

# AgeWell Services

by Kris Collee

During the COVID-19 pandemic AgeWell Services provided meals to residents at the Fruitport Congregational Church on 8th Ave recently. They had 268 people who drove through in their cars to received dinners provided by the Age Well Services. A total of 1340 meals given out that day.

Here is a report from Chris Collee, Executive Director of Age Well Services.

AgeWell Services is proud to partner with the GR-YMCA Veggie Van to help us distribute meals to seniors 60 and older in Muskegon and Ottawa Counties. Together with the help of the amazing refrigerated truck and our collective teams, we have provided over 23,060 meals to 4,863 seniors since Governor Whitmer executed the COVID-19 Stay at Home Order.

Each day, AgeWell Services typically provides 1,600 meals per day through two important senior nutrition programs in Oceana, Muskegon and Ottawa: Home Delivered Meals (through Meals on Wheels) and Congregate Meals (Lunch and Activity Centers). All meals are produced from one centralized kitchen located at Tanglewood Park in Muskegon by trained staff that is socially distanced and wearing PPE. Each year, we are subjected to two Health Department Inspections and one CMMS Audit in which we pass with flying colors. All of our food is purchased through Gordon's Food Service, Sysco, Feeding America and the Muskegon Food Hub. We are currently producing just over 1,800 meals per day during COVID.

Our current menu is altered to include frozen meals with a milk bag to our Home Delivered Meal clients plus emergency shelf stable meals, now delivered 3 times per week (M-W-F). Clients are assessed upon intake to determine the number of meals needed based on their food insecurity, medical condition, access to a caregiver, and activities of independent living (mobility). To qualify, a person must be age 60 or older and home bound. This program has a growing wait list of over 341 individuals.

Our traditional Congregate program has altered operations to distribute 5-pack meal bundles at community-based "Senior Meal Curbside Distribution" locations. Each meal pack contains 3 frozen meals and one box of 2 non-perishable meals. We could not perform this alteration of service without a refrigerated van and additional manpower! The process is extremely organized to maximize efficiency, reduce exposure and reduce waste of motion. All team members on site wear full PPE. The distribution process creates two lanes (one on either side of the Veggie Van) with 4 cones (or "stops") per line, allowing for up to 8 cars to be serviced through this drive-thru model. One person with a clip board takes simple participant information while another team member conveys the food from the Veggie Van to the back seat of the participant's car through their open window. Each car pick up 5-pack meal bundles for up to 3 people. Eligibility requirements are that the participant is 60 or older or a proctor for a person 60 or older.

We have NUMEROUS partners who make this happen! Every location is hosted in the communities we serve and mostly where our Congregate sites are located plus a few sites purposely identified due to food access concerns (for example, Fruitport, Muskegon Heights and Coopersville). At each location, staff include YMCA and AgeWell Services Team members plus volunteers unique to the community such as City Commissioners/Township Trustees or senior center host personnel as well as staff loaned to us from Mercy Health's Community Health Project and LifeCircles PACE. The police departments and fire departments in each community help us direct traffic as well as present a sense of security. Meals are funded by federal, state, and local dollars in addition to generous gifts from our communities, most recently the Osteopathic Foundation and City of Norton Shores Senior Millage Funding. Donations from participants are encouraged but not required.

The process is amazing. The vibe and appreciation are so uplifting!

Ph: 231.733.8630, 1.800.442.6769  
www.agewellservices.org

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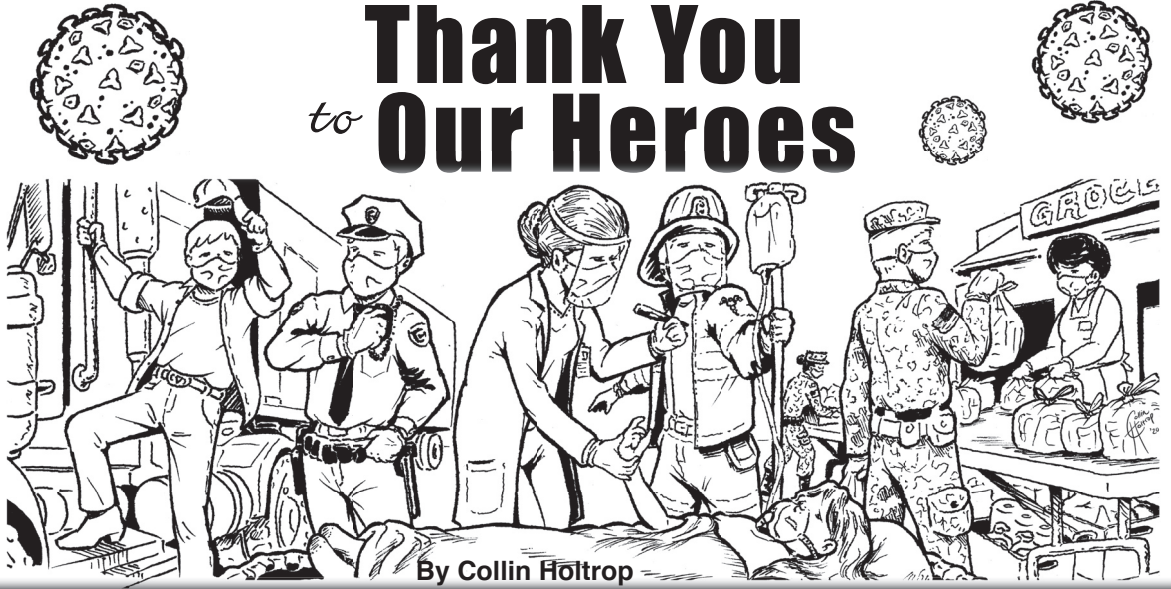
## Summer Reading Program

### June 15 - August 15

Whether we're online or able to meet in person, Summer Reading is still on for all ages! Visit our website or Facebook page for details.

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# Thank You to Our Heroes

By Collin Holtrop

"We are grateful to God for all of our service workers – police, firefighters, medical workers, our military, and other public servants – whom we support and thank for their service."