



# CHEF'S BRIGADE

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## NEW ORLEANS

Mary Freeman  
Wisdom  
Foundation

DELTA  
BLUES  
RICE

PRESS RELEASE – May 3, 2020

In response to COVID-19, Chef's Brigade was formed by a coalition of chefs, food writers, restaurants and purveyors to feed first responders and healthcare professionals hot and healthy meals daily while providing a financial lifeline to New Orleans' beloved restaurant industry.

Supported by community donations and grants, Chef's Brigade bundles groups of restaurants into "brigades," each of which provides daily meals to several New Orleans Police Department Districts and Units, Lambeth House, the New Orleans EMS, the Louisiana State Police and others. The first brigade started serving March 26, and the project has grown to five brigades, comprised of 95 local restaurants, chefs and purveyors.

Purveyors like New Orleans Fish House, Piazza Seafood, Caire Restaurant Supply, Hamco Supply, Louisiana Fresh Produce, Sysco, U.S. Foods, Sanderson Farms and Tyson have donated or provided their products at deep discounts, allowing the chefs and restaurants to maximize the funds Chef's Brigade pays them for 100 meals per shift. Recently, Chef's Brigade received a donation of 1,050 pounds of rice from Delta Blues Rice, an artisanal producer located in Ruleville, Mississippi, and Ragged Branch Bourbon has been similarly generous, distributing 300 pounds of their premium beef into our brigades.

Chef's Brigade has worked in concert organically with the Krewe of Red Beans, and with their financial collapse on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, it is bringing enormous pressures onto Chef's Brigade to pick up some of their slack. Our rapid expansion powered by our economical and sustainable model and fueled by individual donations has directly injected \$45,000 into local New Orleans restaurants. Chef's Brigade has also applied for grants from a number of sources and received emergency grants from the Mary Freeman Wisdom Foundation, Tito's Vodka, and others. The work continues, but so does the need.

As of today, it does not appear that New Orleans restaurants will be open for anything approaching "normal" business in the near term – our restaurant partners are operating on 18% of their normal revenues. Additionally, the City faces an uncertain future regarding large conventions and the loss of festivals – a development that disproportionately affects our restaurants.

New Orleans is a city that loves to eat, and our restaurants are the life blood of the town – both financially and culturally. We need our restaurants to survive because food is in our souls and because so many New Orleans residents depend on the industry for their livelihoods. No one wants to imagine New Orleans without its iconic eateries.

Please take a moment to view our website, [www.chefsbrigadenola.org](http://www.chefsbrigadenola.org) which was recently given a significant upgrade (another generous donation) by New Orleans Restaurant Marketing.

Chef's Brigade operates in partnership with the New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to make New Orleans a safer place to work, live, and play. Through this partnership, donations to Chef's Brigade made through NOPJF are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. NOPJF staff also provides non-profit financial expertise and audit compliance for Chef's Brigade as well as operational support to Brigades in the field. For more information and to donate, please visit [chefsbrigadenola.org](http://chefsbrigadenola.org) or [NOPJF.org](http://NOPJF.org). Please follow along on our Facebook and Instagram pages.