



## Community Needs as COVID-19 Pandemic Hits Home

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It's hard to escape the headlines and the 24-hour new cycle about COVID-19. As my family and I are trying to adjust to our "new normal," we have found solace in bringing back some of our favorite board games, connecting with cross-country friends nightly thanks to FaceTime, working together on the New York Times crossword puzzle, and sharing our love for cooking (with limited ingredients) and family dinnertime conversations. Adjustments, yes but we are incredibly fortunate to have jobs that allow us to work from home, health insurance benefits, and resources to ride out this uncharted terrain. Sadly, as I'll explain below, many of our neighbors in Darien, Norwalk and Stamford are not so lucky.

I've spent the last ten days on numerous phone calls with community leaders, government officials, and our partner agencies to fully get a handle on the ever-changing needs of our community.



According to **Ali Ramsteck**, Director of Human Services for the Town of Darien, she is dealing with more requests than those from 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy, and predicts the needs will continue to rise over the next several weeks. And, the vast majority of clients have school-aged children.

I'm concerned about the restaurant workers, nannies, home health aides, and store clerks who depend on their hourly wages to support their families. They don't have a backup financial plan nor can they afford to stock pile food. These are our neighbors who depend on our social service agency partners for support.

In my conversations with the **United Way Food Collaborative** and **Food Rescue US**, we are working together to get food to those who need it most. Unchartered territory for all of us and banding together we can do so much more.

In these uncertain times, it is important for you to know that The Community Fund of Darien is leading the response efforts to make sure the basic needs are being met for our neighbors who are in desperate need of support but we cannot do it without your help. *Will you be a source of light during this dark time?*

## What We Do Know

- Our partnering agencies need TCF's guidance as thought leaders to provide advice. They need us to work as conveners to allow for the sharing of assets and services.
- Our neighbors will be without employment for an undetermined amount of time. Those who live paycheck to paycheck are in crisis. We are all faced with uncertainty. Imagine what it is like for our neighbors who are homeless in a shared shelter or those who are unemployed and caring for a disabled family member. *Their hope is challenged.*

## What is TCF Doing?

- We are in conversation with our partnering agencies to determine their needs and to respond immediately with funding. We are doing what we do best – vetting the work of our agencies and funding their work.
- We are supporting Darien residents with emergency financial assistance through our partnership with the Department of Human Services in Darien.

## WHAT IMPACT WILL YOU MAKE?

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### MAKE AN IMPACT TODAY

- Funds will be used for **Darien** residents who are in need of emergency financial assistance as determined by the Department of Human Services for the Town of Darien.
- The Community Fund pays landlords and service providers directly to protect client confidentiality, and gift cards are distributed for food purchases.



### MAKE AN IMPACT TODAY

- Funds will be thoughtfully allocated to our nonprofit agency partners addressing human services needs in Darien, Norwalk and Stamford.

**Thank you for believing in our mission work, and for playing such a big role in what makes Darien such a special place to call home!**

