



UNITED FRESH START FOUNDATION

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United Fresh Start Foundation Starts COVID-19 Donation Program to Help Kids and Families

WASHINGTON, DC (April 6, 2020) – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Fresh Start Foundation is offering a new grant program — COVID-19 Rapid Response FRESH Grants — to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for children and families in need, while also creating opportunities for foodservice distributors who face the loss of markets due to the restaurant and hospitality industry shutdown.

“These are two pressing needs facing our country today that are interconnected,” said United Fresh Start Foundation Chair Lisa McNeece, Vice President, Foodservice and Industrial Sales, Grimmway Enterprises, Inc. “Kids are out of school and families are out of work. We need to make sure they have access to fresh produce through remote feeding sites or community programs. And at the same time, our foodservice distributors have been devastated by the immediate shutdown of their markets. This is an attempt to inspire our greater industry to recognize both needs and do what we can to help.”

The United Fresh Start Foundation will fund (25) \$1,000 grants to produce companies and foodservice distributors who can provide fresh fruits and vegetables to schools, community groups, and other emergency feeding sites for those in need. If a distributor can donate at least \$1,000 worth of produce, or more, the Foundation will reimburse them \$1,000. The goal is to break down the barriers that impact access to fresh produce, and bring community members and the supply chain together during this extraordinary time.

The first grant was used to support a donation of 1,000 3-pound bags of apples by Lancaster Foods to the ALIVE community feeding program in Alexandria, Virginia on Saturday, April 4. Lancaster Foods’ President John Gates joined United Fresh’s President & CEO Tom Stenzel in delivering the fresh produce to ALIVE for distribution to needy residents in the community. “I thank John and the Lancaster team for going above and beyond to help our community,” Stenzel said. “And, for me personally, this feeds my own neighbors in need.”

This program is funded through the generosity of those individuals who have agreed to donate their prepaid registration fees for the United Fresh 2020 Convention in San Diego to the United Fresh Start Foundation. “I want to thank each of those individuals for inspiring us with their generosity and making this program possible,” McNeece said.

“In addition, we encourage individuals to consider making a tax-deductible donation directly to the United Fresh Start Foundation so we can continue to serve kids everywhere as best we can. And, of

course, company contributions are welcome! [Make your donation here](#) to ensure kids are growing up fresh!”

Interested produce distributors should [complete this simple form](#) to request a grant from the United Fresh Start Foundation. We ask that you immediately implement community feeding programs and we will get back to you on a first-come, first-served basis as long as funds are available.

Visit www.unitedfreshstart.org for complete details on the COVID-19 Rapid Response FRESH Grants program.

For more information, contact Mollie Van Lieu, Senior Director of Nutrition Policy at 202-303-3403 or mvanlieu@unitedfresh.org.

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About United Fresh Start Foundation

The United Fresh Start Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization focused exclusively on increasing children’s access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Affiliated with the United Fresh Produce Association, the Foundation is committed to helping today’s kids achieve the public health goal to make half their plate fruits and vegetables to live longer, healthier lives. The Foundation works to create an environment in which kids have easy access to high-quality, great-tasting and affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, whenever and wherever they are choosing snacks or a meal. More information at: www.unitedfreshstart.org.