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Senior Center's Food Pickups End, New Program Replaces Them With Deliveries to Seniors and Those in Need

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With Darien Senior Center having ended its food pickup service in the Town Hall parking lot on Monday, a new, expanded program called "Corbin Cares" has been launched in town to have deliveries of breakfasts, boxed lunches and dinners to seniors and others in need during the COVID-19 epidemic.

The effort, expected to begin this week, is a collaboration between nonprofits, local businesses and town government departments. Darien seniors and others identified by the town Human Services Department will be eligible for it as well as others in need in surrounding communities.

The project is funded privately and is seeking donations from the public.

The project, which has the support of Darien's Department of Public Health and the First Selectman's Office, is expected to begin this week.

An announcement from the project organizers said:

- "The Community Fund of Darien, The Darien Foundation and Food Rescue US are joining forces with Corbin Cares, a new initiative launched by Baywater Properties and PG Properties, to fund, organize, and provide ready-to-eat, healthy and safely prepared meals from local restaurants to Darien seniors in need, residents referred by Darien's Department of Human Services, and local nonprofits that feed the food-insecure of Fairfield County. [...]"
- "The program will replace the lunches that were served at the now closed Senior Center with individually boxed lunches that will be distributed under social distance protocols. [...]"

Along with helping seniors, the announcement said, the program will also provide "a robust family-style dinner each week to approximately 75 families who receive assistance from Darien's Department of Human Services."

First Selectman Jayme Stevenson said at Monday's Board of Selectman meeting that the drive-thru pickups in the parking lot outside Darien Senior Center ended that day, but the new initiative is replacing it.

In addition to helping seniors and those in need, she said, the Corbin Cares program will be "fantastic" for local eateries, she said. It will "allow food to be purchased from our local restaurants, which is fantastic, to help them stay in business. [...]" Hopefully, everyone's doing the best you can to support our local restaurants" with ordered deliveries, curbside pickups or pickups at the door.

Darien Human Services Department has a typical caseload of 125 clients, "but that's expanding every day," she said, with the economic dislocations caused by business closures due to the epidemic. "Our Human Services Department is also on the front lines and providing meals to the public school kids that are on the free and reduced [price] lunch program. [...]"

"If you [the public] have ideas about other ways we can support our local businesses, please contact me," Stevenson said.

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Sarah Woodberry, the executive director of the Darien Foundation, said in the announcement:

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<https://darienite.com> with town leadership and Corbin Cares to frame how this program could replace the lunch programs no longer available at the senior center and the public schools. Also, our underwriting of Corbin Cares in Darien will allow the money raised by the Corbin Cares' initiative to stretch further throughout our neighboring communities.”

How It Works

The funds will be disbursed to eateries including Bodega Taco Bar, Ten Twenty Post, Baldanza Bistro, Four Forks, Jake's Place and Upper Crust Bakery and Cafe.

Their meals will then be transported by Food Rescue US to local social service agencies in Darien, Norwalk and Stamford that are providing for individuals and families that are food insecure.

Other Help

In addition to collaborating with Corbin Cares and Food Rescue US, the Community Fund of Darien will continue to provide our town's residents in need with emergency assistance for rent, utilities, medical expenses, transportation costs and groceries through its “Touch-A-Life” fund, in cooperation with Darien's Department of Human Services.

“During this stressful and uncertain time, the silver lining is finding a way to work together as a community to get food and aid to those in need from generous neighbors who care,” said Janet King, the organization's executive director.

Darien residents in need should contact the Department of Human Services at 203-656-7328 or email Ali Ramsteck, Director, at ARamsteck@DarienCT.gov.

Initial Funding

“My partner, Penny Glassmeyer, and I are proud to have initiated this program, which will provide thousands of meals during this crisis for healthcare workers on the front line, as well as those experiencing food insecurity in our community-at-large,” said David Genovese of Baywater Properties.

“The incredible support for Corbin Cares received from our community, the Darien Foundation and the Community Fund of Darien demonstrate the astounding generosity of those around us,” Genovese said.

The Darien Foundation has fast-tracked a \$75,000 grant to fund Corbin Cares within Darien.

They'd Like Your Help

Donations of \$5 will provide breakfast, \$15 will buy a boxed lunch and \$20 will supply a healthy dinner.

Tax-deductible contributions can be [made online](#) through Corbin Cares.

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Donations to Corbin Cares will be managed by The Community Fund of Darien, a 501(c)3, to provide tax documentation for donors. Donations will be 100% tax deductible.