food – THANK YOU.

To let you know how we are operating:

Facilities

- Crisis Protocols began on March 17. This changed our client choice operations to a by appointment process. Though we remain open, this process puts important social distancing practices into effect and allows us to continue to serve those in need while protecting all of us. We continue to review and expand to allow for more appointments, some home deliveries, increased partnerships with agencies outreaching to shut-ins.

- o In three days last week, we assisted more than 500 people.

- Upscale Resale closed on March 18. Sadly the closure was immediately after the store remodel. The Upscale staff are assisting in new roles to support critical agency services. The funding that Upscale Resale provides to South County Outreach is vital, and will be missed as we incur new expenses associated with providing services during this crisis. Please plan to visit when retail therapy is reinstated!

Staff and volunteers

In total South County Outreach has 12 staff members. Some of those staff are included in the high risk category or impacted by childcare needs associated with children being out of school. Currently, 5 staff members remain on site. Our weekly/monthly scheduled volunteer participation is down by 93% (from 300 to 20). Our volunteers are so important to us that we understand their choice to shelter in place. Each day is different, but this change has been substantial. The onsite staff, are working with the volunteers who remain, in the pantry and driving food pick-up trucks daily. Please be patient as you communicate with the team, as most days end with the entire staff preparing the pantry for the next day. Responses to email and phone requests, outside of those by clients, have been slower than we would like.

- If you are interested in volunteering, we would love you help, but we must protect the staff and volunteers who remain on site so we are asking that volunteers commit to more than a single engagement. This helps us control the number of new people we come in contact with:

If you are a group wanting to volunteer:

- We are in need of groups come in from 7:30 am – 9:30 am or from 4:00 – 6:00 to help box/bag food – this should allow us to offer more appointments. Ideally the same group would work that same day and time each week

If you are a single wanting to volunteer:

- We need volunteers between 9 and 4 each day.

The volunteers and the staff are doing an incredible job! I remain extremely thankful to our volunteers who continue to be on site and for those who will return when they again feel safe!

Food Donations

Most grocery stores have ceased grocery rescue due to run-on food. However, in the short term we have added pick-ups at two Costcos in Tustin daily. The food available will continue to change. Currently, we are receiving a lot of produce and breads, but very little meat, dairy or canned goods. As this crisis continues, we know that what we receive will change. In the interim, we have made bulk purchases of canned goods in an effort to meet the increasing needs of people who are facing furloughs, lay-offs and reduced hours.

- Special thank you to Helping Hands Worldwide, Waste Not OC, Home Depot and Costco. We also want to thank our weekly grocery rescue stores: Albertsons, Grocery Outlet, Ralphs and Target – we know they will resume as soon as possible.

Housing and Rental Assistance

The Housing team is working to continue to case manage the formerly homeless families that are in our transitional housing program. Their time in the program will likely be longer as they work to increase income during this time. Case management is being conducted via phone.

- The Homeless Prevention/Rental assistance team is working with clients who will be facing eviction in the months to come.

Empty Bowls 2020

- For those of you who love and attend our Annual Empty Bowls fundraising event. It will be rescheduled for later this year. Thank you to the artisans who have produced this year's bowls! This event generates needed funding to support programs throughout the year.

- South County Outreach will be part of the *Help Them Home* online fundraising campaign on April 22. In partnership with the Orange County Community

Foundation, agencies who work to end families homelessness will hold a 24 hour online fundraiser designed to raise awareness and funds to support families facing homelessness. There are foundations committed to providing matching funds during this campaign, so your donation can double.

Thank you again for your interest, support and concern.

Lara Fisher

CEO/President