

Well, it is the end of the year! I would like to say to all the people that visited the food pantry this year a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New year or just simply Happy Holidays.

I know it's been extremely trying times, in 2020. Sometimes I get the impression, C19 (COVID-19) is just like a bad relationship-I wonder if it's ever going to go away. There are a few thoughts I would like to share.

The first thought is to all of are our clients that this agency serves. I hope and wish you a very Merry Christmas, and I pray that life is good to you as we move forward into 2021. Secondly, to the people of the community who we are able to serve through our food pantry, know that things will get better. You all just hang in there. Hopefully more funds will be coming down the pipe so we can serve you in other ways in the future by providing our community with more services.

I would really like to believe that there are some good things that came out of this pandemic. In some way it has made us closer. Removing some lines that seem to have had separated and allow these barriers and stigmas to fade away as we move in to the Future of 2021. There's one thing about it, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or even where you may be headed, we all can find ourselves in need.

Thirdly I would like to say that I am very proud of our agency this year. We did not close our doors and we were one of the very few pantries in Tyler to stay open during this crisis. I wish we could have done more and gave more but we could only give what we have to give; which brings me to my fourth and final point.

I would like to say thank you very very much to Minuteman Press for helping with our food drive. And also, to Tyler Junior College Art Department. I also would like to thank Ron Walker at Dollar General by Woody Weaver on Gentry. For all of the wonderful work that he did during our food drive. I would also like to thank Starbucks on Hwy 64 and the Loop, for their food donations. Starbucks helped us to really fill in the gaps and it was so well needed and very important and I can never express what it meant to our clients and to the people of the community. I would also like to recognize Samantha Bruce and the Tyler Rose City Kiwanis Club and Brookshire's Super One and Fresh for their efforts and donations that was very generous. Without your hard work and dedication and help, we would have not been able to keep our doors open as we struggled through this pandemic this year. I would also like to thank and appreciate the East Texas Food Bank for all they gave. I know they had a monumental task.

As I stated earlier that I was very proud that East Texas Cares kept their doors open during the pandemic. Even though our other staff members, Jeanette, Pam and Christie went to work at home remotely, they were still able to do a wonderful job helping our clients and persons of the community with what we had to offer. As for myself, I was left alone on many occasions. There's one thing about that experience that I can be honest about; when everybody comes back into the office it's going to be hard for me to hear, just because now, I will hear other voices then just the ones inside my head which is still kind of weird (LOL).

I'm glad that I did not let fear keep me from doing the right thing. I so hope and pray that all who has suffered and has been impacted by the pandemic my very best to you. And to all the people that did not allow fear to stop them from doing the right thing you truly will be blessed, just as I've been blessed by all of the new people that I meet in the community. It makes my heart feel good to know that I was able to be there to serve our clients during this critical time.

Once again from all of us at East Texas Cares, thank you for allowing us to be a part of your life this year. May God bless you all and we will see you next year in 2021. Now we know that fear cannot stop us. It shall be a greater year!

Thanks again, stay C19 free and God bless.

Paul Miller
Food Pantry Coordinator