



INSIDE *the* GATE



SUMMER 2020



Dear Friends of Iron Gate —



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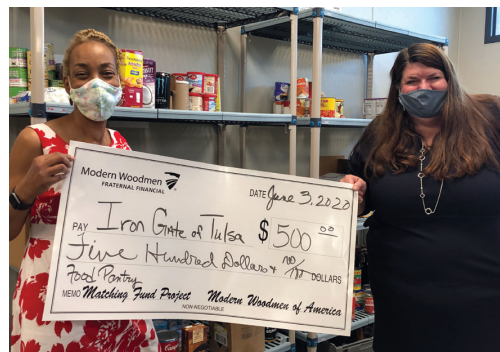
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To say things have changed is the understatement of the year. We had just hit our 6-month anniversary in the new building; we were starting to plan new initiatives; thinking about change; and BOOM, pandemic, brought the change. We started by social distancing in the dining room and pantry, and when that was not enough – we completely pivoted 360 degrees offering all of our services in the “to-go” style. We closed our doors to our dedicated volunteers (we miss you SO MUCH!), the staff began working in two shifts and the pandemic procedures began.

Over the last three months, we have seen the best and worst of ourselves. I am humbled by the dedication and commitment of the staff. They were at Iron Gate on the darkest, scariest, unknown days of April to make sure that Tulsa’s most vulnerable were fed without question. When the streets were eerily quiet and we wondered if going to work was the right thing to do, we reassured ourselves by asking: if Iron Gate didn’t feed people, who would? We were called to DO MORE. So, we did, by strengthening partnerships and fighting food insecurity as we never had before. I am grateful to those who provide support to keep Iron Gate going. This support has come in many forms: financial gifts, masks – homemade and disposable, amazon wish list packages, kid’s packs, staff lunches and encouraging words. This is humanity at its best.

We have also seen the worst. The killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so many others have caused grief, outrage and calls for change. This is a wake-up call about the state of systemic racism and inequality in our nation. At Iron Gate, we are standing with our employees, guests and supporters of color. We are also taking this moment to look inward and reflect. We know economic inequality and food insecurity go hand and hand. We are committed to not just lending our voice to the collective conversation about racial justice, but we are also taking action to make sure Iron Gate truly reflects those values. We are committed to making sure our leadership reflects the diversity of our community. And we’re doing our part to not just denounce oppression, but actively oppose it at our organization. On the face of our building it says we believe in treating everyone with courtesy, kindness, and respect. We vow to actively create a community where that isn’t just a slogan but a reality for all.

This season of our life has left us with many stories, emotions and things we could never imagine happening. We are unsure when our doors will open, volunteers can return and things will feel better. With everything in flux, I encourage you to look for the light when you are feeling discouraged and be the light when you are feeling empowered – and all of us working together can make the world a better place.



Emily Harris from Modern Woodmen Financial surprised Iron Gate with a check for \$500 to help feed the hungry.

Wishing you light,

Carrie Vesely Henderson, CFRE

Executive Director

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chenderson@irongatetulsa.org

IRON GATE'S ANNUAL FOUNDERS' DINNER

NEW DECADE
NEW BUILDING
SAME MISSION

It was supposed to be a night of celebration. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus outbreak put Iron Gate's annual Founders' Dinner on hold. Originally scheduled for Thursday, April 23rd, Iron Gate's Board of Directors decided it was best for the health of our honorees, attendees, and staff if the event was canceled. Iron Gate is so grateful to those who donated to the event. And we still plan to honor those who turned our vision for a new building into a reality - the honorable Karen Keith, Flintco, GH2 Architects, and Wallace Engineering - at a later event.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS WHO SUPPORTED FOUNDERS 2020

PRESENTING

Ruth Nelson

SILVER

FlintCo Construction
GH2 Architects
Mindy Morrison Taylor and
John Taylor
UnitedHealthcare Community
Plan of Oklahoma
Wallace Engineering
Ricky and Becky Young

BRONZE

Mr. and Mrs. Arlo DeKraai
Tom and Betty Rains
Ross Swimmer
Dr. and Mrs. James Taylor

DONATION

Mr. Michael Christian and
Ms. Paige Shelton
Nathan Gormley
Kleemeier Family Fund



Unable to gather their employees for their bi-annual kid's pack stuffing party, Oxley Foundation dropped off enough supplies to make 500 kid's packs for Iron Gate's youngest guests. Oxley Foundation has the reigning title of being some of our fastest kid's packers, typically stuffing 500 kid's packs in less than 30 minutes.

IRON GATE STAFF

Carrie Vesely Henderson
Executive Director

Ashli Sims
Development Director

Matt Mitchell
Operations Director

Caroline Kitalong
Kitchen Manager

Christina Maxwell
Volunteer Coordinator

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INSIDE THE GATE

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Editor

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Designer



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE SIMONS

SERVING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

“Load me up!” she yelled out of her open window even before her car came to a complete stop. She wore a homemade mask and an expression of mild panic.

“I haven’t gotten groceries since I was here a month ago,” she explained. “I have a chronic condition. I can’t go to the store. I’m out of everything. Please give me as much as you can.”

