

How to Captain a Shelter Meal During COVID-19

Step 1: To captain a dinner, go to <https://www.cfhomeless.org>, in the upper right hover over “Get Involved” and click “Donate A Meal.” Check off a date that you and any co-captains (spouse and/or friends) are available for 5:00 PM – 5:30 PM drop-off time (be sure to click “Submit and Sign Up” at the bottom). Type “(Herzl-Ner Tamid)” in the comments section.

Read the shelter’s note regarding serving guidelines and choose what is most comfortable for you. This page’s instructions are for drop-off online, but let us know if you want to serve.

Step 2: Decide on a menu. You can either choose one of the sample menus on page 2, or, you can create one of your own. Be *specific* (“beef hot dogs” rather than “a main dish”) and serve only a few different dishes so everyone gets some of everything. Include foods that are high in protein and are soft and easy to chew. Plan to feed 100 men for dinner.

Step 3: Email your menu and date to ShelterMeals@h-nt.org and we will put together a sign-up form for your meal and send you the link.

Let us know whether you are comfortable having dishes dropped off on your doorstep that day for you to bring (if people can’t make it to the shelter themselves), and we can include that on the form. This is not a requirement.

Step 4: Send an email to your friends asking them to contribute a dish. A sample is included below, though you are welcome to edit/rewrite to fit your style. Fill in/select the **red** with your meal’s info:

Dear friends,

We are captaining a meal at the Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) Shelter on [date] and would love your help to provide dinner for 100 homeless men. CFH strives to mitigate the pain of homelessness by providing meals and basic needs, and as they continue to navigate the COVID-19 Crisis they need our help now more than ever before.

Please sign up to cook or buy part of the meal and deliver it to the shelter (contactless) on [date] by 5:30 PM. Here’s the link: [link]. Feel free to sign up for multiple items or requested servings, and please use disposable containers (recommend Cash & Carry). Large disposable pans are also available at HNT - if needed, call the HNT office (206-232-8555) to arrange a time to pick some up. CFH has ovens/microwave to warm food before serving, but food needs to be cooked before you arrive.

Directions: *The shelter is located at Lincoln Center Office Park: 515 116th Ave NE, Bellevue, across the street from Chevrolet of Bellevue. Turn off of 116th into a parking lot and head west, all the way to the back. When the parking lot turns left, take this turn and park anywhere. It’s the gray building that looks a bit like a small older office complex with the door in the southeast corner. **Please drop off the food on the table under the blue tent at the entrance of the shelter.** You can also drop your dish off on our doorstep between [time] and [time] that day. Our address is [your address].*

Captaining a meal is very easy and hugely rewarding - if you are interested in captaining another shelter meal yourself, please email ShelterMeals@h-nt.org. Thank you so much!

[Your name]

Contacts

Contacts at Herzl-Ner Tamid: Program Director, Rebecca Frankel, Rebecca@h-nt.org; HNT Social Action Committee Co-chairs, Carol Michel & Carol Stockton, SocialActionChairs@h-nt.org.

Contacts at Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) - for onsite issues only: Brent Lo, brentl@cfhomeless.org, 781-222-8334; Lisa Leitner, lisal@cfhomeless.com; 425-213-3769.

Sample Menus (or create your own!)

(Numbers in parentheses indicate how many people needed to sign up for that item)

During COVID, please first focus on getting sign ups for the main and sides, then add sign up spots for non-required fruit, beverages and dessert if you have more volunteers.

