

Hardee Help Center PSA

Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Posted: March 20, 2020 at 6:00 PM

On Monday, March 16 the Hardee Help Center activated emergency relief efforts with the focus of our efforts on the most vulnerable in Hardee County. We are doing our part to help ensure the health, safety, and food security of our community.

The Hardee Help Center is continuing to monitor the situation surrounding the coronavirus and we are taking steps to ensure the safety of our staff, clients, and volunteers. As new information is released the Hardee Help Center will reassess its operations and provide updates to local government, community partners, and the general public.

Administrative Hours

- Because there are fewer than 10 employees and volunteers in our office, we will continue to work in the office and following the recommendations of the CDC. The week of March 23 administrative personnel will be available by email or phone between the hours of 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM.
- Emails to the Executive Director, Lidenia Servin (lidenia@hardeehelpcenter.com) and messages left in staff and general mailbox will be regularly monitored.

Client Welcome Center & Food Pantry

- In following the recommendations of the CDC concerning social distancing and limitations of groups, we have made the decision to close our Client Welcome Center to walk-ins through April 3.
- The requests for financial and food assistance methods through April 3:
 - Print application from www.hardeehelpcenter.com, or pick up an application at the Center's front door. COVID-19 Disaster Relief Assistance Applications will be made available on-line by Sunday, March 22, and at the Center by Monday, March 23.
 - Submit completed applications, along with supporting documents by email: info@hardeehelpcenter.com, fax: 863-773-0798, or in the locked mail box at the Center's front door.
 - Though our Client Welcome Center is closed, we will to be available by phone, and continue face-to-face appointments. Appointments will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis need, through April 3.
- **Food assistance for families:** In place of our regular Crisis Food Program, we have temporarily replaced it with our Disaster Relief Food Program. These are pre-made boxes of shelf stable food. This assistance does require an application, and will continue until further notice.
- **Food assistance for older adult clients:** The Hardee Help Center's older adult clients at Forest Glade Apartment complex have received shelf stable food, in

addition to fresh produce, this week. We will contact them weekly to complete a wellness check, and continue to provide grocery supplements once a month.

- **Food assistance for older adult non-clients:** With the help of volunteers, we have visited and assessed the older adults in the Chatham Pointe Apartment complex. Wellness check calls will be made to those who do not have a neighbor, friend, or family member to offer help.
- **How to report a need:** With the help of concerned citizens we can offer services to other vulnerable people who may benefit from wellness check calls. If you know of a person, please complete the form 'Wellness Check Calls (COVID-19)'. The form will be published to Hardee Help Center's Facebook page and at www.hardeehelpcenter.com by Monday, March 23. Requests can also be submitted via-email: info@hardeehelpcenter.com (Provide the person's name and phone number, and your relation to the person.).

Donations

- Funds, food, and non-food donations are critical for our programs to provide the best help to families, especially in state of emergencies.
- Most needed food items:
 - Canned Foods
 - Snacks, Crackers, Chips, etc.
 - Distilled Water
 - Paper Goods
- To drop off donations through April 3:
 - Call (863-773-0034) to schedule a convenient drop off time.
 - Do not drop off donations if you are feeling sick, or displaying any symptoms of illness, please send another person.

Volunteers

- To ensure the safety of our volunteers, the Hardee Help Center is asking weekly volunteers who are considered part of the vulnerable population to please remain home, and not place themselves in a high risk situation.
- Request for volunteers to help with packaging and distribution as the need arises will be posted on Hardee Help Center's Facebook page. On top of our standard, daily, safety and hygiene process because of the work we do with food and distribution we are undertaking precautions specific to COVID-19. We ask volunteers consider the following things:
 - If you are a healthy adult and want to volunteer, you can:
 - Email: info@hardeehelpcenter.com
 - Telephone: 863-773-0034
 - Hardee Help Center Facebook Group: Volunteer Opportunities
 - We are also limiting volunteering to ages 16-60 at this time, to best protect vulnerable populations.
 - If you are feeling sick, or displaying any symptoms of illness, please stay home. It is true that we rely on volunteer power to get the job done, but we

need you to be healthy and operating at 100% to make that happen! Please do not put yourself or anyone else at risk by coming to volunteer when sick.

- All volunteers must wash their hands upon entering the Client Welcome Center and Food Pantry, before starting a project. Best practice from the CDC- whether at you're at the Hardee Help Center or not-wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Cancelled Events

March 17 – Hardee Help Center Devotion and Lunch

March 24 and April 14 - Financial Education Class

March 27 – Hardee Help Center Work Day

March 28 – Hardee Help Center Last Saturday

March 31 and April 2 - Nutritional Education Class

April 2, 9, 16, 23 – Money Smart Classes

April 11 – 2nd Saturday Homeless Outreach

April 21 – Hardee Help Center Devotion and Lunch

April 25 – Hardee Help Center Last Saturday

We are actively monitoring the coronavirus updates from our local partners at Hardee County Emergency Operations Center, city and county government partners and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and will continue to respond based on the latest recommendations from our trusted local government, public health and medical professionals.

We hope these precautions will be to the benefit of all of our staff, volunteers, and clients. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we all work through this together. Please understand the fluidity of the situation, and that changes may be implemented with little notice.

Sincerely,

Lidena Servin, Executive Director of Hardee Help Center