

The Berkshire Food Project seeks to alleviate hunger, food insecurity, and social isolation by serving healthy, no cost meals and connecting people to other resources, all in a dignified and respectful manner.

Thank You North Berkshire Community!

The first month of 2021 has been pretty busy at the Berkshire Food Project as we dealt with the Corona Virus first hand. The North Adams Emergency Operations Center, the North Adams Health Department, the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and BFP Board Members quickly stepped up and our COVID Emergency Back Up Plan worked! When I tested positive for the virus earlier this month our staff and several volunteers had to be tested before they could return to work and our space had to be completely sanitized. Stacy Parsons, Bri Hantman and Jim Mahon were making arrangements within hours of my test results and soon the space had been sanitized using the same protocol that the local first responders use in ambulances. Less than 24 hours after I received my test results the back up crew was on hand, distributing meals during our regular hours without a glitch!

Our staff - Darlene and Caitlyn - were quickly tested and able to return to work within a couple of days. As volunteers waited for test results, a combination of regular crew and emergency back up crew continued meal distribution for the rest of that week.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE who was involved in keeping the BFP open during that week.

The way the community rallied together to ensure nobody went without a meal is just amazing! And many of the same people who were making sure the BFP stayed open were also coordinating the first COVID Vaccine Clinic in town on the same day!

Fortunately no other staff or volunteer tested positive! This convinces us that following our strict COVID protocol each day has made a difference. Having one volunteer per work table, masked and distanced, is not nearly the engaging and fun experience that was typical of volunteering at the BFP prior to the pandemic. Our volunteers continue to work their shifts anyway, ensuring that there are enough meals for everyone. Just having to get tested produces anxiety, and we are so glad that nobody else had a positive test result.

I've been cleared to return by both the North Adams Health Department as well as the Rensselaer County Health Department that monitors the community in which I live.

While we continue to have a waiting list for volunteers, we do have shifts open up as volunteers' lives change. There's not always a perfect fit between when we need volunteers and when potential volunteers are available. If you are interested in being on the waiting list and being notified when a shift is open, e-mail Kim at kim@berkshirefoodproject.org.

THANK YOU!

**Our temporary pandemic meal distribution schedule is:
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
11:30 AM to 1:00 PM.
Each day we distribute two meals.
ALL are welcome - no questions asked.**

We provide prepared meals to take home and heat up every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. This schedule remains in effect for the foreseeable future - but **not** forever (we promise). There is **NO** criteria and no questions asked. We encourage families to send a single person to pick up to reduce the number of people standing in line. Masks and social distancing required in line and in the building.



In Memory...

Again this month we are remembering a regular face at the BFP who has passed away. Al Pelrine was a regular in our dining room. Al had health issues that prevented him from coming out much during the pandemic and we all missed him. He passed away earlier this month.



**Darlene Ellis and Caitlyn Johnson
Keeping The Community Fed**

From the time that symptoms indicated I needed to be tested for COVID until the time the health department had cleared me to return to work, there were 18 days when I had to work from home - leaving Darlene with all of her usual kitchen management duties and all of my usual duties! She and Caitlyn both had to quickly deal with the anxiety of having been exposed to the virus and getting tested and get back to work.

During this time our several of our volunteers also had to be tested and missed shifts waiting for test results.

This tiny staff of two never faltered - meals were prepared and distributed without any interruption of service. Supplies were ordered and food purchased. The kitchen and work space maintained. It was business as usual for this amazing duo.

Thank you Darlene and Caitlyn for your commitment to the community and your dedication to the Berkshire Food Project!

**Well Done!
Thank You!**

Don't worry - it's an old photo! Everyone wears masks and distances at the BFP these days! We just wanted you to see their smiling faces!

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the BFP during these uncertain times. Each week we see new faces - people who are often facing challenges and crisis due to the pandemic and its rippling effects. We are so grateful that we have enough for everyone thanks to all of the wonderful people who support us. Thank you!

This month we want to say thank you once again to Aaron and Alex Oster and Orion Howard at A-OK Berkshire Barbecue. Not only do they have the Feed It Forward program that makes it easy for anyone visiting their restaurant to donate a meal to someone who needs one, but this year Aaron once again held a "Mo-vement" fundraising event, raising over \$20,000 for the BFP!



Thank you!



[Click on Photo, Logo or Text to Visit A-OK on line!](#)

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