

Arlington Charities' Help & Hope Event will take place on April 21 at the Bob Duncan Event Center

CIRCLE THE DATE: Arlington Charities' Help & Hope event is slated for 6 p.m. on April 21 at the Bob Duncan Event Center on Center Street in Vandergriff Park. Ticket sales and money raised ensures that Arlington Charities' mission to continue to provide supplemental groceries to Arlington residents in need are met.

There will be a VIP Happy Hour, followed by a sit-down cooking demonstration and tasting from popular restaurant owners Brandon Hurtado of Hurtado's

BBQ, Aziz and Elizabeth Kobty of Prince Lebanese Restaurant, and Gold Ribbons Confections' Maurice Ahern. There will be an auction, as well. For information on sponsorships and tickets email penny@arlingtoncharities.org.

The non-profit Arlington Charities, named the 2021 Outstanding Nonprofit of the Year by the Greater Arlington Chamber of Commerce, helps to stabilize families, individuals, and the un-housed by assisting them in covering their most basic needs through food, clothing, hygiene items, utility assistance, holiday programs, nutrition and financial literacy classes, and other support services. Incorporated in 1979, AC is the largest provider of supplemental food assistance in Arlington.

In addition to serving those in need each day, AC seeks out underserved areas of the community to help combat hunger. To meet the unique needs of seniors and the mobility impaired, AC piloted a grocery delivery program in 2020 that has grown to more than 3,000 deliveries in 2021, ensuring that these seniors receive the nutritious foods they need without having to choose between prescriptions or food.

Though the pandemic has represented a unique challenge the past two years, Gayle Collier, Board President of Arlington Charities, says the organization has been buoyed by the community's consistent and unwavering support to meet needs. "To sum up the pandemic for Arlington Charities, I'd say it's been

challenging and awesome all at the same time," Collier says. "Delivering food and support to a client-base that doubled in size was challenging and we did it! The support provided by our volunteers, staff, neighborhoods, faith-based organizations and businesses throughout Arlington came together; [they] counted their blessings and stepped up and helped those less fortunate ... Awesome! Well done Arlington!"

Partnerships are at the heart of Arlington Charities'

many altruistic endeavors. AC partnered with Tarrant County College Southeast Campus to support a satellite pantry to help alleviate hunger on campus. During the pandemic, when the on-campus pantry was closed, a Monthly Mobile Market was established at the campus to provide another avenue of assistance for students.

AC is also a partner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Community Partner Program,

which identifies agency staff as Your Texas Benefits Navigators to assist clients in completing benefits paperwork at AC's location. Partnering with Tarrant Area Food Bank, AC provides Community Mobile Markets three times per month - at St. Andrews UMC, Tarrant County College SE, and at its facility (811 Secretary Drive).

Moving into 2022 AC continues to make strides. Collier says COVID-prompted programs are being refined to meet the changing needs of our community. Case management services have been tripled, and the grocery delivery program has expanded to include more participants and increased interaction to help combat senior isolation. On the horizon is a new online grocery ordering program where clients will be able to register, choose their food items, and set a pickup time/date.

AC is also expanding its outreach and case management services, as well as reformatting nutrition and financial literacy education to meet its post-Covid environment.

For more: arlingtoncharities.org.

What Arlington Charities did in 2021

- 40,121 individual visits to the Drive Through Food Pantry
- 3,038 grocery deliveries were made
- 1,382 lunches were distributed to the unhoused
- 5,442 individuals received holiday help
- 3,848 received case management services
- 38,625 individuals received assistance at Monthly Mobile Markets
- 13,514 total volunteer hours
- \$61,656 in utility assistance provided
- 1,762,492 pounds of food distributed