Iron Gate staff members went to work and filled her empty trunk with groceries, from fresh produce to canned goods to pre-made microwaveable meals from Tulsa Kitchens Unite.

And you could see the anxiety drain from the woman as her stores of food were replenished.

“Thank you so much... I really appreciate ya’ll.”

Since the Coronavirus Outbreak changed life as we know it in March, Iron Gate staff members have seen this cycle of panic and relief play out over many faces. It has redefined our role as an “essential service.”

Iron Gate has continued to feed the hungry and homeless of Tulsa throughout the pandemic without interruption. Iron Gate leaders made adjustments to abide by city, state, and

federal recommendations, but all programs — daily community meal and emergency grocery pantry — remain open and operating.

Things are different. Iron Gate temporarily closed its dining room and transitioned to providing carry-out meals in the morning. A hand-sanitizing station was placed before the meal pick-up to encourage hand-washing. Each carry-out meal includes a double portion of the hot meal as well as a sandwich. Every day, staff members hand out meals through the gate to make sure those in need get food.

Iron Gate's grocery pantry has also undergone a transformation. Guests used to be able to come inside and shop just like in a grocery store. To minimize contact, Iron Gate switched to a pre-packed box of groceries distributed through a low-contact drive-through or walk-through pantry. Guests can receive 25-35 pounds of groceries without ever leaving their cars. Many of the guests visiting Iron Gate's pantry have never been to Iron Gate before and point to the Coronavirus pandemic as the reason behind their need for assistance. Iron Gate is also working with our social service partners and case managers to help provide their clients with groceries.

Demand for Iron Gate services are up across the board. Iron Gate is serving 30% more meals over the same time period last year. Part of the increase is due to Iron Gate's efforts to provide breakfast and dinner for a temporary homeless shelter set up in response to the pandemic. Grocery pantry is serving 50% more households than this time last year. While the global pandemic caused demand to balloon practically

overnight, it also prompted our volunteer workforce to evaporate just as quickly. Many of our loyal volunteers are eager to return to Iron Gate, but out of an abundance of caution we continue to suspend our volunteer program. Food donation drives have also dried up, forcing Iron Gate to purchase more food to meet the increased demand. Despite the challenges, Iron Gate is fulfilling its mission every day.

And the gratitude has poured in from emails, cards, and phone calls.

"I just called to say thank you so much," a guest recently said. "It's like you guys knew exactly what I needed." She gushed in a phone call.

"That makes it all worthwhile," said Carrie Vesely Henderson, Iron Gate's executive director. "It's been tough. Our staff is working long hours and it's hard work. But we see every day what it means to people and we're just so grateful for our supporters who help make this happen."

Iron Gate is preparing for what's to come. Near record-high jobless claims increase the worries over food insecurity. And as the threat of a second wave looms, Iron Gate leaders are challenged to plan for the best, while preparing for the worst.

"The challenges are real," Henderson said. "If you think of our volunteers like our staff, we're working to serve twice as many people with half the staff. But we don't want to put anyone's health at risk. We've seen some supplies, like peanut butter, run short. All the while the people keep coming."

Henderson says Iron Gate is here for those people. And with your help, we can continue to feed the most vulnerable in our community.



Photojournalist Mike Simons captured Iron Gate staff and guests in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic. He visited on a chilly day, snapping shots of our community meal and rainy drive-through grocery pantry.

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS MEET A SPIKE IN DEMAND



You have helped Iron Gate continue to serve throughout the pandemic. Demand has increased for meals and groceries. Here's what you made happen since the pandemic began in March.

80,775 MEALS SERVED



increase over same time period last year

3,797
HOUSEHOLDS
RECEIVED
GROCERIES

52%
INCREASE
OVER
SAME TIME
PERIOD
LAST YEAR

94,407
POUNDS
OF FOOD
DISTRIBUTED
SINCE
MARCH

Iron Gate Service Numbers from 3/15-6/24.

FROM OUR GUESTS

"Thank you for all you do to help others in our need to get through these dark times. You're a light in the window. Thank you again."

- Suzanne D.

"I wish I could show my appreciation with more than words. You all have been such a blessing to me. Because I am considered high risk, I have been self-quarantined since January and have had to order groceries online, which is more expensive and quite frustrating when items I needed were out of stock. And it is almost like you read my mind, giving me items I love, but can't afford even in normal times. When the world is back to our 'new' normal, if I can do anything to help, please let me know. God Bless You."

- Jae M.

"I'm in pretty good shape now and will not need your services this month. Thank you so much for your help last month. It was a lifesaver."

- Ken D.

