



Helping Butler County Older Adults Manage the COVID-19 Crisis

Community answers call when food shortages reported at Butler County senior apartment buildings

May 1, 2020

On Friday, Friday, May 1, managers at two Butler County low-income apartment buildings contacted the Butler County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) to report that residents were running out of food.

Council on Aging (COA) has been working with county EMA offices to distribute supplies and food to service providers and older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, so it was natural that Matt Haverkos, Butler County EMA's director, reached out to COA for help.

Within hours, COA's Director of Provider Services, Randy Quisenberry, had plans in motion to deliver boxes of self-stable food to residents in each building – many of the residents were older adults. Local restaurant group, Frisch's, also donated supplies from its commissary.

But Quisenberry had to overcome some logistical challenges to get the meals packaged and delivered. The EMA's Haverkos connected Quisenberry with Butler County's Shared Harvest Food Bank and the Ohio National Guard for help.

Meals on Wheels of SWO & NKY has a contract with COA to deliver meals to older adults enrolled in Butler County's Elderly Service Program (ESP). The organization delivered several pallets containing 300 boxes of food to Shared Harvest in Fairfield where members of the Ohio National Guard were waiting to help unpack the pallets and prepare the meals for delivery. Terry Perdue, Shared Harvest's director, opened his facility's doors on a Saturday to accommodate the need. Butler County Metro collected the repackaged meal boxes and made the deliveries to Sherman Manor and Anthony Wayne apartment buildings.

Residents at each apartment building received two boxes of food, with each box containing a seven-day supply of meals. The residents would not have to worry about food for at least the next 14 days.



Property manager, Michele Zeh, reached out to Quisenberry after the meals and other supplies were delivered to her building. "This morning we have come into Sherman Manor with some very thankful seniors. I wanted to share a quote with you from John [a resident], 'What a cornucopia! I'm amazed and so grateful for all this food. For all the cleaning and paper goods from before as well. So very helpful!!! I haven't been out much at all.'" She added, "We have many happy faces today at Sherman Manor. The residents are extremely fortunate to have your services here and the staff also greatly appreciate your care for our tenants."

For more information about how Council on Aging and the Elderly Services Program are serving older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit www.help4seniors.org. Any senior who needs help during the COVID-19 pandemic should contact Council on Aging at 513-721-1025 or Butler County ESP at (513) 868-9281.