

Operation BBQ Relief expands latest effort to feed communities in need during COVID-19 crisis

New initiative, OPERATION RESTAURANT RELIEF, launches first Los Angeles program at The Shelby with Food Network Star Chef Aaron May



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Operation BBQ Relief, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit disaster relief organization

that has provided almost four million meals in 26 states since its founding in 2011, has now shifted efforts in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. 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 month in Kansas City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Hilton Head, and several other cities throughout the country.

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Chef Aaron May

Over 750,000 meals were served to communities in need, healthcare workers and first responders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to its success, the program is expanding its reach by adding new cities across the country on a weekly basis, including launches in Los Angeles and Nashville. The new initiative revives closed restaurants by utilizing their kitchens to provide the free meals. 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 will roll out their first Operation Restaurant Relief effort in Los Angeles on May 4th. The effort will be based at The Shelby located at 8445 W. Third Street and will provide 2,500 hot meals each day for two weeks.

Operation BBQ Relief's Los Angeles effort will be led by Food Network star and restaurateur Chef Aaron May. May currently operates Dough in Los Angeles as well as Bullseye Event Group in Indiana. "I couldn't be more excited to again team up with Operation BBQ relief. And to be able to help in even the smallest way in the city I live in, alongside another great partner like The Shelby makes it even better," says May.

The Shelby owner Chad England said, "The Shelby is very pleased to have been selected by Operation BBQ Relief as part of this effort to provide 35,000 meals to the people of Los Angeles. These are unprecedented times and we are proud to be able to give back to the community that we love."

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

"Teaming up with restaurants is a win-win for all involved," says Operation BBQ Relief CEO and Co-Founder Stan Hays. "Restaurants have the ideal facilities, staff, expertise and organizational experience to help us achieve our goals. I couldn't be more grateful for their participation." Added Hays, "Meals will go to so many in need including LA Mission, several hospitals, healthcare facilities and schools."

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, 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. Following all Center for Disease Control guidelines, Operation BBQ Relief has worked around the clock to establish its additional 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, like the Operation Restaurant Relief."

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About Operation BBQ Relief



The Operation Restaurant Relief program has delivered meals to thank healthcare workers serving on the front lines.



Operation BBQ Relief has provided over 750,000 meals in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 4 million meals 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.

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