

In March, Ben Kong started volunteering about every other week to help unpack pallets and fill grocery bags of food at the Grace Episcopal Church Food Pantry in Alexandria. Volunteers were required since most on the existing roster of volunteers were in high-risk categories and there was an explosion of need in the community. (In February, the pantry served around 50 clients per week. In early May, we served over 260 in a week.)

The pantry has had to send people away empty-handed only once so far. Neighbors and other faith communities have filled the need by dropping off donations. Volunteers have stepped up, including students home from school (wearing masks and gloves, in shifts of three). And there've been random acts of charity. One day last month, a passerby joined the line of clients (standing 6 feet apart). When it was his turn at the door, instead of registering to receive a bag, he handed over a \$500 check.



To spread the word to those needing help as well as those able to donate or volunteer, our local NBC4 and Telemundo 44 stations reported on the pantry recently. It included comments by the Rev. Jason Roberson, who leads the Spanish-speaking congregation at Grace.

NBC4:

<https://youtu.be/v9MmkVW9MCg>

Telemundo 44:

<https://www.telemundowashingtondc.com/noticias/local/iglesia-en-alexandria-dona-alimentos-a-familias-necesitadas/1987657/>