THANK YOU

GIVING TUESDAY

NOW

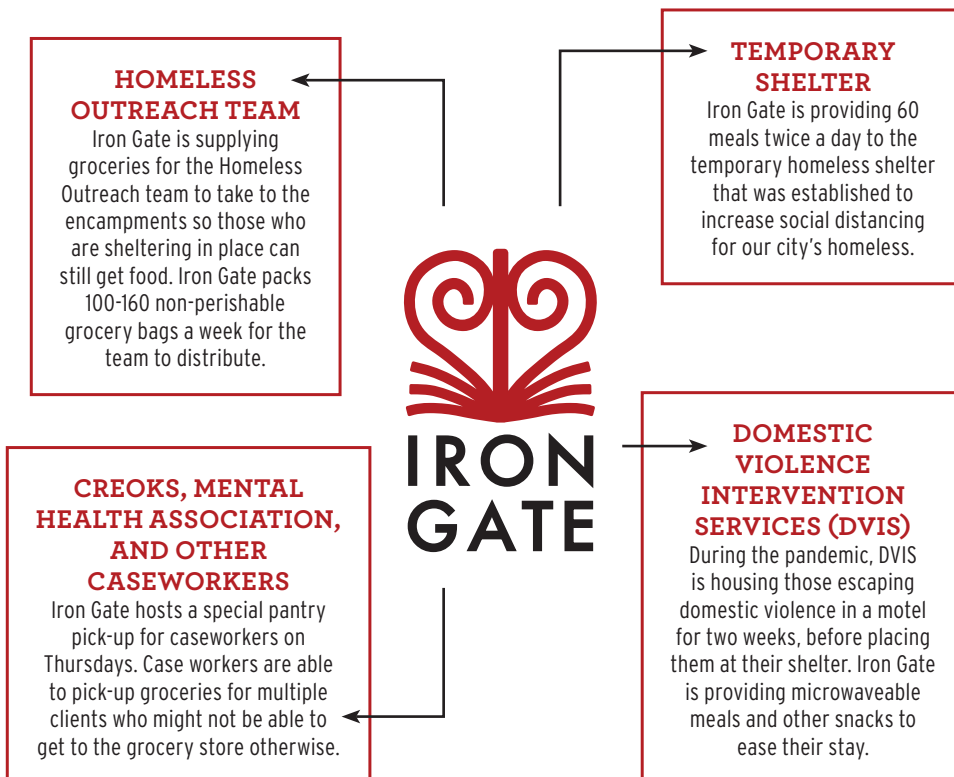
for participating in:



Iron Gate donors are the best donors. Your support fueled a record-setting matching donation drive on May 5th for Giving Tuesday Now. Giving Tuesday Now was a global day of giving and unity organized as an emergency response to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19. The **Mike and Leslie Moore Charitable Trust** led the charge with a \$50,000 matching grant. And you responded. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors Iron Gate raised \$101,867.24. That is enough to provide 14,261 meals and 73,344 pounds of groceries to our neighbors in need. The funds raised were essential in helping Iron Gate keep pace with the increase demand for food during these uncertain times. Thank you so much for this incredible show of support during these difficult times. You make our community a better place to live and work.

SECURING THE SAFETY NET

Iron Gate has always collaborated with other social service agencies to feed the hungry, but those relationships have become even more important during the pandemic. When A Way Home for Tulsa led the charge to create a temporary homeless shelter to reduce capacity and increase social distancing, Iron Gate stepped up to provide the food. When social workers were concerned about vulnerable clients becoming homebound, Iron Gate coordinated a grocery pick-up just for caseworkers. Your support means Iron Gate can continue to play a pivotal role in securing the safety net for Tulsa's hungry.



SUPPORT OUR CHEFS

Iron Gate is lucky to count many Tulsa restaurants and chefs as friends. They've always been there for us – volunteering their time at Cooking for a Cause, donating a percentage of their sales for charity nights, and giving us extra food – now it's our turn to be there for them. Please join us in supporting these local chefs and restaurants who have had to close or reduce their services to help keep our community safe.

Amelia's Wood Fired Cuisine
amelias.us

Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar
flemingssteakhouse.com

In the Raw Sushi
intherawsushi.com

Jane's Delicatessen
janesdelicatessen.com

Laffa Medi-Eastern Restaurant & Bar
laffatulsa.com

McNellie's Group
McNellie's Pub, El Guapo's Mexican Cantina, Dilly Diner, Yokozuna, Fassler Hall, McNellie's South City, Elgin Park and The Tavern
mcnelliesgroup.com/restaurants

Michael V's
michaelvsrestaurant.com

Nola's
nolastulsa.com

Peacemaker Lobster & Crab Co.
peacemakerlobstercrab.com

Polo Grill
pologrill.com

Sisserou's
sisserousrestaurant.com

Take 2: A Resonance Cafe
take2tulsa.com

The Girl Can Cook
thegirlcancookschool.com

The Meat and Cheese Show (Joel Bein)
facebook.com/TheMeatAndCheeseShow

Tucci's
facebook.com/TuccisCafe



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YOU CAN HELP MEET *THE NEED.*

Help feed the hungry by donating food. Below are some of our highest need items. You can drop off your donation at Iron Gate Monday-Friday from 8 am-4 pm.

Peanut Butter	⋮	Canned Fruit	⋮	Cereal
Beef Jerky	⋮	Canned Chicken	⋮	Biscuit and Muffin Mix
Mac and Cheese	⋮	Low-Sodium Canned Soup	⋮	Oatmeal

Ship groceries directly to Iron Gate by shopping our Amazon Wish List: <https://amzn.to/2YrJf6t>

