



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Berrien County Encourages Residents to Contribute to COVID-19 Response *United Way Southwest Michigan Website Provides Resources for Residents in Need*

(Berrien County, Michigan) – With still more than a week left in the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order in Michigan, many Berrien County residents are looking for ways to help that extend beyond social distancing and washing hands. There are plenty of opportunities right here in Berrien County for people to find a way to volunteer or give back.

The Berrien Community Foundation and United Way of Southwest Michigan are working together to meet needs in the community and are posting resources and opportunities to get involved on the [United Way of Southwest Michigan website](#). On this website, residents can access several links for local updated information regarding COVID-19 from a variety of local agencies and see volunteer opportunities as the need arises.

At this time, Berrien County agencies not affiliated with the hospital system, including homeless and domestic abuse shelters, long-term care facilities, home health agencies serving older adults, housing facilities for lower-income individuals, including an isolation/quarantine facility are in desperate need of supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE). Among the items most needed are masks (surgical and homemade to fit both men and women), hygiene items such as hand sanitizer (or empty hand sanitizer bottles or small spray bottles), disinfecting wipes and hand soap, and single-serve meals or snack items. Community members who are able to donate any of these items can drop off donations at the United Way of Southwest Michigan office at 2015 Lakeview Avenue in St. Joseph, Michigan on Mondays from 3:00PM-5:00PM and Fridays from 10:00AM-12:00PM.

Those who are capable of making a financial donation to the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts can do so through the [Southwest Michigan Cares Fund](#), coordinated by the Berrien Community Foundation. In addition to making an [online donation](#), community members can also text to give by texting SWMICARES to 41444, or send checks to:

Berrien Community Foundation
Southwest Michigan Cares Fund
2900 S. State Street, Ste 2E
St. Joseph, MI 49085

While some in the community are fortunate enough to be staying safe at home and be in a position to donate back to the cause, there are others who may be in need of receiving assistance during this trying time. Those who are looking for assistance are encouraged to call 2-1-1, a free and confidential service that helps people find the local resources they need. To get help, simply dial 2-1-1 (or 844-875-9211) to speak with a community resource advisor that can provide you with information and referrals for everyday needs in times of crisis. People in need can also visit www.mi211.org to view resources online or use an online chat feature. Residents can find information about supplemental food and nutrition programs, shelter/housing options and utilities assistance, health care, vaccination, and health epidemic information, addiction prevention and rehabilitation programs, and a safe, confidential path out of physical and/or emotional domestic abuse.

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