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www.help4seniors.org



COUNCIL ON AGING COVID-19 MEDIA ALERT

Council on Aging and LaRosa's Partner to Feed Seniors during COVID-19 Pandemic

Seniors who need help during COVID-19 crisis should call (513) 721-1025

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SPRINGDALE, OHIO, April 15, 2020 Council on Aging (COA) and LaRosa's Pizzerias are partnering to warm the hearts and bellies of vulnerable seniors during the COVID-19 public health emergency. On Thursday and Friday, April 16-17, LaRosa's will prepare more than 350 meals for older adults living in six area low-income senior apartment buildings in Hamilton and Butler counties.

"We are all experiencing the effects of stay-at-home orders and social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, but seniors are feeling especially vulnerable and isolated right now," said Council on Aging CEO Suzanne Burke. "Our hope is that the LaRosa's meals will be a welcome change of pace that brightens the day of seniors in these buildings. We couldn't think of a better partner to have in this effort because Buddy LaRosa and his family have been long-time supporters of the county senior services levies we administer in our service area. In fact, Buddy was a caregiver himself," Burke said.

Because seniors are among the groups most at risk for severe complications from COVID-19, they are being advised to stay home and limit their exposure to other individuals. Many are afraid to leave their homes to shop for food and other essential supplies. COA has been working to meet the needs of seniors who have been impacted by COVID-19 – many of whom have never needed assistance before.

During the pandemic, COA has adapted programs and services to ensure more than 26,000 clients continue to receive services and support they rely on. For example, seniors who previously attended congregate meals can now receive a "carry out" or home-delivered meal. Additionally, COA, through its provider network, has delivered more than 7,500 emergency food boxes to home-delivered meals recipients. Each box contained a 14-day supply of shelf stable meals to be set aside in the event regular meal delivery is disrupted due to COVID-19.

COA has received additional federal funding via the Ohio Department of Aging to expand meal service to seniors in need during this time. For example, when severe weather moved through our region last week causing wide spread power outages, Council on Aging partnered with LaRosa's to provide emergency hot meals to approximately 115 older adults at low-income senior apartment buildings where power was out for an extended period of time. LaRosa's prepared and delivered the meals to the buildings within hours of notification from COA.

“We had already been talking with LaRosa’s about how they could supplement the work our provider network does to feed seniors in our region during this pandemic,” said Randy Quisenberry, COA’s director of procurement and provider services. “They were eager to help seniors through this difficult situation and last week’s power outages presented a great opportunity for partnership. LaRosa’s responded to our call for help quickly and enthusiastically. We are glad they want to continue to serve seniors in our region.”

“These are such challenging times for everyone, but especially for seniors,” said Mike LaRosa, CEO of LaRosa’s, Inc. “We’re all in this together, and that’s how we’re going to get through it. So, we were happy to do our part to help Council of Aging serve these seniors,” he said.

On Thursday and Friday, COA-contracted service providers will pick up and deliver the prepared meals according to the schedule below.

To ensure social distancing guidelines and protect the health, safety and privacy of residents in the buildings, the meals will be delivered to an on-site coordinator at each building who will then distribute the meals to residents.

The meals will include spaghetti with LaRosa’s famous family recipe sauce and meatball (to be heated by recipient), a salad, bread sticks and condiments.

COA will continue working with LaRosa’s and its network of service providers to bring more LaRosa’s meals to seniors living in low-income apartment buildings across its service region.

About Council on Aging: Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio (COA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing quality of life for older adults, people with disabilities, their families and caregivers. COA promotes choice, independence, dignity and well-being through a range of services that help people remain independent for as long as possible.

COA is a state-designated Area Agency on Aging serving Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton and Warren counties. One call to COA links people to the wide variety of agencies, information and programs that serve older adults and people with disabilities.

Regional Headquarters:

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About LaRosa’s:

LaRosa’s was founded in 1954 on Cincinnati’s West Side by Buddy LaRosa. It is now a \$167 million restaurant company with 65 pizzerias serving neighborhoods in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. To learn more about LaRosa’s, go to www.larosas.com.

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