

# Local Farmers and Chefs Rally to Get Food to Those in Need

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**ALTON** – With quiet grace and hundreds of hours of hard work, a small team of farmers, chefs and volunteers from Alton and St. Louis have been working to get much-needed food and personal care supplies to people in need across the region.

“During times like this, we have a responsibility to care for our neighbors in need, wherever they are,” said Rex Hale of AltonWorks in Alton, Il. “Over the last two weeks,

as jobs were being eliminated, we knew many families would be wondering where their next meal would come from. On behalf of AltonForward and AltonWorks, I am honored to be of service to the people of Alton and the greater STL region. We strive to serve as leaders in the community and catalyze the efforts to bring people together in times of need. I'm also proud to be of service to help connect local farmers with the community who needs them so desperately right now." Hale is also an internationally recognized chef, which drives much of his passion for the desire to bring people together, while respecting social distancing, with food.

Hale, along with Rae Miller from Known & Grown STL in St. Louis, and Simmons Hanly Conroy Chairman and AltonWorks founder, John Simmons, began collaborating with local farmers, restaurateurs, area chefs, food suppliers, and social service organizations like Beyond Housing, Diaper Bank, Operation Food Search, Boys and Girls Club, local churches and NCJW among others. They are working to help increase social distancing by establishing a short-term regional network to gather donated food and essential items, as well as prepare and deliver meals in the most effective, hygienic and efficient manner possible to people across the region. So far, over 60,000 pounds of food and supplies have been dropped off at two area sites and thousands of pounds of food have been delivered through at least 30 local charitable organizations.

"Creating a sense of community during a public crisis like this is more important than ever," said Miller. "Food is such an essential part of creating a resilient and thriving community, and the 40 farmers in our program are committed to stepping up to help people get back food on the table." The purpose of Known & Grown STL is to promote and support the work of food producers and retailers who improve our food system, educate residents about food choices, and shift behavior to create a thriving, equitable, and sustainable local food system.

"Altonians have a reputation for regional leadership in times like this," said Simmons. "We needed quick action to get people the supplies required to survive. I'm really proud of the work Rex and Rae have done gathering the volunteers to get two fully operational donation locations helping the people of this region." Christie Schlafly, of STL Food Works, has also graciously donated her building to aid in this effort of creating a stronger community. There are several ways the community can assist in creating a more resilient community:

Two locations have been established for food preparation and donation drop off as well as for social service agencies to pick up of food for delivery to people across the region.

## **STL Food Works**

408 N Sarah St, St. Louis, MO 63108

9:00am – 5:00pm

Donations Needed: Food and personal care items

Who can pick up: NFP organizations for distribution to people in need

**Riverbend Billiards Building**

909 E Broadway, Alton, IL 62002

9:00am – 5:00pm

Donations needed: Food and personal care items

Who can pick up: NFP organizations for distribution to people in need and individuals in need can pick up items for their families. Milk will also be available for sale at this location.

To make arrangements for donating items or if you have needs for items, please call 618-433-9214.