

August 21, 2020

During my recent assignment as Interim Executive Director at MANA de San Diego, we were selected by the San Diego Foundation to receive COVID-19 Relief Funding to assist our communities in need. Together with our MANA team, we undertook a calling campaign to identify families with immediate needs, as a result of the pandemic, that we could provide support for. This turned out to be such a rewarding and inspirational experience for me that I wanted to share this story with you.

Our families were so grateful that someone was simply thinking of them and considering their needs, let alone providing them support. Many shared their stories with me of how they were coping to get by which all were truly amazing. It was great to see all the selfless acts that were taking place, as families helped each other and pitched in to support one another, and even those with little to offer someone else, managed to help their neighbor. Many were a bit apprehensive in discussing their needs or sharing information because they were afraid that this might lead to immigration to them, but with honest and sincere communication, they were able to feel comfortable and knew that it was safe to express their needs.

During these calls, we made our families aware of the wonderful programs being offered by our generous partners to include Cox Communications, San Diego Gas & Electric and AT&T. Many of these families were unaware of these opportunities so we pointed them to corresponding links on our MANA's website, where they can seek additional information for their individual needs.

Through the generosity of the San Diego Foundation we were able to support 52 families with pantry gift cards and an additional 20+ families with rental and utility assistance for those where there had been lay-offs due to the pandemic and for those families that did not have an alternate income source to continue providing for their families.

It was truly a rewarding experience to have personally participated in this outreach and I want to send a big thank you to MANA de San Diego for all the constant support they provide to the MANA Community, during hard times such as these. I leave you with some testimonials from the families that received support and wanted to express their gratitude to MANA de San Diego.

Elena Perez

MANA de San Diego

**Testimonials:**

*“Hola señora Elena buenas noches soy Oscar Guerrero en nombre de toda mi familia queremos agradecerle por su gran ayuda que nos mandó muchas gracias y que Dios los bendiga a todos”* Familia Guerrero

*“My name is Ovet Felix, Renee Felix's dad. We received the gift card from Food for Less today, my wife and I would like to thank you and everyone that is involve in the Hermanitas' program. We really appreciated all the support that you guys are proving to all the families. This gift card comes in handy during these hard times, once again thank you all for supporting us during this pandemic and God bless all of you and all the people that supports this amazing program”* Familia Felix

*“Ms..Perez, Good morning, I hope all is well. I just want to let you know how grateful we are for the gift card that you sent us. I hope you have a wonderful day. Again, thanks so much. Best wishes.”* Familia Cueva

*“Greetings, I am Ashley Gonzalez, daughter of Yanett Valentin. My family and I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for donating a Food 4 Less card to our family. We truly appreciate everyone that has taken the time and money to help us in these difficult times. My mother is extremely thankful and wanted to tell you that God bless you and your family. Thank you.”* Familia Gonzalez

*“I just received your generous Food4Less gift card from MANA SD to my family and I can't even explain how thankful and appreciative I am. On behalf of my family and I, please thank the entire MANA SD TEAM. It comes at a perfect time for my family. Only I am working, neither my husband or oldest daughter have been called back to work. One of my daughters tested positive for COVID and had ALL symptoms they talk about on the news. We had a few sad and scary moments watching her through/recover from her symptoms. She has since still tested positive although all her symptoms are gone. My daughters that are in high school are really saddened by the whole situation of having online classes. We try to stay strong as a family and I encourage them to stay positive through such hard moments. Once again from the bottom of my heart THANK YOU!”* Familia Vargas

*“Muchísimas gracias por el apoyo que nos dieron todo el año con nuestras hijas. También le quiero agradecer por la tarjeta que nos enviaron, nos va a ser una gran ayuda. Que te tenga un maravilloso día. Sinceramente,”* Familia Padilla

*“Hola Elena, Gracias por el apoyo a nuestra familia, MANA de San Diego siempre al pendiente y buscando la manera de que sigamos Adelante, en situaciones como La Pandemia del Covid-19. Recibimos la tarjeta de Food 4 Less. Mi hija Camila Puente hermanita de Mana de San diego tambien agradese el regalo sera de mucha apoyo para nuestra familia. Esperando muy pronto regresen nuestras hijas a los Seminarios y con sus Mentoras con el favor de Dios. Gracias.”* Familia Puente

*“Buenos Días Sra. Elena, le envió este mensaje para darle las gracias por el envío de la tarjeta de Food 4 Less. Esta semana me puse a ver los lugares de mi región en Chula Vista para localizar las instituciones que ofrecen despensas de alimentos, y al ir por el correo vi el sobre de MANA, al abrirlo mi sorpresa fue la tarjeta. Mil gracias por la generosidad por parte de ustedes.”* Familia Valles

## SD Foundation Disbursement Testimonials



*“I would like to extend my gratitude on behalf of my family and I toward MANA, Elena Perez and each member for their hard work and for taking the time to think of me when gifting food especially during this difficult period due to COVID-19. I am at a loss for words due to the appreciation I have for this group and the things each member has done for me.” .....Sincerely, Amanda Guzman*



*“Gracias, agradezco de todo Corazon la tarjeta de Food 4 Less que recibí de parte de MANA. Deseando que cada uno de los integrantes de MANA y sus familias se encuentren bien de salud en estos momentos de pandemia.”*  
..... Gracias, Familia Martinez



*“Buenas tardes, queria salduarla y darle muchisimas gracias por toda esta ayuda tan grande que nos proporcionan ya que gracias a ustedes que luchan por ayudar a personas asi lo logran, no saben el bien que nos hacen. Saben aqui en casa desafortunadamente ya nos toco vivir esta enfermedad y esta ayuda que nos dieron fue de mucha ayuda. Muchas gracias y que Dios los bendiga a ustedes y a las personas que hacen posible esto. Muchas gracias y bendiciones.” ..... Familia Pulido Al cazar*



*“Eh recibido la ayuda para hacer mis pagos de renta y utilidades y les doy gracias de todo corzaon. Dios los bendiga doblemente por el apoyo que nos han brindado en estos momentos dificiles y por ser parte en la vida de mi Abigail, siendo una HERMANITA mas.” ..... Gracias MANA de San Diego, Familia Ramirez*



*“Acabo de recibir tu carta con el apoyo financiero. Muchas gracias de corazon, en verdad. Bendiciones para ti y toda tu familia, ya pude hacer mis pagos. Que Dios te bendiga tu vida a cada momento. Bendito Dios ahora con este bajon del desempleo ya sabras pero igual ya metiendo aplicaciones de trabajo y haci. Mi familia y yo estamos enormemente agradecidos.” .....Familia Rangel Sierra*



*“Le mando este mensaje para comentarle que me llego el apoyo tan grande para mi familia y esto nos va ayudar bastante a ir al corriente en nuestros pago. Mando saludos y bendiciones,” .....Familia Arevalo*