



Coronavirus Update: April 20, 2020

KEEPING YOU IN THE KNOW about how COVID-19 is affecting our people, our programs, our methods of delivering essential services like food and shelter, *and how you can help us continue to serve our Guests.* I know that this message is reaching most of you in your homes, where you're struggling to maintain a semblance of normal life while trying to remain safe, sane, and healthy. We, too, are facing that in our homes and the Ministry. I want to acknowledge the exceptional efforts and creativity of our staff as we continue to focus our energy on the care of Guests in our Food Pantry, Soup Kitchen, Capernaum Place, and the City Shelter.

TEMPORARY PROGRAM CHANGES

- The Shelter has moved our Guests to a quarantine facility (Doubletree Hotel in Andover) run by the city where families can shelter in their rooms, thus offering an improved option for preventing the spread of the virus (details below).
- The Soup Kitchen continues to use a "meals to go" system Monday to Friday.
- The Food Pantry continues Wednesday distribution of groceries in the new "groceries to go" format.
- We have closed our Thrift Stores until further notice.
- We have closed our Sewing and Culinary Arts classes until further notice.
- We have suspended our crucial Volunteer Program until further notice.

A MESSAGE FROM JEFF HASSEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR April 20, 2020

The focus inside Lazarus House continues to be service to our Guests – through the Soup Kitchen, Food Pantry, Shelter, and Transitional Housing programs.

Miguel and Almarie, the leaders of our Soup Kitchen, are redesigning the way we staff that part of the ministry. They plan to create two independent teams to deepen our bench and keep the Soup Kitchen serving meals even if a whole team becomes quarantined or ill.

Given the design of our Shelter to hold as many Guests as possible, our Shelter staff breathed a sigh of relief when they were able to move our Guests into the new city shelter in the Doubletree Hotel in Andover. The city shelter gives our Guests private rooms so they can isolate in ways that were not possible in our shelter. Carmen, our Shelter Manager, will continue case management with our Guests and reported that they have settled in nicely to their new surroundings. Lazarus House will welcome them back to our Shelter when it is safe to do so.

Lazarus House and the City of Lawrence found traction for a partnership to turn our Ishah House facility into a COVID-19 Recovery Center. However, our forward process has been delayed by inspections for compliance with fire codes, Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, sprinkler test certifications, and fire alarm system tests. Six weeks ago, we offered our Ishah House building to the City at no charge for the next several months to give COVID patients a place to heal and provide the hospital the chance to free-up beds for patients who are in critical need. I remain hopeful that our efforts at partnership will come to fruition for this project *or another* that will be a benefit to the citizens of Lawrence in a time of crisis.

This week, the leadership of the Board of Directors and I made the difficult decision to furlough employees who were already at home and not working due to COVID-19 program closures. It is important to note that the essential services of Lazarus House remain open. Our HR manager will help our furloughed employees apply for unemployment, and I will publish weekly communications, so our employees will know what is going on and what to expect.

The Food Pantry was in operation on Wednesday, giving bags of groceries to 776 families using a “grab and go” system. Our Guests continue to express profound gratitude for Lazarus House staff risking illness and remaining open, providing them with the food they need to feed their families. *On a related note, we hear from our community partners and Food Banks that food access may become the next big challenge in Lawrence.*

If you would like to support Lazarus House in these ever-changing times, [a financial donation is best](#).

Praying for an end to COVID-19 and safety for all in the interim,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Hassel', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and 'H'.

Rev. Jeff Hassel
Executive Director

Note: Lazarus House leaders continue to make necessary changes, as recommended by the State of Massachusetts and the CDC, to the way we serve, sanitize facilities, use personal protective gear, and operate. We are keeping safety for all at the forefront of our minds and actions.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US CONTINUE TO SERVE OUR GUESTS

- PRAY for our Guests, our staff and the Lawrence Community
- [DONATE](#)

LAZARUS HOUSE – A Beacon of Hope in the darkness of poverty and homelessness.

Lazarus House helps women, men, and children living in poverty restore their dignity and self-respect. We offer life-saving and life-giving services in the areas of food, shelter, clothing, and education.