

New Bedford's Coastal Foodshed receives \$40,000 to sponsor COVID-19 meal delivery project and help people get back to work

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation today announced it will contribute \$40,000 to Coastal Foodshed to sponsor and coordinate the New Bedford COVID-19 Meal Delivery Project. Starting Monday and running for four weeks initially, Tia Maria's European Cafe and Destination Soups will prepare 100 daily meals for older adults and others in need in New Bedford, Mass. As part of this project, meals will be delivered to homes by New Bedford-based Yes! We Van commuter transportation services. As a result of Coastal Foodshed's sponsorship of the meals program, at least eight local people will now be back to work helping others.

"Through Coastal Foodshed's ability to work with Tia Maria's, Destination Soup, and Yes! We Van, this four-way partnership will deliver nutritious and timely meals to our most vulnerable neighbors during these challenging times," said Michael Carson, president and CEO of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and chair of the Foundation's board of directors. "It is designed to support social distancing, take care of those most at-risk for complications from COVID-19, and help put people whose jobs have been impacted by COVID-19 closures back to work. The Harvard Pilgrim Foundation is looking to further expand this project to other areas in the region and we remain committed to providing the necessary resources to support community-focused initiatives."

As part of this project, Immigrants Assistance Center will

identify New Bedford residents most in need. To apply for meal delivery, call (508) 996-8113.

“As a current Healthy Food Fund partner with Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, we are very committed to coordinating this local initiative and getting freshly cooked and healthy meals to those in our community who need it most,” said Kim Ferreira, MS, RD, LDN, Co-Executive Director & Co-Founder of Coastal Foodshed, which operates a Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation supported Mobile Market.

The Foundation will continue to work closely with nonprofit organizations, community leaders and government stakeholders to support their efforts in addressing the COVID-19 crisis.

“This tremendous opportunity from Coastal Foodshed and Harvard Pilgrim Foundation comes at just the perfect time,” said Jessica Coelho, owner of Tia Maria’s European Café. “We are all in uncharted territory and now our team has a new-found purpose as we can prepare meals for homebound seniors and others in the community who need food. Because of this effort, we are able to provide work for three of our employees. We are excited to be a part of this and are very thankful that we can contribute.”

Additionally, Yes! We Van transportation services can offer three of its employees additional payable hours which it otherwise would have reduced due to impacts of COVID-19.

Harvard Pilgrim Foundation recently announced support for two other local organizations as part of its \$3 million COVID-19 relief efforts: United Way of Greater Fall River and United Way of Greater New Bedford each received a \$10,000 grant for their COVID-19 Relief Fund.