



NEWS RELEASE

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FAMILY ASSISTANCE MINISTRIES MAINTAINS SERVICES WHILE ADAPTING OPERATIONS DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Nonprofit agency balancing tension between mission to serve community and reality of threat to clients, volunteers and staff.

San Clemente, CA – March 16, 2020 –Responding to the fast-changing realities of the U.S. coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, Family Assistance Ministries (FAM) will continue, but adapt, its daily food, shelter and personal supportive services to south Orange County families and individuals in need.

“We are dedicated to responsibly serving our community,” says FAM CEO Elizabeth Andrade. The agency is “balancing the tension between our mission to serve our community and the reality of the threat to our organization.”

FAM has begun to witness the impact of COVID-19 on clients’ lives, according to Andrade. “We have already experienced an increase in requests for rental and utility assistance needs. We have started to hear the concern from our clients as their employers have reduced their hours or closed for the next two weeks. Friday, we had 7 new families requesting food assistance.”

FAM’s thousands of clients include those most vulnerable to the coronavirus outbreak: seniors, health-compromised, food-insecure and unsheltered.

With the help of more than 1,330 volunteers, the nonprofit maintains its San Clemente-based resource center, emergency family shelter, transitional shelter, permanent supportive housing, resale shop, three satellite support centers in San Juan Capistrano, Dana Point and Laguna Niguel.

To help minimize personal contact and safeguard its clients, volunteers and staff, FAM has instituted the following procedures:

- **Client Hours.** FAM's San Clemente office will adapt its regular office hours, now 10 am–3 pm Monday thru Friday, as long as possible.
- **Drive Up Food Services.** Clients are asked to call our main line at 949-492-8477 to pre-order.
- **Virtual Case Management.** Prescreening meetings will be conducted over the phone or via Skype/Facetime with clients in need of financial assistance.
- **Senior Response Program.** “We want to ensure that seniors have the items they need during this time without leaving their homes,” says Andrade. Arrangements are underway to serve senior clients.
- **Resale Shop.** FAM's Resale Shop will remain open Monday- Saturday 10am-5pm for as long as possible. All necessary precautions are being made in order to ensure proper safety and cleaning measures are in place.
- **Volunteers Availability.** Volunteers in higher risk categories are suspending their normal engagement with FAM in all areas including drivers, warehouse assistants, front desk staff, and retail shop and satellite distribution helpers. *Help is needed to meet the needs in our community*
- **Food Pick-Up Schedule.** The schedule of food pick-ups at participating grocery stores may be adjusted due to decreased food volume and fewer available pick-up drivers.
- **Marine Base Food Distribution.** Food supply distribution to the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton is suspended for the time being.

Several upcoming FAM events have been postponed or cancelled, including:

- Second Saturday food distribution
- Wine Soiree GALA underwriting event
- Swallows' Day Parade participation
- Annual Easter Brunch and Egg Hunt. Easter basket collection will continue. Distribution to clients will be held during the week before Easter.

In the coming weeks as national, state and local COVID-19 protocols and policies change, Andrade promises the agency “will continue to communicate with clients, volunteers, staff and partners regarding our updates to programs and precautionary steps.”

Further information regarding FAM's services and operations is available at the agency's website <https://www.family-assistance.org/>