



Giving Kitchen

Georgia Nonprofit Organization Responds To Record High Requests For Help, Announces Series of Virtual Fundraising Events

ATLANTA (February 25, 2021) – It's been a busy year for Giving Kitchen (GK), the nonprofit organization that provides crisis mitigation for food service workers. Nearly 2,500 people received financial assistance over the last 14 months, for a total of more than \$1.1 million in financial aid. Despite unprecedented and overwhelming demand due to the pandemic, GK has not turned away a single qualifying client. The organization is already seeing another influx of requests for help this year, with more than 65% of clients facing COVID-related hardships so far in 2021.

GK clients responded via survey to share why this financial assistance matters:

- 76% say GK prevented an eviction
- 69% say GK prevented incurring a late fee on a utility payment
- 75% say they didn't have to skip meals to pay bills

The unrelenting distress put on the food service community over the last year is evident: GK's January 2021's monthly totals saw the second largest number of clients served and the second-largest amount of financial assistance awarded in GK's young eight-year history. February's totals are about to surpass January's. Of the [GK Stability Network](#) clients, nearly 70% have come for help with their housing or utilities.

Giving Kitchen's largest annual fundraising event, Team Hidi, originally scheduled for January 31, was postponed due to the pandemic. It would have been the 9th annual rendition of the sell-out event known for being an all-encompassing culinary experience, where dozens of restaurants and over a thousand supporters come together for tastings, auctions, and live music. Despite its deeply meaningful history and ability to raise crucial funds, hosting an in-person gathering of that scale simply wasn't an option this year.

Instead of deferring completely, GK is reinventing its signature fundraiser for 2021. [Team Hidi: Spring Training](#), presented by Sysco and US Foods, will consist of a series of expertly curated

virtual beverage and food events, each with its own theme, tasting menu and local talent, meant to serve as a “warm-up” or practice session for what’s to come. “We can’t host the Team Hidi event we’ve all come to know and love over the past eight years, but that doesn’t mean we can’t still come together to eat, drink and share virtually, in support of our vision for a community where crisis is met with compassion and care,” says Giving Kitchen Co-Founder Jen Hiding-Kendrick. “We won’t call it Team Hidi, because it’s not. It’s getting together virtually, in anticipation of better days ahead. We want Team Hidi: Spring Training to be a place where hope springs eternal, and we look forward to hosting Team Hidi in-person again in 2022.”

Giving Kitchen relies on Team Hidi patrons and auction bidders to fund nearly half of its financial assistance program for the year. Organizers hope that together, the four smaller events combined with the online auction, will help them reach their fundraising goals.

[Team Hidi: Spring Training](#) will consist of four virtual events and an online auction:

- **Beer Night:** Wednesday, April 28 @ 7pm
- **Spirits Night:** Sunday, May 2 @ 6 pm
- **Wine Night:** Thursday, May 6 @ 7pm
- **GK Anniversary Party:** Thursday, May 13 @ 7 pm
- **Online Auction:** opens April 25 and runs through May 9

Attendance at the virtual tasting events is not necessary to participate in the online auction, so it’s a great way to support food service workers no matter where you are. Online auction lots include one-of-a-kind private or semi-private dining experiences, unparalleled outdoor experiences as well as time with your “MFBFFs” (music, food, beverages, friends and fun)!

Food service partners typically donate 100% of goods and services for Team Hidi, but this year Giving Kitchen is committed to compensating them for any expenses associated with their participation. “In 2021, for reasons as obvious as they are painful, we’re working with each food service partner to compensate them for their time and talent,” says Giving Kitchen Executive Director Bryan Schroeder. “It’s an honor to have their support during these trying times – they have our back, we have theirs.”

Tickets for Beer, Spirits, and Wine Nights go on sale Friday, February 26 at two different price points. In addition to giveaways and other surprises, gift baskets will include specially selected food and beverages, curated for two, unique to each tasting event that will ensure an evening every culinary enthusiast will enjoy.

“Rather than focus on all the things that can’t happen this year, we are choosing to appreciate what’s in front of us,” says Hiding-Kendrick. “COVID definitely threw us a curveball, but we are grateful for this opportunity to break bread with our friends and neighbors, and come together to support our incredible food service industry during this difficult time.”

To make a donation to Giving Kitchen, visit givingkitchen.org/support. Food service workers in need of assistance can begin the process at givingkitchen.org/help.

“Don’t let the fear of striking out hold you back.” -Babe Ruth

ABOUT GIVING KITCHEN

Giving Kitchen (GK) helps food service workers. The nonprofit organization provides crisis mitigation for food service workers through financial support and a network of community resources. Since its inception, GK has helped more than 7,000 food service workers in Georgia. The James Beard Foundation named Giving Kitchen the 2019 Humanitarian of the Year. Follow us on social media @givingkitchen, and download the GK app, available for iPhone and Android. givingkitchen.org

Giving Kitchen’s vision of creating a community where crisis is met with compassion and care would not be possible without the generous support of the organization’s 2021 Annual Corporate Partners: Anheuser-Busch, Global Payments, Liberty House Restaurant Corporation, Mailchimp, Revel Systems, Sysco, Tito’s Handmade Vodka, and US Foods.

ABOUT TEAM HIDI

The genesis of Team Hidi came about when Atlanta [Chef Ryan Hiding](#) was diagnosed with late-stage cancer in December 2012. It was Ryan’s journey, and the outpouring of support by his industry, that ignited the formation of Giving Kitchen. Hidi’s legacy lives through Giving Kitchen and its mission to provide stability to the food service community.

Click [here](#) for Giving Kitchen Brand Support Guidelines.

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