

Helping Our Neighbors at Thanksgiving

Dear J&M Families,

As we approach the holiday season we are all wondering what will the holidays look like, we hope to keep swimming but what else? If we look at the bigger picture maybe we can all do a little something to help others. One of our swim families is involved in feeding families at Thanksgiving that live near our swim sites. If you want to and can help, please click the link below. Thank you, J&M Coaches

Dear Friends,

I hope you all are well during these trying times.

With Thanksgiving around the corner, there are many families in our community who are really struggling and need your help.

After my friend, Dr. Benji Marfori, the senior Emergency Room doctor at Alexandria Hospital, shared his war stories against the COVID scourge and how it has decimated the lives and families of the Arlandria area, I felt like I had to get involved and do something, No more talk.

Let me share some of the things that we discussed:

- *While more than 4559 citizens of the City of Alexandria have contracted COVID-19 and 76 have sadly perished, Arlandria has been hit hard by a perfect storm of documented COVID infections and deaths on top of the area's lowest median income, lowest median age, highest population density, and percentage of multigenerational homes in the this predominantly 60% Latino area.*
- *While almost all (96%) COVID deaths are older than 50 years old, the vast majority (73.6%) of the COVID infections are in those younger than 50 years old with Latinos composing the most commonly infected group (45.2%).*
- *The primary wage earners in this neighborhood often perform front-line, or behind the scenes, essential services that make our lives, quarantines, and social distancing possible.*
- *When the primary wage earner gets sidelined by COVID, whether by direct infection or by COVID-related shutdown, these neighbors often have many people who depend on them and cannot make ends meet.*

The City of Alexandria and its citizens have set a regional example by providing the Arlandria area more than double the next local neighborhood-in-need's food assistance and emergency rent assistance but the need is ongoing and seemingly endless. A good buddy of mine, Murray Bonitt local businessman and owner of Bonitt Builders, felt strongly about this and agreed that we band together and provide a full Thanksgiving meal for those most in need. Murray spoke to his friends at Alexandria Restaurant Partners, and they are going to prepare 500 dinners for 4, or **2000 meals**, for distribution on Thanksgiving Eve.

While a possible vaccine may be just around the corner, many families are heading into a very long, uncertain winter with hope dwindling and no end in sight. **I would like each of you to consider donating whatever you can to the Del Ray Community Partnership in support of this cause to help the neediest in our community. Just [CLICK HERE](#).**

Anything you can give will help and would be greatly appreciated. Any excess funds raised will be contributed to Casa Chililagua, a local charity which serves the Latino community in Alexandria and will be used for Grocery Gift Cards to distribute.

Dig deep my friends and let's set an example of how the people of Alexandria will stand up for our neighbors in need.

Respectfully submitted,

Brett Rice

Murray Bonitt

Dr. Benji Marfori