

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County donates to Appalachian Agency to help expand senior food outreach

NEWS RELEASE

During an emergency meeting of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors on March 30, the board voted to donate \$20,000 to Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens to help expand their food program to reach more area seniors.

According to Tazewell County Administrator Eric Young, these funds were left in the budget from last year's efforts to assist laid off coal miners.

"There are only a few stipulations that the supervisors wanted in place," said Young. "To benefit from these funds, individuals must reside in Tazewell County, must be 65 or older and must not currently be receiving services from Appalachian Agency."

Even before Gov. Ralph Northam issued Executive Order #55 on Monday that included a "stay at home order" to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), many seniors were afraid to go grocery shopping. This donation will help alleviate that fear. Not only will this donation be used to provide meals, but it can also include meals supplements such as Ensure or Glucerna.

"We are extremely grateful that the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors entrusted us with this funding, which will allow Appalachian Agency to expand our nutrition program and provide meals to those seniors who may be afraid to leave their homes," said AASC Executive Director Regina Sayers.

AASC's Care Coordination Department operates a food pantry and distributes emergency food supplies on a daily basis to clients in need. Many people served by the agency are financially unable to purchase enough food to sustain themselves.

AASC operates a nutrition program that provides hot meals two days a week at eight senior nutrition sites located throughout the service area. This equates to 763 meals a month for a total of 133 participants. However, these nutrition sites have been closed due to the coronavirus situation. Appalachian Agency also offers a home-delivered meals program for clients who are unable to leave their homes and are not physically able to cook their meals. Approximately 460 people are served on a monthly basis, totaling 11,000 to 12,000 meals per month. The agency maintains a waiting list for this service due to a lack of funds.

This is why donations such as this one from Tazewell County are so important. As a private nonprofit, AASC depends on donations and it is especially important during these uncertain times when area seniors may not have enough food.

For more information about this emergency meals program, call Appalachian Agency at 276-964-4915, and ask for the Care Coordination Department.