

# COLUMBIA TOWN CENTER ROTARY RESPONDS TO COVID-19 BY DELIVERING HELP TO THE MOST VULNERABLE

## Rotary Delivers Food & PPE

By President Harsana Showunmi and Sharon Waligora

month. The ODFP offers a good selection of food including canned goods, dry goods, fresh produce, frozen meat, and dairy items.

To help with the increased demand, CTC Rotary contributed \$4,000 over the past 3 months to help buy additional food and stepped up its hands-on support to load cars, direct traffic and deliver food. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, food bags were pre-packed and then loaded into the

trunk of each car. So, instead of transporting our families who have no transportation to pick up their food at the pantry, CTC Rotary improvised and delivered food to 27 families each month. Because of the increased demand from families in need and the requests for food to be delivered, Running Brook Elementary School (RBES) volunteers have willingly helped with deliveries. We anticipate that these families will continue to need our assistance in the coming months.

It was evident that in addition to the food crisis, there was a PPE shortage. Senior citizens are also extremely vulnerable to COVID-19, hence the need to take the necessary steps to help keep them safe. To help fight and protect against COVID-19, we provided PPE to Winter Growth, Inc., a Senior Care Facility in Columbia, MD. We acquired over \$2,000 worth of the following equipment and delivered it to the Columbia facility: 11 gallons of hand sanitizer, 80 KN95 masks, 130 washable cloth masks, 700 surgical masks, 100 face shields and 30 boxes disposable gloves.

Our thanks to several craftspeople who contributed equipment to this project including Elena Sotnikova for the face shields; Debbie from Frederick, HoCo Mask Makers, and Oanh Nguyen for sewing the cloth masks.

We truly enjoy serving the community and look forward to the months of service ahead. Read more about our service at [ctcrotary.org](https://ctcrotary.org). Visit us on Facebook at CTCrotary. Support our project at [ctcrotary2020.org](https://ctcrotary2020.org).

The Columbia Town Center (CTC) Rotary Club sprang into action in April to set up a hands-on project to help the most vulnerable citizens in our community deal with food insecurity and lack of PPE in response to COVID-19.

Fueled by a District 7620 COVID-19 grant, donations from Columbia Rotary Club, Howard West Rotary Club, and generous contributions from community members, CTC Rotary set out to provide food for families living in downtown Columbia, struggling with food insecurity due to lost jobs and lack of access to the Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) program for their children at school. Additionally, CTC Rotary took on the difficult task of acquiring PPE for senior citizen care facilities and volunteers during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis.

When the pandemic hit our community, prompt response was paramount. After a record grant request turnaround from District 7620, with the leadership of Sharon Waligora and Harsana Showunmi, CTC Rotary sprang into action, leveraging our existing partnership with the Open Doors Food Pantry (ODFP) at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Highland MD. Every 3rd Saturday of the month the Food Pantry provides food to an average of 80 food-insecure families in the community and was ready to take on the challenge of providing more. Since this crisis began, CTC Rotary has helped the ODFP distribute food to 180, 206, and 192 families in April, May and June, respectively, at their "Drive-Thru" Food Pantry; serving more than double the typical number of families each

[Below] The Open Doors Food Pantry volunteers photo shows our members in their black Rotary hats posing socially distanced with other volunteers including ODFP board members in red shirts. Sharon Waligora is in a red shirt with a Rotary hat on because she is on both boards.



[Above] Columbia Town Center Rotary Club President Harsana Showunmi and Alvin Thompson delivering PPE to Winter Growth Director.

[Below] Rotarian Alvin Thompson loading cars to deliver food.



[Below] In response to COVID-19, the Olney Rotary Club and Roots Market donated

