

TOWN OF CORNWALL

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Apart Together, Vol. 10 **Coronavirus / Covid-19 Update** **April 9, 2020**

Dear Friends,

We are beginning to see results of Cornwall residents' social distancing here with the flattening of the curve. The Town continues to have one confirmed Covid-19 case. It is our mutual goal to keep that number as low as possible. I thank everyone who has contributed by taking actions well publicized by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) including hand washing and wearing masks in public*.

We continue to meet townspeople needs with the Food & Fuel Fund. We are also helping people with medicine & rent with this fund. Heather Dinneen, the Town's Social Service Agent who is overseeing this effort, offers this update:

“The Cornwall Food and Fuel Fund's mission is to help support Cornwall residents with financial support in meeting basic needs, including housing, heat and food. The Food & Fuel Fund is administered by the Director of Social Services, with oversight from the Selectmen.

In addition to supporting families through the office of Social Services, the Fund also provides funds for purchasing food for the Cornwall Food Pantry (prior to Covid-19, the budget for these purchases was \$1,200 per month in purchases from Davis IGA). The Food Pantry also relies on donations of food and goods from the community, and a \$500/month order from the Cornwall Market (this purchase is covered by a donor).

As the Covid-19 virus began spreading, and people started being furloughed from jobs, we saw an increase in the number of households needing support. Families who had two working parents, now have to have at least one parent at home as schools are closed. And while people who were furloughed have filed for unemployment, they have been told there is a 5 week delay in processing benefits.

We reached out to the current list of patrons to the Food Pantry, as well as to all Cornwall Consolidated and Child Center families, and set up an online form for requesting food and supplies. For those with no internet access, the Director of Social Services called to request a list.

A group of 10 people was trained and certified by the Town in order to provide the volunteer support to sort and distribute food to families in need. Additional volunteers have since been added to the list.

For comparison, in March 2019, the Food Pantry supported 129 residents over the course of the month (the total of all household members for each household who visited the Pantry that month). During the two weeks that we provided food to households in need since the Covid outbreak, we have provided food to more than 130 people (double the amount supported last year). We anticipate these numbers to increase as more households are feeling the strain of being out of work, and waiting for federal relief checks and unemployment to start.

Additionally, last year, families still had access to income that they could use to purchase food and supplies and relied on the Pantry only for some food support. We are currently seeing that families are in need of more food and supplies and are relying almost entirely on the Pantry to meet their food needs.

We anticipate providing this support to Cornwall families for 10 weeks. While the number of families receiving support may spike in the next 4-5 weeks, it will still take time for families to get back on track and caught up with bills once their unemployment and other relief is received.

We anticipate the cost for this extreme need over the course of 10 weeks to be \$50,000. This includes not only food support (purchasing food that is not provided through donations), but also support with bills related to heat and shelter.”

- Heather Dinneen, Cornwall Social Services Director

Your fully tax deductible contributions can be sent to “Cornwall Food & Fuel Fund”, Box 97, Cornwall, CT 06753, or by Paypal to clwfinance@optonline.net. We thank individuals, organizations (this week’s hero is Camp Mohawk YMCA) and churches who are working with Heather.

*Please understand that all reported confirmed cases are probably undercounted due to the continuing lack of testing. Transmission of this danger by non-symptomatic carriers continues to be a huge problem.

I would like to thank Dave Colbert and all the people who have contributed to the Cornwall Art & Remote Entertainment(s). The many submissions are available for viewing on www.cornwallct.org. Please check it out.

We appreciate that the economic effects of the Covid-19 crisis are also being felt in Cornwall. I urge you to support the local businesses who are adapting their operations. More details will follow in Monday’s bulletin about individual & business support. Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Gordon Ridgway

First Selectman,

Town of Cornwall, CT

CC: Selectman Priscilla Pavel and Selectwoman Marina Kotchoubey