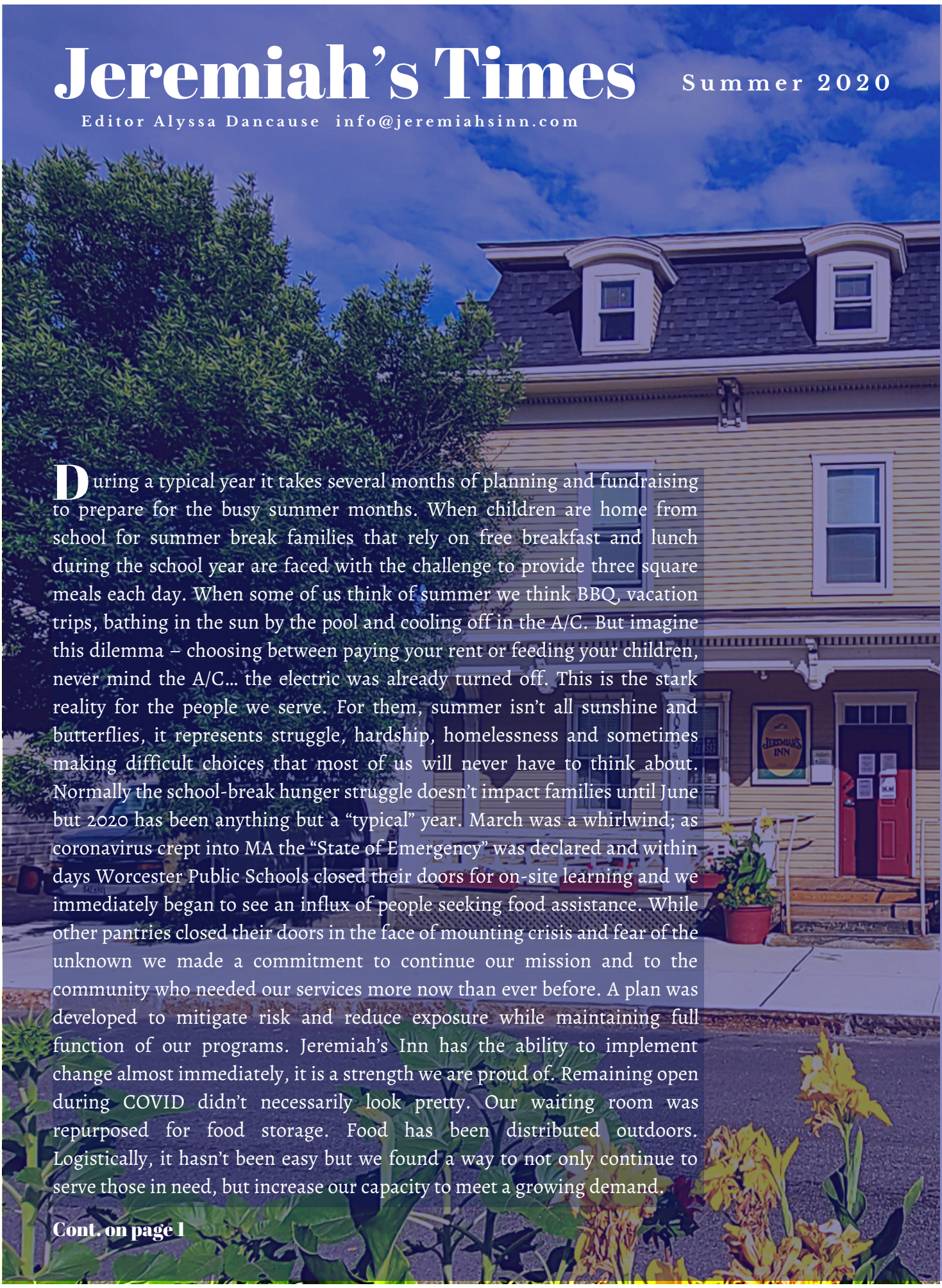


Jeremiah's Times

Summer 2020

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During a typical year it takes several months of planning and fundraising to prepare for the busy summer months. When children are home from school for summer break families that rely on free breakfast and lunch during the school year are faced with the challenge to provide three square meals each day. When some of us think of summer we think BBQ, vacation trips, bathing in the sun by the pool and cooling off in the A/C. But imagine this dilemma – choosing between paying your rent or feeding your children, never mind the A/C... the electric was already turned off. This is the stark reality for the people we serve. For them, summer isn't all sunshine and butterflies, it represents struggle, hardship, homelessness and sometimes making difficult choices that most of us will never have to think about. Normally the school-break hunger struggle doesn't impact families until June but 2020 has been anything but a "typical" year. March was a whirlwind; as coronavirus crept into MA the "State of Emergency" was declared and within days Worcester Public Schools closed their doors for on-site learning and we immediately began to see an influx of people seeking food assistance. While other pantries closed their doors in the face of mounting crisis and fear of the unknown we made a commitment to continue our mission and to the community who needed our services more now than ever before. A plan was developed to mitigate risk and reduce exposure while maintaining full function of our programs. Jeremiah's Inn has the ability to implement change almost immediately, it is a strength we are proud of. Remaining open during COVID didn't necessarily look pretty. Our waiting room was repurposed for food storage. Food has been distributed outdoors. Logistically, it hasn't been easy but we found a way to not only continue to serve those in need, but increase our capacity to meet a growing demand.

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JI FOOD DRIVE A BIG SUCCESS THANKS TO YOU!

