



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 4, 2020

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The Goodness of America

As COVID-19 continues, Americans are finding new and wonderful ways to help their friends and neighbors navigate this difficult time. We would like to showcase here some of the more small-scale efforts that make a big difference.

Porch Prom

When Grayson Chapman of Highland, Texas, found out her March 28 senior prom was canceled because of coronavirus concerns, she was devastated. The senior prom is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that many seniors look forward to during most of their high-school careers. Thankfully for Grayson, her siblings were there to help.

Grayson's sister, Maura, who is now in college, wanted to do something for her sister to make up for the canceled prom. She enlisted the help of their younger brother, Crae, and their mother, Jaci, and decided to turn the front porch into a makeshift prom.

"We just kind of drug things out that we had at home and we made it special," Jaci told Big Country Homepage.

The porch was transformed with lights and decorations taken from inside of the family's home and outfitted to play prom music. Food was prepared, and the siblings were all dressed in their best formal attire. Grayson's parents, uncle, and cousin were in attendance as well.

Jaci recalled that Grayson "thought it sounded a little cheesy at first," but became excited when she realized she would get to "dress up after all and go to her last 'prom.'"

The "prom" went on for two to three hours, and the night ended with Maura crowning Grayson "Prom Queen," using the crown she had received at her own prom.

"We used my crown to make it an even more real experience to have that element of prom queen and king in there," Maura said.

Grayson's little cousin Gene was crowned "Prom King."

Crae said it was "a little family moment" that they will never forget.

Jaci told Fox News that the prom was not the one her daughter had envisioned, "but we've tried to teach our children life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it."

Slice of Hope

Three police organizations in Toms River, New Jersey, purchased 300 pizzas for their community after they were placed under a statewide stay-at-home order, Breitbart News reported.

Officer Jesse Robertazzi was inspired to organize the March 26 "Pizza Day" after he saw a similar event by one of his colleagues on Facebook in a nearby town. He spoke with some colleagues, and before long "Pizza Day" was in full effect. The program was sponsored by Toms River PBA, Toms River Fraternal Order of Police, and Toms River Police Foundation.

According to Breitbart News, the pizzas were prepared by six local pizzerias and ready by lunchtime on a first come, first served basis — one pizza per family. One pizzeria even threw in a side of garlic knots



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with every order.

They selected pizzas, according to Robertazzi, because “a large pie can feed a family of four, potentially” and is food that “brings everyone together to pull a slice off to eat.”

The officers told CNN they had hoped that their “Pizza Day” would give families “a sense of normality by getting out the house and getting into their favorite pizza shop” to pick up the pizzas and bring them home to their families. They also loved the idea of giving business owners a sense of normalcy by bolstering their business in the absence of dining-in.

In a Facebook post by the police organizations, they said “Pizza Day” was part of their #keepitlocal initiative. The event was so successful that the organizers are hoping to do another one, using different area pizzerias.

A Tip Paid Forward

In Prescott, Arizona, an anonymous donor tipped Rosa’s Pizzeria \$2,000, which owner Skyler Reeves used to pay his employees’ most urgent bills.

Reeves said he was busy loading orders for curbside pickup when a woman handed him an envelope and quickly walked away. When he opened it, he saw \$2,000 and a note that read, “Hi there. As a neighbor and lover of Rosa’s, please accept the enclosed and use it as you see fit for your staff.”

Reeves told Fox News he was so unbelievably touched by the woman’s generosity that “the hairs on my arm literally stood up.” He admitted that the generosity could not have come at a better time, as he had already been forced to lay off nearly half of his 100-person staff, consolidate his three restaurants, stop his catering company from processing any new orders, and halt construction on his newest restaurant, which was set to open in April.

Reeves decided the best way to use the money was to ask his employees to bring him the bill that most stresses them. His intention is to use the \$2,000 tip, and supplement it with his own funds.

Canceled Rent

Brooklyn, New York, landlord Mario Salerno announced on March 30 that he would be waiving rent for the month of April, NBC New York reported.

Salerno, who owns approximately 80 apartments throughout Brooklyn, made the announcement in a notice to residents. It read, “Due to the recent pandemic of Coronavirus COVID-19 affecting all of us, please note I am waiving rent for the month of April. Stay safe, help your neighbors, and wash your hands.”

Salerno later told NBC he knew his residents had a lot to worry about through the health crisis and didn’t want his rent to be another worry.

“I say don’t worry about paying me, worry about your neighbor and worry about your family,” he said.

Salerno’s tenants were flabbergasted by his kindness and admitted the waiver was much-needed.

One tenant, Kaitlyn Guteski, told NBC she had been out of work after her hair salon was closed owing to the pandemic. Another tenant said he had lost his job as a lawyer and has been having trouble with the state’s unemployment system, which is currently overwhelmed.



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“He’s Superman,” Guteski told NBC New York.

—Raven Clabough



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