

# Operation BBQ Relief Expands Programs to Feed Communities in Need during COVID-19 Crisis

*Newly launched initiative will provide up to 180,000 meals per week in Pennsylvania and stipend to area restaurants*

KANSAS CITY, MO, UNITED STATES, April 8, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- KANSAS CITY, MO — (April 8, 2020) - Operation BBQ Relief, a 501(c)(3)

nonprofit disaster relief organization that has served over 3.2 million meals in 26 states since its founding in 2011, has now shifted efforts in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.



“

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*Stan Hays, Co-Founder and CEO of Operation BBQ Relief*

In addition to deploying their trademark effort of providing hot barbecue meals to those affected by natural disasters, Operation BBQ Relief launched a new program called Operation Restaurant Relief with great success last week in Kansas City.

The new initiative revives closed restaurants by utilizing their kitchens to provide free meals to those in need and those on the front lines. As part of the effort, the restaurants will rehire laid off workers to comply with the program and receive a stipend for their participation from Operation BBQ Relief.

With the help of corporate, civic and personal donations, Operation BBQ Relief intends to roll out the Operation Restaurant Relief effort this week in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh by working in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. The partnership with DHS will allow Operation BBQ Relief to provide vital meals throughout the whole state of Pennsylvania and will add breakfast to its program, thereby increasing meal capacity to over 180,000 meals per week.

While restaurants receive a small stipend to participate, it only defrays a portion of the restaurant's expenses. Nevertheless, the effort is being hailed as providing critical relief to the severely impacted restaurant industry while also feeding the community's most affected residents.

Earlier in 2019, Operation BBQ Relief promoted Jarrod “Jay” Collins to Chief of Programs. Collins spent his career in the Army as a Green Beret in special forces leadership roles, and is bringing that forged-under-fire leadership to Operation BBQ Relief on a daily basis as they respond to this crisis. “We believe in people and people working together are the solutions,” says Collins.

As a non-profit disaster relief organization, Operation BBQ Relief relies on corporate, civic and personal contributions to ensure their efforts continue. Operation BBQ Relief's corporate

partners include Kingsford Charcoal, YETI, Farmers Insurance, Prairie Fresh and Ole Hickory Pits. The need for donations is greater now than ever before due to the magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis.

"Teaming up with restaurants is a win-win for all involved," says Stan Hays, Operation BBQ Relief CEO and Co-Founder. "Restaurants have the ideal facilities, staff, expertise and organizational experience to help us achieve our goals."

According to the National Restaurant Association, up to 7 million restaurant workers are subject to layoffs in the coming months. With this plan, Operation BBQ Relief has managed a way to reverse restaurant closures, put employees back to work and provide free meals to the local community each day.

Following all Center for Disease Control guidelines, Operation BBQ Relief has worked around the clock to establish protocols and processes specifically for COVID-19 that include: sanitizing surfaces regularly, medical screening of volunteers upon arrival to any Operation BBQ Relief deployment site, limiting access to the food production areas, separation by at least 50-feet for receiving, delivery and distribution of food, as well as many other safety and security initiatives.

"Operation BBQ Relief is following all the recommended CDC and local health guidelines," Hays says. "We have acted deliberately with care and concentration to ramp up COVID-19 deployments."

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#### About Operation BBQ Relief

Operation BBQ Relief is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Kansas City, MO that was founded in May 2011 in response to a need for tornado relief efforts in Joplin, MO. Competitive pitmasters from eight different states answered the call to feed displaced families and first responders. Together, they were able to serve over 120,000 meals in a thirteen-day period. This experience of building a network to feed individuals in need has been the inspiration for Operation BBQ Relief. To date, Operation BBQ Relief has provided over 3 million meals



Operation BBQ Relief will serve over 180,000 meals per week in response to the pandemic.



Operation BBQ Relief has established protocols and processes specifically for responding to COVID-19.

throughout the United States and internationally following natural disasters and through The Always Serving Project, benefiting the homeless, first responders, veterans, and service men and women. For more information, visit [www.obr.org](http://www.obr.org).

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