**Hello Valued Volunteers**

Thank you to all our Volunteers for stepping up during this unprecedented time and strengthening our community through being good neighbours and helping those that need it most.

Please stay safe and healthy. Please follow all instructions to ensure this as we receive daily updates from our Town of Cochrane Government, Rocky View and the Provincial Government of Alberta and Chief Medical Officer.

Programs

Our programs are continuing but have adapted to the current realities:

1. Snow Helpers are continuing to clear snow as needed and maintaining social distance from the clients.

2. As of today the Volunteer Driver Program (VDP) is for deliveries only. Our Programs Manager is contacting our 3 grocery stores to see if Volunteers can do grocery pick ups for paid for groceries and deliver to steps of clients but not enter homes.  Shopping Trips may continue for those clients but Volunteer Drivers must not enter stores or homes and sanitize to protect themselves after the trips.

3. Our Meal Teams has been referring to Helping Hands partner St. Andrews's United Church under the leadership of Reverend Ray Goodship and his volunteer team where each Tuesday they are providing soup to go  free of charge to those that need it as our commercial kitchen is closed. As always clients or volunteers can call incredible team at Town of Cochrane Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Western Resource Centre to apply for Food Hampers at 403-851-2250.

4. Our Moving with Hearts team has postponed to protect our volunteers and encourage social distancing. Volunteers are welcome to join the VDP program or Caring Neighbours program if they are not already members by notifying our Volunteer Programs Manager.

5. Our Caring Neighbours/Newcomer Helpers Programs have adapted and Volunteers are phoning and emailing our most isolated seniors, single parent families as well as families of all types, the disabled, ill and injured and newcomers but no in person visits are to occur. Some Volunteers are sending cards to us to send so that our clients know we care deeply about them even though we can't visit them in person right now. Rest assured we will make sure our clients know you care for them.

As previously noted the Food Drive is postponed on April 25 as is the Annual General Meeting on March 26.

New Volunteers

If a new community member or recent applicant online wishes to volunteer Helping Hands will waive the requirement to obtain a police check as the RCMP office is closed to this service. An application package will be sent by the Volunteer Programs Manager asking for a scanned copy of driver's licence to be returned back and the electronic package will include a declaration that there potential volunteer has no criminal record on file. Once the package is received a new Volunteer the Volunteer will conduct a short interview over the phone and confirm acceptance to join Helping Hands. The Volunteer will receive confirmation and be linked to clients to help. This is a change from not accepting new volunteers due to the requests we've received for those that want to serve by Volunteering.

At this time Helping Hands helps or has helped in the past year 188 Clients with the possibility of more to contact.  We have 200 Volunteers with close to one hundred 100 regularly active volunteers. We have two staff so we are working remotely without access to all of our normal business tools. We appreciate your patience as we adapt and respond as quickly as possible.

Donations:

First Food and Cash donations should go the Food Bank. If you are able and in a position to help Helping Hands you can visit our website at [www.helpinghandscochrane](http://www.helpinghandscochrane/).ca and click on the secure link to DONATE NOW which brings you to ATBcares site to make a donation to our Helping Hands. These donations are matched 15%and will allow Helping Hands to continue its mission to link People who Help with People who need Help.

Helping Hands has served Cochrane and Area and Western Rocky View for 13 years. As this new decade starts our programs are needed more than ever.

Thank you and with deep gratitude for all you give in terms of your time, talent and treasure. Your generosity is awe inspiring!!

Sincerely

Matthew Hagel on Behalf of the Board and Staff of Helping Hands