



An emergency food program
of the Northside Planning Council



The Northside Planning Council is a nonprofit community development organization that serves the Northside of Madison and beyond with a strong antiracist mission and various food systems, economic development and community capacity-building programs:

- FEED Kitchens
- FEED Bakery Training Program
- Healthy Food For All
- MarketReady
- Northside News
- Stable Families, Strong Community
- Northside Economic Development Coalition

The idea

By early March, we began to realize that a potential pandemic and quarantine would bring some serious emerging needs:

- Food insecurity
- Food business survival

As a 5400 sq. ft. nonprofit, production kitchen, we saw FEED as a critical piece of food systems infrastructure that could be repurposed during a crisis.

So we developed the concept: culturally appropriate meals prepared by FEED businesses to be distributed to vulnerable and home-bound residents.

The stay-at-home order took effect on Monday, March 16.

We launched FEED To Go on Thursday, March 19.

The program continued every weekday until July 3, 2020.

All of the food businesses we contract with are owned by people of color who have struggled to access capital and are particularly vulnerable during the pandemic.



In partnership with our FEED entrepreneurs, we delivered 30,300 meals in 14 weeks to 15 sites around Dane County, averaging 2200 meals per week or 440 meals per day.

We partnered with multiple organizations to fundraise together.

- **Northport Community Learning Center**, 60 meals per day (fundraising partnership)
- **Packer Community Learning Center**, 60 meals per day (fundraising partnership)
- **Vera Court Neighborhood Center**, 40 meals per day (fundraising partnership & NPC funds)
- **Kennedy Heights Community Center**, 20-40 meals per day (NPC funds)
- **Bayview Foundation**, 80 meals per day (fundraising partnership)

We recruited 115 new volunteer drivers so that we could maximize the number of meals produced and distributed.

Volunteers arrive at FEED at 2:45 to pick-up their coolers and then distribute food at a central neighborhood location and direct-to-door between 3-4 pm every week day.

We used our text broadcasting service to reach residents who are otherwise offline.

- **Boys and Girls Club Sun Prairie**, 40 meals per day for 3 weeks (**fundraising partnership**)
- **Boys and Girls Club Taft**, 40 meals per day (**fundraising partnership & NPC funds**)
- **Boys and Girls Club Allied**, 40 meals per day (**fundraising partnership**)
- **Triangle Community Ministry at Brittingham**, 50 meals per day (**fundraising partnership**)
- **Triangle Community Ministry at Karabis**, 50 meals per day (**fundraising partnership**)
- **Bridge Lakepoint Waunona**, 40 meals per day (**fundraising partnership**)

NPC also fundraised for a number of neighborhoods that do not have centers.

We leveraged existing relationships with resident leaders and property managers to support outreach in those neighborhoods.

- **Ridgecrest Apartments**, 40 meals per day (NPC funds)
- **Parkcrest Apartments**, 20-40 meals per day (NPC funds)
- **Oak Park Terrace mobile home community**, 40-60 meals per day (NPC funds in partnership with Lake View Elementary Community School)
- **East Bluff Condominium Community**, 20-40 meals per day (NPC funds in partnership with Lake View Elementary Community School)
- **Kipling Drive**, 20 meals per day (NPC funds in partnership with Lake View Elementary Community School)

Funders Included:

- Selfless Ambition
- Boys and Girls Club of Dane County
- Boys and Girls Club Covid Relief RFP
- United Way Covid Relief RFP
- Housing Ministries of American Baptists
- Madison Community Foundation
- Direct donor fundraising by NPC
- Matching funds raised by partner organizations (including SEED Grant funds)

“I heard many people say how delicious the food was. Many people looked to see what vegetables were used and appreciated having them in their meal. One man got excited every time he saw spinach in the meal and raves about it each time.”

~ Quote from Volunteer

“At my site there were several people in wheelchairs that likely weren’t able to cook for themselves and never failed to show up for this fresh food. One woman would take about eight meals and then would distribute them to people who wanted them but who would not leave their apartments because of Covid risk.”

~ Quote from Volunteer

“The first Wednesday we delivered to the first complex about six children were waiting for their meals and more were coming. It was at that moment we realized we could make a difference in the time of a pandemic yet social distance for our safety. It definitely was needed and the meals smelled awesome.”

