

# Angels of Kindness: A Community Coming Together

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It is always nice to see a community coming together to help each other, especially when times are tough. The current pandemic, caused by the rapid spread of the Coronavirus throughout our nation, has put many families into a position of needing the help of others.

Employees have been unable to work due to the "Stay-At-Home" Order given by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker to help slow the spread of the deadly virus, putting a financial strain on many people in our community and throughout the state. From the implementation of "E-Learning" to "Social-distancing," it has definitely been an adjustment for everyone, but our community has stepped up to the plate in finding ways to help support each other. Many people have stepped up by supporting small businesses and many small businesses have stepped up by supporting their employees, but some go even beyond that.

At the top of the extraordinary acts of kindness list, would have to be the volunteers who help at the local pantries and food banks, as well as, teachers and school staff. School staff members have been passing out breakfast and lunches to students each day and keeping the kids on track with their academics through E-Learning and online tutoring.

Next would have to be all the great people at Helping Hearts Grow and Alton Works. HHG is a not-for-profit organization whose volunteers have been working tirelessly to collect, package and deliver meals to those unable to get out. Last week they packaged and delivered over 375 sack lunches throughout the area. Alton Works, with John and Jayne Simmons, is a social impact company helping to revitalize the Alton area. They have begun working with local and regional food providers to assist in the effort to get food and other resources to those community members in need of urgent assistance. They have both been a blessing to hundreds of families just since this pandemic began.

Facebook has been an unexpected source of support for many people. The Madison County Blessing Group, a group of ladies who typically share Amazon wish-lists with each other and then randomly surprise each other with items on those lists, had members who immediately jumped up to offer their assistance. Many ladies from the group asked that anyone needing help "Drop their list! (Post their wish-list)". Many lists included snacks, juice, Amazon "pantry" items, and even games and movies to help keep kids entertained.

The employees who have been working overtime at warehouses, carry out and delivery restaurants, gas stations, store employees, truck and delivery drivers, nurses, doctors, administration and CNAs have kept our country afloat while we wait for this deadly virus to run its course. Without these people, the community would be lost, and the heroes have definitely come through.

Residents at nursing homes across the state have been cut off from family and friends for weeks now to preserve their health, but in one Brighton, IL nursing home, the residents are still receiving visits, just not the usual kind. A woman named Karen, whose dad was a resident in the facility and passed away several years ago, still comes to visit residents. Even though visits have been temporarily canceled, she made sure to stop by all the outside windows to say hi. Courtney Driver, Activities Director at Robing's Manor, who shared the heartwarming story, says "The residents were so excited to see her!" She says the residents have been missing their visits and the ones who realize what is going on are scared. Karen's visit made a big difference to them," Courtney said. "It was great to see the residents' smiles."

The simplest things can make the biggest difference during stressful times and so many people, like Karen and so many others, are making things a little bit easier. They are examples of the great community of people we have around us.