Much To Be Grateful For

At St. Mary’s Dining Room we see the difficulties experiencing homelessness brings each and every day. It takes a toll on ones mind, body and spirit. The lack of rest, the constant need to remain alert, the uncertainties and stress over food, safety and so much more.

What we have learned is how all those feelings are exasperated during a pandemic. Many of our guests deal with underlying or chronic health issues and find themselves in the at-risk category for COVID-19. Between that and the difficulty of finding ways to self-isolate, their level of vulnerability is incredibly high.

One of our guests shared, “it’s getting really scary.” Another guests told us, “I didn’t believe it would get this serious, then things started closing. When things started closing, that’s when it hit me.” She went on to explain that she utilizes all of the services we offer, and told us, “I was worried you would close too.” She was particularly concerned our hygiene center would close.

While we have had to make many changes during this time, we have worked hard to ensure that our guests continue to have the supportive services they need. We know how vital these services are.

During this crisis, we’ve seen a significant increase in meals served in comparison to this time last year. This tells us that more individuals in our community are dealing with the effects of poverty and homelessness. More individuals are in need of a warm meal with a welcoming smile. And we are grateful to play a role in alleviating the worry of where that next meal will come from.

Yet, we know that we do not do this work alone. Our community has worked hard to support us as we serve on the front lines and offer necessary care. We’ve received encouraging words, notes of appreciation, and much more.

We are reminded that we have much to be grateful for and that we have a community who is passionate about the work we do. We are incredibly grateful to individuals, like yourself, who have made sure our services remain available in our community. No one has been untouched during this time, which gives us a renewed sense of gratitude every time we receive a donation, a financial contribution, a prayer or thoughtful encouragement.

Your commitment to our guests and our mission is a constant reminder that the work we do matters, and that we are all in this together.

Edward Figueroa

Our team has risen to every challenge that has been presented to them. They have continued to show up to do our important work all while caring and worrying for their own families at home. I am incredibly proud and thankful for their commitment to our mission. Our response during this crisis has meant that we continue to adapt our service delivery as protocols and directives from the state and our local government continue to be implemented.

We staff continue to be essential workers and have put themselves on the front lines so that we may be able to feed the hungry, care for health issues and restore human dignity to our guests.

Thank you to our community for always rising to the occasion, for always thinking about the needs of others and for keeping our team in your thoughts. I am also grateful for the support our donors have shared with us to provide our team with the resources they need to meet our mission.

I wish all of you great health and peace of mind as you personally face the challenges that this pandemic has placed on all of us. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to make our community a better place.

Sincerely,

CEO

Why Qualified Charitable Distributions might be for you

If you are 70 ½ years old or older, making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a great option to lower your income taxes while doing good for others. QCDs count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (up to $100,000), effectively lower your adjusted gross income and bring about many tax benefits. (In response to the Coronavirus outbreak, Congress has waived the Required Minimum Distribution rules for qualified retirement accounts for 2020.)

Contact your IRA custodian and request a direct transfer to:

St. Mary’s Dining Room
545 W. Sonora Street
Stockton, CA 95203
Our tax ID number: 94-2687280

Do not withdraw the funds and make a contribution yourself, or you will have to report the withdrawal as taxable income. To be a QCD, funds must be a direct transfer from your IRA custodian to a qualified 501(c)(3).

For transfer information, please contact Lorrie Herrera at (209)467-0703 ext. 3104. Please note that we are not in a position to give formal tax advice, and we strongly advise you to have these gifts reviewed by your own qualified financial or tax advisors.

A Message from the CEO

I don’t know if any of us would have predicted that when the new year started our world would soon be dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. But here we are, and we have not had a choice but to figure out how to continue our work of caring for those in our community who are experiencing homelessness.

I am reminded of our logo that reminds us of our three guidelines: Caring for our guests, our Community that supports us and our Commitment to serving both. We have implemented drastic changes to our service delivery across our campus so that we can continue to care for guests daily and keep them and our team healthy. Our community, you, have continued to be incredibly generous with your support even as you and your family face life during a pandemic.

I want to assure you that our team is committed to serving our guests and our community.

Thank you to our community for always rising to the occasion, for always thinking about the needs of others and for keeping our team in your thoughts. I am also grateful for the support our donors have shared with us to provide our team with the resources they need to meet our mission.

I wish all of you great health and peace of mind as you personally face the challenges that this pandemic has placed on all of us. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to make our community a better place.

Sincerely,

CEO
**Volunteer Spotlight**

In wake of this crisis, we found ourselves in a state of worry and uncertainty towards the effects of what COVID-19 would have on our operational needs. One being that we rely heavily on volunteer support to assist in preparation and serving of our meals. The number of volunteers have dramatically dropped resulting in asking employees from other departments to step in and assist the kitchen team. It’s all hands on deck!

Fortunately, the Ready to Work of San Joaquin program has stepped in and almost immediately alleviated that stress and is able to fill that void in these trying times. Individuals in this program assist our kitchen team with preparation of meals and immediately step up to help with meal service and other kitchen needs. Their assistance is vital in helping us Monday - Friday every single week thus far.

Ready to Work’s mission is to “change lives through work by seeking to reduce the number of homeless people in San Joaquin County by helping men with a history of homelessness and obstacles to employment, rebuild their lives and the lives of their families.” Their partnership is assisting us in serving our mission. Thank you Ready to Work of San Joaquin!

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**Our Response to COVID-19**

*St. Mary’s Dining Room is working hard to prioritize the safety of our staff, guests and volunteers during this time. In our efforts to continue to care for our guests we’ve temporarily made the following changes...*

- **Our Social Services** program has temporarily closed. Our case managers are helping support other departments and our guests are able to check their mail in our administrative office.

- **Our Medical Clinic** continues to see patients. All patients are screened prior to their appointment by temperature checks and a series of questions. We are limited to patients only, and no family members in our waiting room.

- **Our Dental Clinic** continues to see only emergency patients. We have limited seating in waiting room.

- **Our Clothing and Hygiene Center** has limited the number of seats available in our waiting rooms. Our women’s hygiene center has eliminated community shopping time in order to help focus on showers, increased cleanings and help spread individuals out to adhere to social distancing recommendations.

- **Our Dining Room** has made significant changes. Guests are welcome to eat in our dining room, but seating has been significantly reduced. Our dining room, which seats over 200, is now limited to 42 individuals at a time. All meals are being served in to-go containers with pre-packaged utensils.

- **Our Dental Clinic** continues to see only emergency patients. We have limited seating in waiting room.

- **Top Needs for Summer**

  - Season-Appropriate Clothing
  - Underwear, Socks, Sports Bras
  - Travel-Size Sunscreen
  - Towels (Bath and Hand)
  - Shampoo
  - Deodorant
  - Travel-Size Toiletries

  *Donation Drop-off open Monday - Friday 7:30am - 3:30pm*

  *For more information or to schedule a pick-up within the Stockton area, please contact our administrative office at (209) 467-9703*

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We are constantly adapting our response plan and are prepared to make additional changes should they become necessary. As always, the health and safety of our staff, guests and volunteers remains our priority.