

# Tropical Cheese Ind. Donates \$100,000 in Groceries To Perth Amboy's Food Relief Efforts

*Tropical Cheese Founder Rafael Mendez, His Family and Company Helping to Restock City's Inventory of Groceries that Aids Households and Food Pantries*

PERTH AMBOY, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA , July 23, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [City of Perth Amboy](#) has received bountiful donations of groceries and dairy products from [Tropical Cheese Industries](#). Rafael Mendez, who founded the company that is based in Perth Amboy, and his family have donated tons of groceries to stock and then re-stock the city's food distribution center, which is helping thousands of families feed their households. Each time the inventory of food was running low, Tropical Cheese provided more resources.



Rafael Mendez (center), the founder of Tropical Cheese Industries, his family and the company have generously pledged to donate more than \$100,000 worth of groceries to the community's food relief efforts.

Recently, Mr. Mendez, his family and Tropical Cheese pledged to donate an additional \$100,000 worth of company products and all types of groceries to the community's food relief efforts. The first shipment of 14 pallets of food has already been delivered to Perth Amboy's food distribution center on Olive Street and more deliveries are on the way. The cases of food contain beans, cooking oils, eggs, canned goods, fresh fruits, onions, plantains, potatoes, rice and vegetables. Tropical Cheese is donating many of its brand name cheeses, desserts, beverages and more.

Tropical Cheese Industries started to contribute its branded products and cases of basic groceries when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down much of the city and state in early March.

The company quietly emerged as a reliable resource for food after Irving Lozada, the city's acting director of Code Enforcement, shared details with Mr. Mendez about how the city was responding to the food shortages.

Mr. Lozada, who was gathering food donations from local bodegas, explained to Rafael that too many families in Perth Amboy were unable to feed their households. Mr. Mendez responded immediately and began sending shipments of Tropical's cheese and dairy products, plus basic groceries, to the city's food distribution center.

Speaking for the company, his family and employees, Mr. Mendez said, "I've been involved in the Perth Amboy community for the past 50 years. It brings me tremendous satisfaction to help people because I see a need triggered by the pandemic. We are grateful to have the resources to help our neighbors who are suffering and are trying to feed their families."

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Each day, teams from the city's Department of Human Services and the Office of Recreation sort the grocery items and prepare more than 30 cartons of food for local families. Volunteer drivers load the boxes in their vehicles and then make food deliveries. Department Director Kenneth Ortiz, who has organized and coordinated the grocery distributions, said, "With the contributions from Tropical Cheese, local companies and generous people, we have delivered groceries to more than 5,500 families."

Perth Amboy Mayor Wilda Diaz said, "We're incredibly grateful that Tropical Cheese, which is a local, family-run business and one of the city's largest private employers, is donating huge amounts of its award-winning products and truckloads of groceries to feed so many families. While the number of households requesting food deliveries is slightly declining, we expect that our families may face food insecurity issues for months to come."

The grocery donations from the Mendez family and Tropical Cheese will help restock the city's



Local business owner Anthony Diaz is volunteering his time to help pack cartons of food and essential materials.

inventory of food, according to Mr. Ortiz. Also, the not-for-profit [Perth Amboy COVID Help](http://www.perthamboycovidhelp.org) organization – a joint effort by the city and the nonprofit Celebrate Our Stars & Stripes committee – continues to gather donations from corporations, local companies and other donors.

The organization’s chairman Barry Rosengarten said, “The significant donations by Ralph Mendez and Tropical Cheese have restored the hope for households struggling to feed their families. Our team is humbled and grateful for all the contributions we have received, and this generosity shows how our community joins together to help one another. The reality is that our work goes forward because we are still recovering from the coronavirus crisis, which has disrupted many of our businesses and families and the entire city.”

More donations are needed. The fastest way to contribute is by visiting the nonprofit’s website: <http://www.perthamboycovidhelp.org>. Or send donations to Perth Amboy COVID Help, P.O. Box 999, Perth Amboy, N.J. 08862. Please make checks payable to: CPA COVID-19 HELP.

### Deep Roots in the Community

Mr. Mendez arrived in Perth Amboy after leaving Cuba in the early 1960s. As a young man, he wanted to go into business for himself, but, like many entrepreneurs with a vision, he had little money and even less access to credit. With a well-used, \$500 truck, he started a business delivering milk door-to-door to local households.

Within a few years, he owned 50 trucks that were making wholesale milk deliveries. The company was soon doing more than \$1.5 million a week in sales in a highly competitive business.

At this time, Mr. Mendez noticed that only one company was producing the Queso Blanco cheese for the Hispanic market. The company began to shift its focus from milk to cheese production. Tropical Cheese was soon producing its own award-winning Queso Blanco and many exceptional cheeses and Latino-targeted dairy products. Tropical sold its milk business in 2004.



Team at Perth Amboy's food distribution center includes from left: Rogelio Estevez and Isamar Payano, from the city's Office of Recreation (OCR); plus Mhairi Smeaton, Salvation Army (SA) lieutenant; Ramon Diaz, of OCR; and Jocelin Delaluz, of SA.

Today, Tropical Cheese, which has distribution centers in Florida, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, generates more than \$200 million in annual sales. The business employs 400 people, including hundreds of workers at its Perth Amboy headquarters and modern processing plant. Mr. Mendez's adult children, Vanessa Mendez-Gamez, Chief Marketing Officer, and Luis Mendez, Senior Vice President, are now helping to manage the rapidly growing business. They and their dedicated employees will continue the Mendez family legacy by producing the highest quality dairy products, serving their customers nationwide and assisting the local community when help is needed.

### About Perth Amboy COVID Help

Perth Amboy COVID Help is not-for-profit organization that is guided by a committee of individuals that includes local leaders from the City of Perth Amboy, business owners, pastors and residents as well as board members from the city's Business Improvement District (BID). Its mission is to rapidly gather contributions, purchase food and distribute the goods to needy families in Perth Amboy. CPA COVID-19-HELP is a 501(c) (3) entity. Each contribution is 100% tax deductible.

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