



A New Pantry Visitor Receives her Groceries

Coronavirus hit. You helped.

Read about the families you supported through the coronavirus pandemic.

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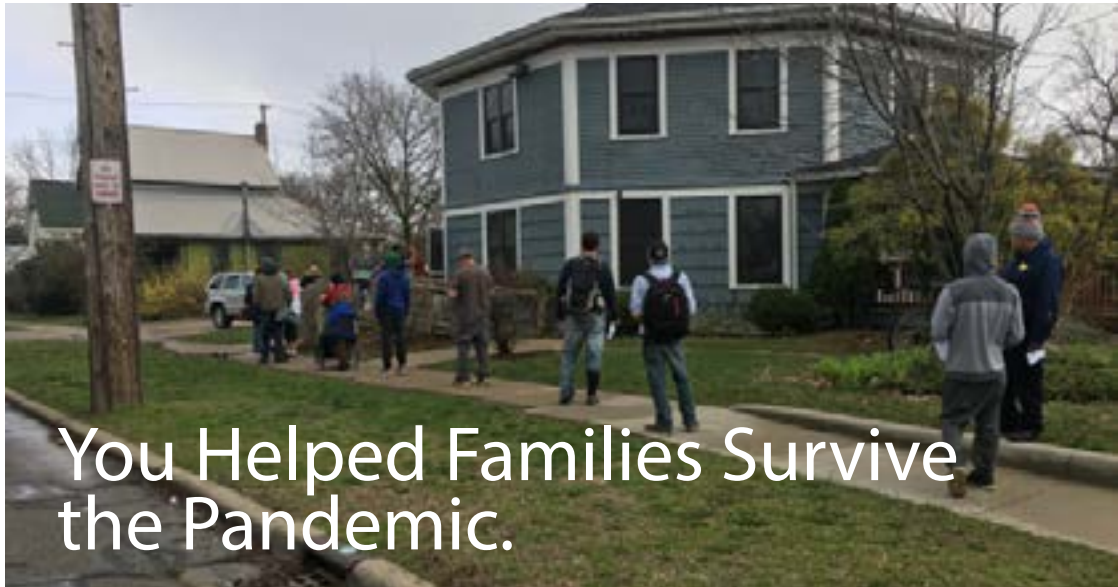
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You Helped Families Survive the Pandemic.

With your help, SOS provided relief to those hit the hardest by the coronavirus pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic changed the lives of many. For some, it has made providing basic needs impossible. Thanks to you, SOS has been able to support these individuals.

School closures, job loss and cut hours have contributed to increased demand for our services. In the weeks following the statewide shutdown, SOS's food pantry saw a 31% increase in visitors. In the month of May, 24% of SOS's pantry visitors were new — most of them visiting a pantry for the first time as a direct result of the pandemic.

"We had a young man come to the Food Pantry. He said that he had never been to our food pantry before," said Tracey Anderson, SOS's Food & Volunteer Coordinator. "He said he and his wife were both out of work due to COVID-19 and had not received their unemployment checks yet. He thanked me for being here and said he hoped to come volunteer for us when this is all over."

"One lady had stage four cancer and was scared to stand in line to get food due to her reduced immune system because of her cancer treatment," Tracey continued. "We were able to reduce her exposure by going out to her car, finding out what she wanted from our produce list, and bringing it straight to her car for her."

Thankfully, alongside the rising demand for our services during the pandemic, people like you have really stepped up your support. Your gifts have made it possible to respond to more requests for help during this crisis. Without your gifts, many families would have gone hungry during the pandemic.

Other pantries closed this spring because of the virus. Because of you, SOS's pantry stayed open. One man called because he needed food. When he found out that SOS's pantry was open and he could get groceries that day, he cried. He said he had called five pantries but none were open. He was so grateful and relieved to find the food he needed at SOS.

The coronavirus pandemic has presented an unexpected obstacle for many, but thanks to your support, families at SOS are finding the help they need to get by during this difficult time.



SOS Turns Fifty

Volunteers Like You Make a Difference

Cath Antkowiak-Howard worked at a crisis center in Indiana in 1970 when she was a high school student. She moved to Ypsilanti in 1974 because her partner was attending graduate school. She knew she wanted to continue her crisis work in Michigan. So she began volunteering at the SOS Crisis Center.

How did you get involved with SOS?

Cath said, "In Indiana, social workers did not do intensive, clinical casework. So I thought I wanted to be a psychologist. Moving to Michigan, I learned what comprehensive social work was and fell in love with it. There were three divisions of volunteering at SOS: phones, on call, and clinical (one-on-one counseling). I learned all the jobs. For me, it was a vocation. It became a calling."

What do you remember most about SOS?

Cath remembers taking many phone calls. She often worked several shifts each week, doing drug crisis work and suicide prevention over the phone, on call and some one-on-one counseling sessions. Cath remembers SOS providing a place for people to drop in and receive whatever help they needed.

When Cath worked at SOS in the 1970s, there was little understanding at the hospitals of the difference between medical crises, mental health crises, and drug abuse. SOS helped the hospitals recognize the difference.

"There was one young man being treated at the hospital. He was incoherent and they thought he had taken something. They found white pills next to him. This was not normal for a trip. We said it did not seem like drugs. But they assumed he was young, so it must have been drugs. It turns out he had a headache and the white pills were aspirin. He had encephalitis."

How did SOS make a difference for you?

Cath remembers the close friendships she developed with fellow volunteers at SOS. She remembers working with them to organize volunteer training. Volunteering has made a tremendous difference in Cath's life. She says, "People want to give back and pay it forward. Volunteering allows people to do so without a full time commitment. It also gives people the opportunity to get experience if they feel like this may be their profession."

How YOU Can Volunteer with SOS

People like you are at the heart of the work SOS does every day. Now that SOS is celebrating 50 years, so many wonderful supporters like you are sharing their stories of how SOS has made a difference in their lives and the lives of others. In this story, one of SOS's early volunteers from the 1970s recalls her time helping others at SOS.

Are YOU an SOS volunteer? Share your story! You could inspire someone else to get involved and help feed more hungry families Please contact Barbara Cecil at barbarac@soscs.org.

"Volunteerism creates communities where people are more in touch with where they live,,



You're Invited to Road to Home 2020!

Thanks to your support, our Road to Home event raised \$176,418 last year. you helped respond to a surge in requests for food and other basic needs amid the coronavirus pandemic.

You can make Road to Home 2020 another success! Tickets will go on sale on SOS's website in August. Road to Home will include an engaging program and a silent auction.



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Coronavirus Update

Read about how supporters like you helped families during the pandemic

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Upcoming Activities

11th Annual Road to Home Fundraiser

SOS's annual fall fundraiser will be held at Sesi Lincoln on Wednesday, October 14th. Debbie and Mike Tirico are co-chairs for Road to Home 2020. The event will include food, a live auction, and a silent auction of unique bowls. If an in-person event is impossible, an engaging virtual program will be developed.

Your Opinion Matters

The pandemic is the biggest crisis we have ever faced. You can help us find more supporters like you to help more families during this crisis. Please complete your 2020 SOS Supporter Survey by August 10th. You can complete the survey online here: bit.ly/3gczEXr. Thank you!