Our 26th Annual Food Drive, typically, is a time where we not only collect food to stock the pantry, but we connect with shoppers and tell them about our mission. For safety reasons we had to opt for donation bins at various locations, and the kindness of the staff to spread the word and collect donations for us. Our main donation site was Shaw's on Gold Star Blvd. Kevin and his staff always take such great care of us, and we greatly appreciate all they do! Additional locations such as United Granite Works Inc. in Auburn, and SaVida Health collected food at their offices, and Price Chopper on Cambridge St. helped us out all week! We received a 500 lb. donation of food and toiletries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints which was such a blessing!! In total we collected just over 2,000 lbs. of canned goods, gluten free items, cooking staples, cereal, and toiletries and words can't express our gratitude!! A huge THANK YOU to all of our generous sponsors for your support! Special shout out to Shaw's & Star Markets Nourishing Neighbors Program for donating \$5,000 for COVID & hunger relief, and for allowing us to collect food at Shaw's locations in Worcester. We are also grateful for the overwhelming amount of individual donations to our Food Drive campaign!! In total we raised nearly \$16,000 to help feed families in our community who are being affected by food insecurity at this very difficult time. 100% of the proceeds to this campaign will benefit our Nutrition Center, which supports clients who are struggling to make ends meet.

CONTINUED FROM COVER PAGE

Visits have increased by 25% each month since March. In June the number of individuals that received food was up by 104% from last year. And if this trend continues we anticipate an annual increase in people served of 79%. The community support has been amazing and allowed us to not only feed so many in need, but also provide them with life-saving masks and disinfecting supplies. Items undoubtedly out of reach otherwise. We thank the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, the Worcester Together Fund and Coalition, Webster Five Foundation and Worcester County Food Bank for assisting in our efforts to continue to operate safely and effectively. These grants helped provide PPE gear, masks, gloves, disinfecting equipment and cleaning supplies and a shelter for outdoor distribution. We are proud and especially grateful to the brave and dedicated team of staff who stepped up and risked their safety, day after day on the "front lines" to help our neighbors in need and ensure the men of our residential program continue to receive life-saving addiction treatment and supports throughout this pandemic.



September is **Hunger Action Month**. Each September JI joins *Feeding America* and their network of over 200 food banks to take action all month long to bring awareness to hunger and food insecurity right in our own communities. Visit feedingamerica.org to take part in the national movement & follow us on social media to see how we are celebrating locally!



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SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT



We would like to give a special shout out to **Herlihy Insurance Group**. For over twenty years "Team Herlihy" has been sharing its good works and financial support with the Worcester County community. Our organization, among others, has been the grateful recipient their generosity. Jim and his team sponsor both our Annual Food Drive and our CSSL Softball Team. When COVID-19 hit they donated a large supply of PPE gear and sanitizer. We have also received \$5,000 from the Herlihy Family Memorial Fund. Thank you "Team Herlihy" and the Herlihy family for your kindness, and for all you do for Worcester!!!

MASS HOUSING (MH) CCRI/COMMUNITY SERVICES GRANT



We have recently experienced increased demand for our Residential Rehabilitative Services. Isolation, financial insecurity, and concern for loved ones are at the top of the list of triggers for those in early recovery from Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

RAPID REHOUSING PILOT PROGRAM & JI RESIDENTS



Earlier this year we were asked to take part in the State Opioid Response (SOR) Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Pilot program. Residents who met certain criteria and who were residing in Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) funded residential programs were eligible to apply. The grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) covered expenses such as: first, last, and security deposits, short term rental assistance, utility arrears, and even furniture! We had the pleasure of working with Open Sky Communications and Housing Specialist, Melissa Ingerson to coordinate the applications and

placement of our residents. "Working with JI has been a great experience, staff and clients are very nice," says Melissa. Erik and Juan are 2 of the 8 residents from our program that were placed with housing and support and they are doing amazing! We are so proud of them both - Erik has actually started working for us as House Manager! This program is so important to the well-being of our clients. Many are homeless when they come to us, and for others sometimes going "home" isn't always a safe option. We are eager to see if this pilot becomes a definite program in 2021 so we can continue to refer residents and set them up for lasting success!

Twelve step meetings were cancelled, residents could not visit or be visited by family, and many were laid off. Using the grant we received from the Center for Community Recovery Innovations (CCRI), a subsidiary of Mass Housing we were able to purchase technology to ensure our residents continued to get the best SUD treatment possible. Case Managers can now use laptops to meet with their clients and maintain social distance. Residents are able attend online intensive outpatient treatment, 12-step meetings, and meditation classes. When an office visit is not deemed safe they can meet with healthcare providers remotely. We are extremely grateful to CCRI for their support in keeping our residents connected!

CHOPPED!WORCESTER 2020 UPDATE

As a safety measure, Jeremiah's Inn (JI) has decided to cancel CHOPPED!Worcester 2020. JI is committed to doing what it takes to stop the spread of the virus, and the health and safety of our staff, residents, clients, and the community is our priority. We will take this extra time to make sure that next year's event is even bigger and better! We also would like to take a moment to thank our local restaurant industry. CHOPPED!Worcester relies heavily on the generosity and participation of local restaurants, many of whom have been gravely affected by the pandemic. Please support your local eateries when you can—without their support there would not be a CHOPPED!Worcester.



NATIONAL
RECOVERY
MONTH

National Recovery Month is a national observance held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can enable those with mental and substance use disorders to live healthy and rewarding lives. Now in its 31st year, Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those living in recovery. Recovery Month works to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the emergence of a strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and community members across the nation who make recovery in all its forms possible. The theme for 2020 National Recovery Month is **Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connections.**

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