



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DDH & DBA LAUNCH “DOUBLE HELPING HANDS”

Supporting Local Restaurants AND Homeless Community during COVID-19 Crisis

(Berkeley, CA) — The [Dorothy Day House \(DDH\)](#) in partnership with the [Downtown Berkeley Association \(DBA\)](#) is initiating the “[Double Helping Hands](#)” program on Tuesday, April 7, contracting with local restaurants to provide to-go meals for homeless community in Downtown Berkeley. The program will start with restaurant supplied to-go lunchtime meals outside the DHH Berkeley Community Resource Center (BCRC) located in the Veteran’s Memorial Building at 1931 Center Street in Downtown Berkeley.

According to David Stegman, Executive Director of DHH, “This is a win-win for the Dorothy Day House and the Downtown community. Our resources were stretched in providing to-go meals as the only way to maintain proper social distance for the homeless community we serve. And we are delighted to provide some business for Downtown restaurants that are hanging on by a thread during the COVID-19 crisis.”

“This is really a win-win for our community, supporting our local restaurants and the homeless during this emergency.” said Mayor Jesse Arreguin, “Thank you to the DBA and Dorothy Day House for launching this program. I am amazed that during this challenging time that our community is thinking about the needs of everyone, and that the best of humanity is shining through.”

John Caner, CEO of the Downtown Berkeley Association says the idea came from reading [a story about how the City of Cambridge Massachusetts was contracting with local restaurants to provide meals for the homeless](#). Caner reached out Robbi Montoya, DDH BCRC program manager, who agreed it was a fantastic idea. Caner told her “give me 48 hours and let me see if we can kickstart donations and restaurant interest to start a similar program.” Caner estimated they needed raise at least \$10,000 to kickstart the program to fund 1,000 meals at \$10/meal over a ten-day period.

According to Caner, he knew the City is stretched having recently approved \$3 million for the Berkeley Relief Fund, which Caner also helped organize. “So, we reached out the past and present DBA board members who within 24 hours personally committed over \$5,000, and then the DBA board agreed to match with another \$5,000.”

Caner adds, “Next we reached out to four Downtown restaurateurs who were barely surviving with take-out and delivery business, or had recently close their doors. A couple said they were already providing take-out meals for emergency responders in the \$15 per meal range. Caner asked if could they do meals at \$10 that are still nutritious tasty and worth their while. They all said yes, “sign me up”, including Amy Murray of Revival Bar + Kitchen, Dorothee Mitirani of La Note, Alex Popov of Cornerstone, and Kristine Seinsch of JazzCaffè/ACT Catering.”

According to Amy Murray, longtime owner and chef of Revival Bar + Kitchen, “We were hard hit when the arts district closed, and then our business collapsed with the Shelter in Place Order, and we had to sadly layoff most of our staff. We are struggling to pay rent and suppliers, and maintain a modest takeout and deliver menu. Double Helping Hands will help us stay open and keep some of our staff working during this time of extreme hardship.”

The first lunch-time meal will be provided by the JazzCaffè/ACT Catering on Tuesday April 7, followed by Revival Bar + Kitchen on April 8, La Note on April 9, and Cornerstone on April 10. Each day DBA Ambassadors will pick up and deliver the 80-100 meals, with the Downtown Berkeley electric utility cart, from the restaurants to the DHH BCRC to-go area outside the Veteran’s Building.

The first to-go lunches, on Tuesday provided by the JazzCaffè/ACT Catering, will include either: a shaved roasted turkey sandwich on Acme’s sesame kaiser roll with grilled asparagus, swiss cheese, hemp seed hummus; or a vegetarian option of grilled trumpet mushroom sandwich on Acme’s Sesame Kaiser Roll with roasted yam, salsa verde, hemp seed hummus; plus toasted red quinoa salad with spring vegetables and roasted carrot vinaigrette, and a chocolate chip cookie.

According to Stegman and Caner, with the initial \$10,000 in funding, the program will run for at least a week and half with approximately twelve days of to-go lunches. If ongoing fundraising is successful, DHH hopes continue the lunch-time program during the COVID crisis, adding other Downtown restaurants, and possibly expanding to other meals also. Also, Caner and Stegman hope this model might work for other shelters and local restaurant communities in the Berkeley, the Bay Area and beyond.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the **Dorothy Day House–Double Helping Hands** program, by visiting www.doublehelpinghands.org or the Dorothy Day House website at www.dorothydayhouseberkeley.org. Please be sure to designate your online donation for the “*Double Helping Hands*” program.

Or you can make **donation by check**, made out to “*Dorothy Day House*” with “*Double Helping Hands*” in for/memo field, and mail check to Dorothy Day House P.O. Box 12701, Berkeley CA 94712.

All Double Helping Hands tax deductible donations will go 100% to funding to-go meals for homeless purchased from local restaurants. No overhead will be charged by DHH or DBA, except 3% Network for Good fee for online transactions.

Also, if you are a Downtown restaurant, and interested in becoming part of the meal program, please contact Matthew Jervis at mjervis@downtownberkeley.com to get added to the list of potential supplier restaurants.

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