

Children's Friend Responds to COVID-19



ChildrensFriendRI.org



Dear Friends,

Thanks to you, the work of Children's Friend continues through the COVID-19 crisis. Our families need us now more than ever, as they are the ones who have been hit hardest during this crisis and have little to no safety net. In this newsletter, you'll see our mission at its best – being innovative and quickly adapting to serve our children and families as best we can in the safest and most creative way possible.

Our teachers are mastering long-distance learning, organizing readers on Zoom, and planning Spirit Days for our kids. Our family visiting staff are checking on families, conducting virtual home visits, and making curbside deliveries of food and diapers to ensure our families have the essentials. Our WIC, Women, Infants, and Children, workers are ensuring over 6,000 families have access to healthy food and nutrition supports.

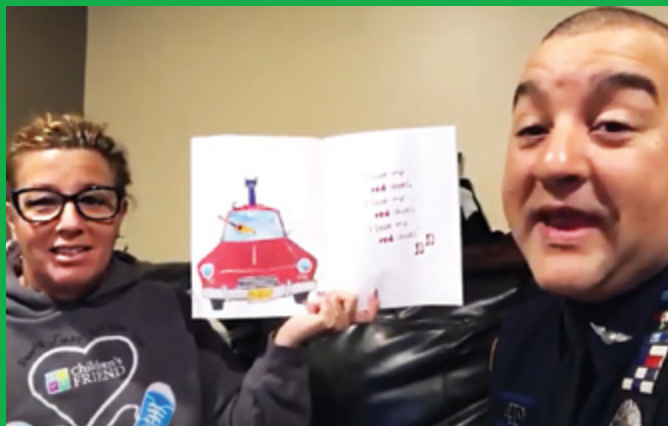
We can only continue to provide these much-needed services through the generous support of our donors, funders, and longtime community partners.

Thank you for all you are doing to support our children and families in these trying times. You are the reason Children's Friend is able to continue improving the lives of our youngest and most vulnerable children.

Thanks,

David

David Caprio,
President and Chief Executive Officer



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Working Outside the Box

Do you remember when you first heard about COVID-19 school closures, working from home, and social distancing? At Children's Friend, it was a blur of all hands on deck. In less than a week, we closed all classrooms and 14 sites, implemented new protocols for our work, and our staff began working remotely. Our goal then - and now - has been to continue to provide services while maintaining our standards of quality.

Donors, friends, corporate partners, and staff - you've all stepped up to help us meet this unprecedented challenge. We want to share with you what your support has made possible.

Keeping Families Fed

For vulnerable families, food insecurity is often a problem. Under the current conditions, food insecurity is practically an epidemic of its own. In partnership with Panera Bread and other local restaurants, including Siena Restaurants, Angelo's Pizza Palace, and Antonio's Pizza by the Slice, among many others, we have been able to provide meals to many of our families. Linda DeVincent, Manager of Family Preservation, has been overseeing this effort. Our staff is dividing and distributing 100 meals per day, five days a week.

Tina Laprade, Director of Family Preservation, and Rachel Cooper, Manager of Project Connect, have been handling the site where Panera drops off the food. They divide the food by family and worker. Pre-scheduled staff members pull up in their cars, and the meals are loaded. All this is done with no contact between the staff loading the meals and the staff picking them up for maximum safety.

Linda says, "Our front line staff deserves the spotlight. They have built relationships with families that are now the basis of how we do our work. Without those relationships, we would have absolutely nothing to work with, and our families would not be supported in the way that they are."

Distance Learning

There were over a thousand children in classrooms daily at the time that the call came to close. Figuring out how to continue to serve them and their families was a big challenge.

Our teachers developed a mixture of methods to keep close contact with all of our students. When possible, they teach virtually through a computer or tablet. For some families, teaching happens over the phone. Our teachers give parents assignments for their children that they can do at home with things around the house.

WIC Services

Two sites remain open to provide WIC services for the 6,000 families enrolled. A skeleton crew of ten are split between the two locations, helping families access healthy food during this crisis.

WIC checks go out quickly. For those who need immediate assistance, Director of Nutritional Services, Lucia Santiago, and her staff pass these checks under glass doors at our site for pick-up. Critically important special formula for our sickest children is passed out to families using maximum precautions.

"Knowing that I am helping others and serving the community helps me cope with this adversity," Lucia says.



There Are Many Ways to Help

- Scan the QR code to donate online at childrensfriendri.org
- Text Childrensfriend to #41444 to give
- Use the enclosed envelope to mail your donation
- Purchase items from our wish list at cfsri.org/wish-list

