COVID-19 Response & Impact Report
November 2020

It has been a year like no other. Thanks to your generous support, Kitchens for Good (KFG) has risen to the challenge. Our staff and army of volunteers have been working around the clock since March to prepare hundreds of thousands of nourishing scratch-cooked meals for individuals and families impacted by the pandemic, and provide support to our many alumni apprentices who were affected by furloughs and job loss. With your support, we have had a huge impact, scaling our meal production by 600% to ensure that vulnerable children, families, and seniors do not face hunger in our community.

Hunger Relief

In March 2020, KFG worked to quickly pivot its staff, resources, and kitchen capacity to meet the growing need for food assistance in the region. KFG rapidly scaled its existing hunger relief meal production from 2,000 meals a week in February to over 15,000 meals a week by May. These heat-and-eat meals met a critical need for food insecure families who were struggling with layoffs, school closures, and economic hardship. While many food relief organizations, pantries, and food banks increased the supply of bulk staple foods to be prepared by clients at home, KFG was and remains one of the few local organizations preparing and distributing heat-and-eat nutritious meals, thereby meeting the needs of people regardless of their capacity to cook for themselves.

Meal Partners Include: San Diego Food Bank, Jewish Family Services, City Heights CDC, Elder Help, My Brother’s Keeper, Christ United Methodist Ministry, and Grossmont College.

The Impact of a Meal

“T”m a senior that lives alone, finances are very limited basically nonexistent and I’m stuck inside 24/7. I have no ability to leave my house and I rely on grocery deliveries from social service agencies. Typically I open my door to see a week’s supply of groceries but it’s just small jars of syrup and jam, it’s hard to cook because I have limited mobility and even harder to figure out what to make with that stuff. Last week I unexpectedly received one of your meals and it was HEAVENLY! Your meals are simply delightful, all I need are 6 to live on for the whole week- a life saver! Truly heads and shoulds above anything else that is out there. I can’t express enough, thank you to the chefs for making scratch made, healthy and delicious meals for people like me”
Supporting Apprentices

KFG’s apprenticeship program and its apprentices were also deeply impacted by the pandemic. In March 2020, all in-person culinary classes and new enrollment were paused. To keep the enrolled apprentices connected and learning from a distance, KFG quickly pivoted to launch an online daily life skills and career development class over Zoom and provided apprentices with weekly home-delivered culinary kits filled with ingredients, recipes, and cooking lessons, in partnership with MarketBox SD and Rouxbe, an accredited online culinary school.

KFG spent much of the summer months providing outreach and support to its 300 alumni apprentices by connecting them to resources or social services and helping them to reenter the workforce. KFG is pleased to report that the majority of apprentices who experienced furloughs during the pandemic have been rehired or placed in new jobs.

In-person apprenticeship training was relaunched in September 2020 with a cohort of Culinary Apprentices and the inaugural cohorts of the new Baking and Food Service Management Apprenticeship programs. KFG has made significant changes to its apprenticeship program to ensure staff and apprentice safety, including smaller class sizes, separately timed kitchen shifts to limit large groups, designated workstations to enforce social distancing, and extensive sanitation and safety training for all staff and apprentices.

Looking Ahead

The needs for Kitchens for Good’s services have never been greater. Research has shown that hunger has doubled in San Diego since the pandemic and will continue to increase as the pandemic extends into 2021. Unemployment remains high, but is especially severe for individuals who are overcoming histories of homelessness, incarceration, or foster care. As society works to recover from this crisis, it is imperative that it is done in an equitable manner that does not deepen economic opportunity gaps, but instead provides pathways out of poverty for historically marginalized communities. To that end, Kitchens for Good is expanding and strengthening its existing apprenticeship program and continuing to scale its hunger relief program at its new kitchen. In Fiscal Year 2020/2021, Kitchens for Good will:

- Launch its operations at its new kitchen and training center at the Door of Hope Campus
- Enroll 148 individuals in one of KFG’s three 20-month apprenticeship programs (culinary, baking, food service management) and ensure that 80% of enrolled apprentices remain employed and on track to receive their apprenticeship certificate at end of fiscal year
- Prepare and distribute 275,000 meals for food insecure San Diegans

On behalf of the staff, board, and apprentices of Kitchens for Good, we humbly and wholeheartedly thank our donors for supporting our vital mission in the community during this unprecedented crisis. Thanks to your support, we have been able to provide thousands of meals to families, children, and seniors in need throughout San Diego County and provide critical support to our apprentices.