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FEATURED

Boyertown unites to feed those in need amid coronavirus; Multi-Service hosts drive-thru meals, pantry

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Boyertown Area Multi-Service served more than 300 hot to-go meals to The Center of Spring Street members.

Submitted photo

The Boyertown Area Multi-Service experienced a huge increase in demand for its meal programs serving older adults and its community food pantry, Preston’s Pantry.

The Multi-Service continues to meet the needs of the community in modified ways to protect the health and safety of volunteers and families amid the coronavirus pandemic.

“The community has been so supportive during this time. The collaboration between agencies, organizations, businesses, restaurants, schools and churches has been absolutely amazing to experience,” said Lydia Messinger, executive director of Boyertown Area Multi-Service Inc. “We truly have an incredible, compassionate community that always comes together to support each other. The donations of food, produce, and volunteer hours have been such a blessing to our community during this time of need. In addition to meals and support, the smiles and cheer being shared with the community is positive, and much needed during this time.”

To protect all staff, volunteers and the community, the Multi-Service is offering its services in a modified format, based on recommendations from partner agencies on the county and state level. Volunteers, staff and board members have been working around the clock to make sure they are able to meet the needs of the community, said Messinger.

Looking back at the week of March 16-21, Messinger explained how the Multi-Service continued to serve the growing need of the community during this time.

“For Meals on Wheels, over 600 meals were prepared this week by our amazing team in the kitchen and delivered by dedicated volunteers to homebound elderly. In addition, Executive Chef Chris and Sous Chef Karen worked with volunteers to pack and deliver 5 days’ worth of shelf stable food to every single Meals on Wheels recipient, making sure our most vulnerable community members are served,” she said.

The Center of Spring Street members were served hot to-go meals instead of being served lunch inside in a large group.

“More than 300 hot meals were prepared and provided to-go, distributed in a drive-thru manner in our parking lot, even in the rain!” said Messinger.

All drive-thru meal recipients were also provided with fresh produce, bags of shelf stable food, and notes of encouragement with inclusions of trivia, puzzles, and brain teasers. “The meals, especially the St. Patrick’s Day meal and the 45th Anniversary meal, brought so much uplifting cheer. The words of thanks and appreciation from the seniors in the drive-thru were incredible to hear!”

Reservations are required for this program, call 610-367-6957 for more information and to register for meals.

In addition to the food and produce distributed to seniors with the lunch time to-go meals, Preston's Pantry served 67 adults and 45 children in a modified drive-thru manner, providing them with shelf stable and frozen foods, an abundance of fresh produce, eggs, and dairy, pet food, formula, baby food, diapers, and personal care items.

"A whopping 5,008 pounds of pantry items were distributed to these families and individuals!"

Pantry access is by private appointment, call 610-367-6957 if you are in need of food pantry access.

Case management was also modified. Services are being provided over the phone, rather than in person during this time. Call 610-367-6957 to schedule an appointment.

"The Case Management team fielded calls from community members who are stressed, worried, and experiencing challenges."

A list of available help and resources is being compiled on the Multi-Service website to serve as support for the entire community.

The community also can reach out to help Multi-Service.

"Because our traditional revenue streams are being significantly impacted by this pandemic, our greatest need is monetary contributions to allow us to continue to serve our community," said Messinger.

If you or someone you know is in need of food assistance, call 610-367-6957.

Boyertown Area Multi-Service is open Monday through Friday. The building is closed to the public at this time. For more information, call or email LMessinger@BoyertownAreaMulti-Service.org.

Boyertown Area Multi-Service is a social service agency dedicated to meeting needs and improving the lives of people in the Boyertown School District Area and surrounding communities of Amity, District, Hereford, Pike and Oley townships.

For more information, visit <http://www.boyertownareamulti-service.org>.

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