



CENTER FOR FOOD SYSTEMS  
AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

## Paying it Forward

*A glimpse of hope and help through an act of care by the University of Virginia's Dining Services. 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 materials and supplies are in excess, donating offers a way to prevent waste while helping others. The University of Virginia's dining program found itself with too much food—much of it perishable—following the university's transition to online learning due to the Coronavirus outbreak in the United States. In March, most students traveled home to finish out the semester. Not many students were left on campus, and the need for dining services saw a major dip.

Much of the food on hand was donated to and shared with local charities and food banks. The district executive chef for UVA Dining made it clear that he wanted to demonstrate community care and did not want the facilities' perishable products to be lost. The vice president of operations for the University of Virginia said that the "university is grateful" to have a partnership with Aramark, its food vendor, that allowed for such community care and donations to take place locally (Kelly, 2020).

Community organizations that UVA collaborated with to meet growing regional food needs included the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, The Haven, The Salvation Army, Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, and the Food Pantry for Fauquier County through 4P Foods. The food shared consisted of cheeses, potatoes, onions, prepared fresh fruit salad, and other mixed fruits and vegetables. Food received was sorted in a way that allowed balance between all recipients, and tailored to match the specific needs of the receiving parties. According to the district executive chef for the dining program, this broad effort was designed to be "ongoing" throughout the pandemic (Kelly, 2020). No monetary figures have been released in regard to the sum of donations from the university.



*The above illustration is by Alexandra Angelich, of University Communications, UVA*

The University of Virginia's Dining Services COVID-19 information and response page can be found [here](#). Details about the [Blue Ridge Area Food Bank](#) and [Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry](#) can be found on their websites. This vignette was adapted from [an article by UVA Today](#), which was published on May 23, 2020.

## Reference

Kelly, M. (2020, May 23). *UVA Dining donates perishable foods to area charities*. UVA Today. Retrieved from: <https://news.virginia.edu/content/uva-dining-donates-perishable-foods-area-charities>