

It was a simple act of kindness that started it all. Three men stepped outside of a bible study class and made a homeless man a sandwich. Hundreds of thousands of meals later, Iron Gate's mission remains the same. We feed the hungry and homeless of Tulsa — every day. We feed people in three ways, through our community meal, grocery pantry and kid's pack program. Those who eat at Iron Gate are "guests" because we invite them to eat with us. Our philosophy is we are all guests on this earth and guests treat one another with courtesy, kindness and respect.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF IRON GATE  
CO-FOUNDER GENE BUZZARD (1946-2020)



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**FACES**  
*of*  
**IRON**  
**GATE**

With masked portraits, this year's Faces of Iron Gate could just as well be dubbed Faces of the Pandemic. The story of this unprecedented global public health crisis is written across all of their faces. From long-time Iron Gate guests to those who have never needed help before, everyone has been affected either by the virus or the economic fallout. In the face of the crisis, the plight of the food insecure is even more dire. As one guest put it, the virus "has taken a lot of people down." But thanks to your support, when they fall, Iron Gate is there.

Armed with masks, carry-out containers, and boxes of food, Iron Gate continues to feed people every day. Iron Gate continues to serve a daily meal, offers grocery assistance three times a week, and provides snacks for kids. Our mission never wavered. Your support makes that possible.

Faces of Iron Gate has always been a way to humanize the issue of hunger. This year's edition captured by veteran photojournalist, Mike Simons, showcases how hunger can truly affect anyone. From the father who has never had to apply for unemployment let alone visit a food pantry to the woman who believed her life was finally back on track, many of our guests never thought they would have to ask for help. Your support means help is there, when it's needed. As we weather this health crisis and economic downturn, Iron Gate's mission to feed the hungry has taken on even more importance. You are essential to that mission. In the Faces of Iron Gate, there's warmth, grief, and hope. A hope nurtured by the food you help provide. We hope these stories touch your heart, but we also hope they move you to action. You can ease someone's burden by giving to Iron Gate today. Thank you for your support.



Mike Simons is a veteran photojournalist who fell in love with news photography in high school. He has worked for the Tulsa World for almost 20 years. He's covered presidents and natural disasters, photographing everything from strangers on the streets to wedding celebrations. He is no stranger to Iron Gate, having covered the organization for years for the Tulsa World. "The work Iron Gate does is essential and important," Simons said. "When approached about the Faces of Iron Gate project, I leapt at the opportunity. Right now is such an important time for Iron Gate and other organizations that serve people experiencing homelessness and others in need. I wanted to be able to spend time with clients and get to know a little bit about them. I enjoyed working on the project. I met some incredible people, and I hope the photos do them justice."

# HUNGER IN A PANDEMIC

Iron Gate continues to feed the hungry and homeless of Tulsa during these uncertain times. We have served our community throughout this crisis without interruption. Our programs—daily community meal and emergency grocery pantry—are open and operating. Iron Gate has transitioned to providing carry-out meals in the morning. Iron Gate has moved to a low-contact drive-through/walk-through pantry to encourage social distancing, while providing 25-35 pounds of groceries per household. Iron Gate has seen demand for our services dramatically increased over the last five months. And we're able to meet that increased demand because of your support. Thank you for putting food in the hands of people in need.

## 121,563 MEALS SERVED

Iron Gate served 41% more meals over the same time period last year.

## 6,483 HOUSEHOLDS HELPED WITH GROCERIES

Iron Gate served 54% more households over the same time period last year.

## 155,437 POUND OF GROCERIES

Iron Gate provides a variety of shelf-stable goods, protein, milk, and fresh produce.

Data Collected from 3/15/20-8/15/20.



## PETE

Pete has seen a lot in the 14 years he's been coming to Iron Gate. "Big difference now is everything is improved. I like the new building and how everything is set up. They make it convenient for us." He says the new building was so nice he didn't think it would be Iron Gate's new home. "I was amazed. I kept asking people what [the building] was going to be. Then they told me it was going to be the Iron Gate and I said that's amazing what God can do." Pete says he's so grateful for Iron Gate and all of the supporters who make the program possible. "I like the way they take care of us and serve us. I like the meals they give us. And it's a blessing from God that we get this."



## ANGEL

Yummy desserts. That's what Angel says keeps her coming back to Iron Gate. Although the new building doesn't hurt. "I was like wow! I couldn't believe it," she said. "Especially inside...I was amazed. It's beautiful." Life has been hard since the pandemic struck. "It's been kinda crazy. A lot fewer places you can go. A lot of different rules. Some places it's like it's not worth it to go to." But she's at Iron Gate almost every day for her carry-out meal. "You don't know how many lives you're changing and how many people you're helping just by giving them a smile and a warm meal."



## CARLOS & FAMILY

Carlos is a family man. He dotes on his teenaged daughters and six-year-old son. And being out of work is tough on this father who prides himself on taking care of his family. He lost his job in Kansas and recently moved to Oklahoma to find work. You can see the love tinged with worry as he watched his family getting their portrait taken. He says they're happy and doing the best they can. And he was grateful to Iron Gate for loading him up with groceries. It's not just food on the table. It's the fuel he needs to keep looking for a way to provide for his family.



## ROBERT

One of the most soul-wrenching things about homelessness is the act of not being seen. Robert says that doesn't happen to him at Iron Gate. He walks with a limp and sometimes struggles with his words, but he says at Iron Gate he doesn't feel judged. "These guys they do like Jesus does: Look at the inside of your body instead of the outside. These guys they try to look at your heart instead of the outside of your body. And that's what Jesus does."



## RODNEY

You can always go home again. During this global pandemic, that adage seems to be true for many. We've heard again and again about adult children, returning to their parents' homes often with their own children in tow. That's Rodney's story. He's never needed help. But with his adult son and granddaughter at home, things are tight. So he brought his son to Iron Gate to show him help is out there.



## LISA

Lisa almost didn't participate in Faces of Iron Gate. But her gratitude outweighed her reluctance. This woman is a portrait of resilience. She's struggled with homelessness and battled addiction for decades. But six years ago, she got clean and got her life back on track. She was working, sharing an apartment with her brother, when the pandemic struck. "We were doing the best we could until this Covid thing come along and it just messed with everybody. It's taken a lot of people down." Lisa smiled through her tears as she expressed her gratitude for Iron Gate during her time of need. "You guys [Iron Gate] are a blessing. You help the homeless. I've been homeless before. I haven't since I've been up here and I'm not going to be. I'm clean, I've got God in my life and I can work. I appreciate you guys doing what you do because I don't like asking for help and you guys have given me help."