~ Quote from Volunteer

Culturally Relevant Foods: We did our best to meet the specific food needs of the communities we were serving.

- For example, there are a large number of Muslim families at Northport Apartments, so we did not send meals with pork products there.
- There was a high demand for Asian-inspired cuisine at Bayview, and when we were unable to identify a FEED chef who could prepare that cuisine, we contracted out meals to Morris Ramen to ensure that residents' dietary preferences were being respected. We coordinated additional pickup and delivery from the restaurant.
- Despite the shortage of meat, we always tried to include a meat dish. The few times we substituted tofu, we received quite a bit of feedback that that was not preferred, so we avoided it in the future.

Pandemic Safe: We instituted Covid safe practices to protect our staff, volunteers and residents.

- We designated certain NPC staff as “in-building” staff and others as “out-in-the-community” staff, so as not to create cross-contamination.
- We instituted a rigorous cleaning protocol multiple times a day.
- We held regular Zoom volunteer orientation sessions to help volunteers learn how to safely distribute the meals by laying them out on an outdoor surface, prepping plastic bags and asking residents to social distance and approach one at a time.
- Volunteers were asked to remain in their cars outside of FEED to have coolers loaded, rather than coming into the building.
- We began asking volunteers to wear masks and gloves from the beginning.
- Coolers were returned to us every day and were rigorously cleaned for the next day.
- We asked any entrepreneurs who were involved with the program to limit their outside exposure as much as possible.

Cost Efficient: We streamlined purchasing and production and leveraged donated food and volunteer labor to keep costs down and maximize the number of meals we could produce.

- **Meals cost \$5.65 each.**
- **We made the choice to use volunteer delivery drivers, who were thrilled with the opportunity to contribute and feel useful during these challenging times.**
- **NPC worked with each individual chef on their ingredient needs and then bulk-purchased all of the ingredients and packaging to ensure maximum cost savings.**
- **Through Healthy Food For All, we were able to collect high quality donated ingredients to use for the meals. We also accepted donations of coolers.**

“People with disabilities lived at the site I worked. They all seemed to live alone, so coming for the meals was a time of day for a little socializing, which we tried to provide. We developed relationships as best we could with those who came regularly - an additional benefit for some lonely people, made lonelier by the pandemic.”

~ Quote from Volunteer

“One gentleman (an overseer to the site's community garden) was so grateful for our daily presence, that he invited us to come back in August and help ourselves to any of the vegetables that would be ripe and ready for picking.”

~ Quote from Volunteer

“The first day we were at our site, there were children on the playground. They wanted meals and said they would take them home and put them in the refrigerator so they'd be safe for later - except for one girl, she said she was hungry and sat right down and ate the meal with her fingers.”

~ Quote from Volunteer



30,300 meals delivered
at \$5.65 per meal
while protecting 35 jobs
in 6 food enterprises.

“One guy watched from afar for the first two weeks or so. The first time he came to the distribution area, he asked for one meal. The next time, he asked for four. He explained that he was taking meals to his neighbors. Indeed, I saw him delivering to several other places.

~ Quote from Volunteer

“Everyday we were there, a single woman walked from the other side of the complex to get a meal. Only one - all she needed. Most days she used a cane. I suspected that we might have been the only people she talked to during the day - and that this was her only outing.”

~ Quote from Volunteer

We paused the program on July 3 due to funding shortages but also to give our businesses space during the summer to use FEED. We were also hoping that the growing season would bring additional food security to the community.

Of course, we had no way of knowing how serious and prolonged the situation would become.

We are now hearing from residents, community partners and our businesses that they would be grateful if we could start up again.

So, we are!

Our Next Steps:

- We are ramping up the program again, starting with a fundraising campaign and a silent auction, with all proceeds going to FEED To Go.
- We just received over \$15,000 from the 100+ Women Who Care to help us relaunch.
- Meals will cost anywhere from \$5.65 to \$7.00 each, depending on having enough funds to purchase in bulk.
- Any seed money would be appreciated as a fundraising match and to ensure bulk pricing to help us keep costs down: \$5.65/meal, 80 meals/day for six weeks = \$13,560



Thanks!

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