

Local Restaurants Work Together to Feed Unemployed F&B Members

As restaurants close their doors for an unknown amount of time, Pay It Forward Charleston is keeping local farms in business by providing food to the out-of-work Food and Bev members who create and serve our favorite dishes and drinks.

How Does It Work?

Pay It Forward Charleston has partnered with Feed the Need Charleston to channel funds to local farms who currently have an overabundance of goods due to the decline of restaurant sales. They in turn provide their restaurant partners with deeply discounted goods for each weekly supplemental provisions bag. A \$10 donation through payitforwardcharleston.org provides one bag of groceries to a Food and Bev member in need. Grocery bags are centered on your everyday pantry staples,— fresh fruit, bread, and eggs to name a few.



Dozens of grocery bags wait to be delivered to F&B community members in need.

Local Businesses Supporting Pay It Forward Charleston

Local restaurants like Taco Boy, Cru Catering, FIG, Delaney Oyster House, and Mercantile & Mash have volunteered to help distribute the groceries. Each location will give out approximately 50 bags of groceries per day to help maintain social distancing per the CDC guidelines. Additionally, each participating restaurant is encouraged to continue working with their regular suppliers to create the grocery bags thus helping keep everyone in business.

Michael Shemtov, owner of Butcher & Bee and forerunner of Pay It Forward Charleston, plans to distribute more than 1,000 bags of groceries per week. "Every week we have to raise more funds to keep feeding our community. We're committed to providing this service for as long as it's needed but we are completely dependent on the generosity of others to help us achieve

this goal.” By working with Feed the Need Charleston and partnering with several local restaurants — a list that continues to grow as more volunteer — Shemtov has created a resilient distribution system that continues to evolve as we all adapt to the current circumstances.

Over the past month Pay It Forward Charleston has received more than \$40,000 in donations and an astounding 7,284 bags of groceries have been funded. The number continues to increase as nearly 400 bags of groceries were paid for overnight.

Already funded to continue providing groceries for the next three weeks, Pay It Forward Charleston is just getting started. Red Clay Hot Sauce is contributing 15% of their online sales to the cause. Off Track Ice Cream is donating \$1 per pint sold. Local artist Sam Sidney is donating all proceeds from her I love Charleston coloring print sales.

Since the start of Pay It Forward Charleston, Butcher & Bee has received an outpouring of love and gratitude from those effected. A mother receiving support had this to say: “Thank you so much for this. More than anything, I cried when I saw the muffins, eggs, and the bread. My kids were able to have treats (muffins) and I can make them sandwiches for a couple days. They are autistic and don’t eat much of anything. Thank you so very much.”

WE NEED YOU!

How can you contribute to pay it forward Charleston?

Individuals can make a monetary donation here.

You can also support local businesses who have pledged to contribute a portion of their sales to Pay It Forward Charleston. Businesses that would like to get involved can contact Butcher & Bee at this email: jkleiger@butcherandbee.com.

As the world continues to change around us, if you’re not in a position to donate or shop local, please share this article and the information about Pay It Forward Charleston to help raise awareness.

You can also help other communities by sharing this initiative with your friends and family across the country. Butcher & Bee is currently putting together a playbook to help other cities start similar programs to benefit their communities. All inquiries can be sent to: payitforward@butcherandbee.com



Employees at well known restaurant Butcher & Bee are hard at work prepping grocery bags provided through Pay It Forward Charleston.

Food and Beverage members can sign up to receive groceries here.

If you are a local business currently contributing or looking to contribute to Pay It Forward Charleston through donation of sales or other initiatives, we would love to speak with you so we can help raise awareness. Please contact us here or DM us on our social channels.

By Samantha Paternoster | April 25th, 2020
