



CENTER FOR FOOD SYSTEMS
AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Joining Forces

A story highlighting an initiative to feed families in need while supporting local restaurants in Roanoke, VA. This short vignette is part of our “Virginia Food Systems and COVID-19 Story Collection Project” that aims to highlight, collect, and share stories of hope and resilience in our food system amidst the pandemic. Find out more about this project and view our entire series on [our website](#).

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<https://foodsystems.centers.vt.edu/>

When needs arise, good neighbors are often there to lend a hand. The Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Virginia partnered with other local organizations to aid in the “7 Weeks to Take Out Hunger” initiative. These organizations sought monetary donations to purchase food from local restaurants to give to needy families during the Coronavirus pandemic. All of the purchased food came from local businesses and restaurants, as the initiative of the Boys and Girls Club and its partner organizations also aimed to keep Roanoke-area merchants afloat.

During week one of the seven week-long initiatives to feed hungry families, participant organizations raised more than \$26,000 toward their \$100,000 goal. With the funds, the “7 Weeks to Take Out Hunger” initiative planned to feed between 1,000 and 2,000 needy families each week. However, more families became in need as the pandemic progressed. Each week the demand for food grew about twenty percent. Donations came from numerous types of businesses and organizations, ranging from the Community Foundation of Western Virginia to Delta Dental.

Michelle Davis, a spokesperson from the Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Virginia, made it clear that the initiative to feed the hungry was not created to be purely focused on food. This initiative is also centered on keeping people connected while ensuring their needs for food and resources are met. Feelings of connectedness dwindled as social distancing measures increased, so the opportunity to safely go out to put food on the table was welcome.



Above, a Boys and Girls Club volunteer is shown wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), like gloves and a mask, while loading food into a recipient's vehicle in order to slow the spread of Coronavirus. (Photo from WDBJ7)

For more detailed information about 7 Weeks to Take Out Hunger, click [here](#). Learn more about the Boys and Gils Club of Southwest Virginia at [this link](#). This vignette was derived from a WDBJ7 news piece from May 1, 2020 (see below).

References

Birch, J. (2020, May 1). *Boys and Girls Club helping feed hungry families while supporting local businesses*. WDBJ7. Retrieved from:

<https://www.newsbreak.com/virginia/roanoke/news/00veM3iu/boys-and-girls-club-helping-to-feed-hungry-families-while-supporting-local-businesses>