

5 THINGS



Meal delivery robots at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's are on the front lines in feeding the few hundred students left living in residence halls while reducing the likelihood of coronavirus transmission.

NEWS & TRENDS

5 coronavirus things: Meal delivery robots help minimize COVID spread at University of Wisconsin

This and FEMA partnering with California to feed at-risk seniors are some of the stories you may have missed recently regarding the COVID-19 crisis.

Mike Buzalka | Apr 14, 2020

In this special edition of 5 Things, Food Management highlights five things you may have missed recently about developments regarding coronavirus and its impact on onsite dining.

Here's your list for today:

1. Meal delivery robots help minimize COVID exposure

Related: 5 things: Safety concerns rising among dining workers still on the job

Most of University of Wisconsin-Madison's 45,000 students are gone while faculty work from home and campus buildings are closed to all but the few employees deemed essential to university operations. But the robots remain, and they are on the front lines in feeding the few hundred students left living in residence halls while reducing the likelihood of coronavirus transmission. Those wary of venturing outside and coming into contact with COVID-19 can dispatch a robot to deliver food to the front door of their dorm building instead of heading to the sole dining hall that remains open.

Read more: Robots deliver food— and relief—to UW students still on campus during COVID-19 pandemic

2. California partners with FEMA to feed at-risk seniors

Related: 5 things: Compass Group transforms US Open tennis court into meal kit preparation and distribution site

California Governor Gavin Newsom has announced a new partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that will provide three meals each day to California's elderly population struggling amid the coronavirus pandemic. This comes after seven patients died of COVID-19 at a nursing home in Hayward while 65 other patients and staff at the home have also tested positive for the virus.

The newest partnership with FEMA is in addition to the Meals on Wheels program, which provides 50,000 meals to California's senior population. Those 50,000 meals are not enough, Newsom said, noting that there are one million seniors isolated at home during this pandemic.

Read more: Gov. Gavin Newsom announces partnership with FEMA to provide meals to seniors during COVID-19 pandemic

3. Health system turns cafeterias into employee grocery stores

Chicago-based CommonSpirit Health is transforming its hospital cafeterias into makeshift grocery stores for physicians and other front-line employees. The repurposed cafeterias sell staple foods and other household goods that may be in short supply at retail stores, including milk, eggs, disinfectant wipes and toilet paper. The stores are open during normal cafe hours to maximize convenience for employees.

Read more: CommonSpirit turns cafeterias into grocery stores for staff

4. School caterer now feeding needy

My Green Lunch, a school lunch catering company based in Northern California, has partnered with the Santa Clara County Office of Education and Loaves and Fishes Family Kitchen to provide thousands of free meals to Bay Area residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Todd Evjenth started the company in 2012 to provide healthy, locally sourced hot meals to Silicon Valley schools, but with schools shut down during the shelter in place order, Evjenth switched gears to focus on those in need.

“My Green Lunch has completely shifted our focus from providing healthy school lunches to providing healthy emergency meal relief,” Evjenth said in a statement.

As of April 9, My Green Lunch had provided 5,450 meals. The company’s goal is to provide a total of 2,500 free meals a week for the foreseeable future.

Read more: San Jose school lunch company switches to emergency meals during pandemic

5. Dallas ISD foodservice workers make Time cover

It may not quite be the same as making the cover of Rolling Stone, much less Food Management , but six food service employees at Dallas' T.W. Browne Middle School made the cover of April 20's Time magazine honoring frontline heroes.

A photo of Browne's cafeteria manager, Yolanda Fisher, and five of her assistants—Porsche Lacey, Keke Lafayette, Shannon Wiggins, Pamela Harrington and Katrina Parker—is one of five different covers this week, as Time focuses its attention on those who are putting themselves at risk during the COVID-19 crisis.

Read more: Dallas ISD cafeteria workers make Time's cover

Bonus: Stony Brook University's CulinArt food service team feeds students still on campus

Contact Mike Buzalka at mike.buzalka@informa.com

Source URL: <https://www.food-management.com/news-trends/5-coronavirus-things-meal-delivery-robots-help-minimize-covid-spread-university>