

D-20 distributes lunches



Above: Beginning in March and continuing into April, Academy District 20 and other area school districts have provided “grab and go” lunches and snacks to students. District 20 had six locations, including Discovery Canyon Middle School pictured here. Staff and volunteers distributed the lunches at the Discovery Canyon Campus, providing 325 to 375 lunches every weekday. *Photo by David Futey.*

Food for those in need



Above: Family of Christ Lutheran Church has partnered with Palmer Lake Elementary, Tri-Lakes Cares, and the Springs Rescue Mission to feed hundreds of people in April alone. This effort will continue through the summer to serve families that are in need. “Many people have lost their job or have reduced hours. With schools closed, there is more food needed in homes for the children,” Pastor Mark Moreno said. “Our role as the church in our community is to help our neighbor.” All donations go to families who need assistance. “We are here to help anyone.” See www.foccs.net to give help or to request help. *Photo courtesy of Mark Moreno.*

Free lettuce



Above: On Fridays in April and on May 1, Emerge Aquaponics, affiliated with YWAM Emerge and located in Black Forest, offered free lettuce in its Get One-Give One giveaway as a response to COVID-19. According to Emerge Aquaponics founder Josh Imhoff, they teach individuals and organizations around the world “how to grow lettuce and other produce through aquaponic systems” as a business model. About the lettuce giveaway, Imhoff said we “usually sell to local colleges, universities, restaurants, and small grocers, but since they are closed we decided to offer our produce for free to the community.” Attendees drove up to one of four stations and received two heads of bibb lettuce and were encouraged to keep one and give the other to someone else. *Photo by David Futey.*

Local church helps feed homeless



Above: Volunteers from Fuel Church in Monument have been cooking in the Salvation Army food truck in Colorado Springs to support anyone in need of a meal during the COVID-19 pandemic. Face masks came from the Salvation Army and volunteers sewing in the Tri-Lakes area. *Photo by Maria Crosby.*

By Lisa Hatfield

Volunteers from Fuel Church in Monument are standing in the gap to help feed homeless people right now. A coalition of nonprofit organizations came together to serve people with food insecurity during this period of COVID-19 isolation that has everything off-kilter. One of the solutions: The Salvation Army offered use of its food truck, Catholic Charities is providing the food products, and Fuel Church is cooking and serving hot meals three days a week in Colorado Springs.

On April 6, they served American goulash with bread, Gatorade, and individual dessert packages. Fuel Church Chef Deanna Smith said it was really a positive experience, and people were kind and supportive and the volunteers serving did such a great job. “We are expectant and grateful for the opportunity to serve the unsheltered community and to glorify our Heavenly Father!” she said.

Yes, there are still other agencies providing grab-and-go meals, including Salvation Army’s RJ Montgomery New Hope Center, Springs Rescue Mission, and Catholic Charities Marian House. They have even increased the number of meals served a day to include a new homeless isolation shelter for those infected with COVID-19 and serving extra lunches to those who come to Springs Rescue Mission, with the food provided by Care and Share. Tri-Lakes Cares in Monument is stretching its hours so families can pick up pre-ordered food boxes and still maintain social distancing. Silver Key is teaming up with COSILoveYou to deliver more food to people in homes all over Colorado Springs.

And yet, there are people who are unwilling to come in from the cold. And so, three days a week since early April, the church volunteers have parked the food truck and fed 50 to 100 people a hot meal, according to Maria Crosby, one of Fuel Church’s leaders.

Everyone tries to keep at least 6 feet apart. Fuel Church hands out fliers from the El Paso County Public Health Department with information about a wide variety of resources available. On cold days, they hand out home-knitted hats, scarves, and gloves, and handwarmer packs from the Salvation Army.

Finding a location to park the truck has been the biggest hurdle in the whole process due to requirements from the city of Colorado Springs. So far, they have been allowed to park at Marian House, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, and Westside Cares. Then they get the word out so anyone who needs a meal during the COVID-19 pandemic can find it.

See: <http://fuelchurch.org/>, www.ccharitiescc.org/emergency-essential-services/marian-house-soup-kitchen/, https://coloradosprings.salvationarmy.org/colorado_springs_corps/cure-hunger/, <https://careandshare.org/findfood/>, <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate/current-needs/>

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Essential hidden heroes



Left: Before the COVID-19 pandemic, frontline service workers maintained and provided essential services and goods for our community. Often not in an identifiable work uniform, these people are hidden in plain sight because of their casual dress. Now directed under the stay-at-home policies, these same personnel are considered essential to sustain the every-day, critical infrastructure operations of our communities. Sanitation worker Michael Harsinowicz picks up and disposes trash from the many container sites on his daily long routes. At the end of the day, he pursues a business management degree online. Not pictured is his co-worker and truck driver Michael Cianciarullo, who finishes with a long commute home to help his wife with homeschooling their two children. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*