Meal 1	Meal 2	Meal 3
20 portions of roast chicken (5)	2-9x13 pans of meat lasagna (6)	40 hot dogs (4)
20 portions of mashed potatoes (5)	2-9x13 pan of vegetarian lasagna (2)	50 portions of vegetarian baked beans (2)
40 portions of green beans (3)	25 portions of green salad (4)	80 hot dog buns (2)
25 portions of whole fruit (4)	25 portions of whole fruit (4)	25 portions of coleslaw (4)
2-9x13 pans of brownies (5)	3 pre-sliced fruit pies (3)	4 dozen cookies (3)
20 portions of non-alcoholic beverages (5)	20 portions of non-alcoholic beverages (5)	20 portions of non-alcoholic beverages (5)
		25 portions of whole fruit (4)

Meal 4	Meal 5	Meal 6
2-9x13 pans of mac & cheese (6)	4 pans of meatloaf (4)	30 portions of sloppy joes (4)
40 portions of carrots, sweet potatoes & yam casserole (3)	2-9x13 pans of pasta & sauce (3)	1-9x13 pan of vegetarian pasta dish (1)
25 portions of green salad (4)	25 portions of Caesar salad (4)	25 portions of coleslaw (4)
25 portions of whole fruit (4)	120 Costco soft dinner rolls (1)	25 portions of whole fruit (4)
2-9x13 pans of brownies (5)	40 portions of green beans (3)	4 dozen cookies (3)
20 portions of non-alcoholic beverages (5)	20 portions of non-alcoholic beverages (5)	0 portions of non-alcoholic beverages (5)
	25 portions of whole fruit (4)	

Another Idea: if you think some friends would prefer to contribute financially, choose a main dish you can get ready-made (like Costco pizzas, KFC chicken pieces, etc...) and give the sign-up option to Venmo you \$XX to cover the cost of that dish for 20 people.

For more ideas, check out these websites: <http://www.cditchen.com/recipes/holidays-parties/cooking-for-a-crowd/> and <http://recipesforacrowd.com/>

Feedback/Suggestions from Previous Meals

We were overwhelmed by the amount of food our friends and HNT members donated – we ended up having enough for 2 meals! Rebecca made the dinner organization very easy to manage by creating the sign-up sheet and by handling all of the details. It was a piece of cake for us. It felt good to solve a short-term need, so that the staff could work on solving the long-term issues. This experience motivated us to continue giving back to our community and helped us realize that **volunteering with our friends is a fun and rewarding way to spend time together.**

-Michelle Goldberg

Captaining the dinner service at Eastside Men's Shelter was **one of the most purposeful tzedakah opportunities that I have been part of.** It was extremely meaningful to help fulfill one of life's most basic needs, and to nourish body and soul. What a really fun way to spend the evening among a wide variety of people who also volunteered to help out. And the men were so very kind, appreciative and gracious, making it all worthwhile! I will happily contribute again in a heartbeat.

-Aileen Okrent

It was very noticeable when the men spotted an item they may not see a lot like seasonal vegetables such as squash, broccoli, cauliflower - pretty sure they see a lot of baby carrots. One of our volunteers responded when I questioned why they would use their farm fresh (literally) vegetables, they responded, 'don't the men deserve something so good'. They had already treated these men with a level of dignity that isn't always reflective when we think of the task of feeding 80 men.

-Nadine Strauss

The six of us who served dinner all had great evening dishing out the food and interacting with the men. **I wish that the many members of the community who don't support a homeless shelter in Bellevue would come spend an evening and see for themselves that there is really nothing to fear.**

-Julie Ellenhorn

You can use a cooler (or foam/polystyrene boxes) to help keep food warm. Wrap the pot in a couple of layers of towels and then wedge it in the cooler. Wedge more towels around as needed to stop it tipping over. It also makes transportation easier.

-Mindy Landsman

What to bring the food in—those huge disposable aluminum pans (used for roasting turkeys etc) so you can just drop off and leave everything. We sealed it tight and it stayed warm... **Don't stress about making too much. It will get eaten.** They are so appreciative!

-Shelley Dillon

They were very appreciative of the quality of the food, the choice of vegetables, and of course the brownies and cookies were a great hit. **There are 2 stoves, each with a large oven and 4 burners.** We brought our food as hot as we could, but then were able to keep things warm in the ovens. There still is **not much room for actually preparing food.**

-Susan Edelheit