

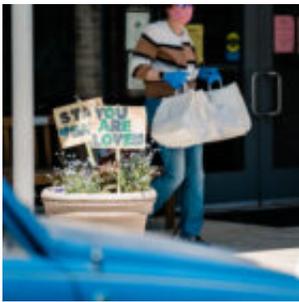
## **Corbin Cares Initiative for Food-Insecure Families and Seniors Extended to July 3**

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**Date :** June 5, 2020



When Corbin Cares and the Darien Foundation partnered back in March to provide meals for Darien senior citizens and families impacted by the shelter-in-place order, the program was projected to wind down by Friday, May 22.

However, the ongoing needs related to the pandemic have warranted the program's extension to Friday, July 3.

— an announcement from [Corbin Cares](#) and the [Darien Foundation](#)

“We conceived these meals to replace the lunches that were being served by the now closed Mather Senior Center and to support families who had relied on the school lunch program” said Sarah Woodberry, executive director of the Darien Foundation. “We are proud that as of May 22, this collaboration has provided 4,140 meals to those in need.”

Corbin Cares enlisted six local restaurants, including Bodega Taco Bar, Ten Twenty Post, Baldanza Bistro, Four Forks, Jake's Place and UCBC, to provide healthy, boxed meals that are then distributed to the seniors and families.

“It's inspiring to be involved in a public private partnership like this,” said Ward Glassmeyer, chairman of The Darien Foundation. “Corbin Cares has worked closely with town officials to craft an initiative that provides food for neighbors in need while also generating business for local restaurants.”

Prior to the pandemic, local seniors were accustomed to congregating, connecting with others, and enjoying a discounted lunch together at the Mather Senior Center. This was obviously halted when the Center was closed in March.

In response, Corbin Cares began offering to-go lunches on weekdays from the Mather Center. In this “drive-through” scenario, seniors pull up and remain in their cars at a socially safe distance.

Mather staff, wearing masks and gloves, place the boxed/bagged lunches into their vehicles. When the program began, 30 lunches per day were provided. As needs grew, this expanded to 50 lunches per day / 250 per week being served.

Shared Senior Center Director Beth Paris, “We have more than a dozen seniors whom are over 90 years old, and would therefore be particularly at risk during the pandemic.

When the lunch program at the Mather Center was temporarily suspended due to health risks associated with the food-shopping duties of Chef Judi Rotar and other part time support staff, we were encouraged to find this solution.”

She continued:

“The ‘drive-through’ lunch has served as ‘nutrition on every level’ – for our seniors — mind, body and soul. Coming to the Center for lunch is an outing that provides a much-needed routine and purpose. Our participants look forward being greeted each day.

“The restaurants have gone above and beyond in providing fresh, well-balanced and generously portioned meals. This has greatly benefited folks who had a fear of shopping, those who wanted to remain somewhat independent, as well as those who loved being socially connected and cared for by their community. In addition, this has also helped several individuals with monthly expense concerns.”

The current goal is to reopen the Mather Center kitchen on July 1, so that their staff can start preparing and providing the meals once again. The plan is for the Senior Center staff to take over the drive-through lunch program the week of July 6.

In addition to support for the seniors, Corbin Cares also provides 300 dinners per week to Darien families (which include about approximately 125 children) who have been identified by the town’s Department of Human Services.

“Many people do not realize that there are many families right here in town who suffer from food-insecurity. This program’s goal is to support them, as well,” said David Genovese, the founder and architect of Corbin Cares.

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Genovese and his Corbin Cares project have galvanized many local businesses, organizations and individuals to step forward to collaborate, help others and provide support for those in need.

Also, Corbin Cares has launched a series of free virtual / Zoom events, classes and diversions to inspire, uplift, and connect the community of Darien.

The events include a wide array of offerings, from fitness classes to wine tastings to bartending lessons. The events calendar is filled through June, and the complete schedule can be seen [online, here](#).

In addition, concerned by the mental impact of the isolation and anxiety associated with this crisis, First Selectman Jayme Stevenson spearheaded the production of 14 free mental wellness videos, featuring healthcare experts, clergy members, doctors to offer support during these times.

The videos, funded by The Darien Foundation and produced by DAF Media, are available for viewing at: <https://bit.ly/2zaGGvj>

### **About Corbin Cares**

**Corbin Cares**, with the support of our community, will work with The Darien Foundation, The Community Fund of Darien, The Darien Lions Club, Food Rescue US and several local restaurants to get healthy, ready-to-eat meals delivered to those in our community who are food insecure and to our hospital & healthcare workers during this battle with Covid-19. Corbin Cares was initiated by Baywater Properties and PG Properties in connection with their redevelopment of a portion of downtown Darien, which they have branded The Corbin District.

For more information about Corbin Cares, visit

<https://www.thecorbindistrict.com/corbin-cares/>

Corbin Cares events page: <https://www.thecorbindistrict.com/events/>

Facebook: @thecorbindistrict

Instagram: @thecorbindistrict

The photos, taken at a distance with a telephoto lens, are by Katharine Calderwood of [Calderwood Digital](#).

### **About The Darien Foundation**

The Darien Foundation is an independent, community-based, 501(c)(3) public charity.

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Since 1998, The Darien Foundation has awarded over \$4.5 million in grants for technology and capital initiatives, which create opportunity for Darien's youth, support our town's safety and security services, and enhance the overall quality of life in Darien.

Our volunteer Board of Directors, who reflect the many constituencies of Darien, thoroughly evaluate grant requests, and assist grant recipients in achieving their goals. Public donations are directed to supporting grants awarded by The Darien Foundation, as all operating costs have been funded by board member and officer contributions.

Most recently, The Darien Foundation has awarded grants to the Darien Police Department, The Depot Youth Center, Person-to-Person and Darien TV79.

For more information about The Darien Foundation, visit [darienfoundation.org](http://darienfoundation.org)

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