



## **Buffalo City Mission Launches Virtual Program for Annual “Mission Possible Food Drive Challenge”**

*Educational program will introduce “virtual collection drive” and other dynamic online elements to engage schools, church youth groups, and other youth programs across Western New York in the fight against hunger and homelessness*

**BUFFALO, NEW YORK (October 6, 2020)** – Today, the [Buffalo City Mission](#) kicked off the fifth year of its Mission Possible Food Drive Challenge, a community wide initiative that brings together area schools, church youth groups and other youth programs to engage students of all ages in an exciting, educational, and action-oriented food drive challenge.

To address health issues from COVID-19, this year’s program will feature dynamic virtual elements to engage the community in a safe and impactful way. Instead of a kickoff event, today’s launch is virtual, with a 10-week program that will be energized through content sharing, social media and high-spirited online communication.

The competition will take place over a challenge period from October 6 to December 18, 2020.

“The Mission Possible Food Drive Challenge represents the very best of how younger generations can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others,” said Aubrey Calhoun, Associate Executive Director at the Buffalo City Mission. “This year’s virtual competition is a testament to the inspiring resolve and creativity that we have in finding ways to help the poor and homeless in our community. We look forward to seeing how our region’s schools, church youth groups and other youth programs rise to the challenge.”

As with past years, the Mission Possible program will feature student teams coming together to develop a strategy of how to track, measure and accomplish goals – earning character milestone “badges” that recognize the importance of being a visionary, having kindness, compassion, generosity, and also becoming a community changer. Last year’s program engaged 24 schools, youth groups and student organizations to raise more than 25,000 canned goods, and feed more than 6,250 hungry individuals.

New program features include:

- A “virtual collection drive” where each participating team will have an Amazon Wish List to personalize, distribute to students, request items, collect funds, and have purchased goods shipped directly to the City Mission
- Weekly video updates from the City Mission and Mission Possible mascot, “Can Man”
- New lesson plans tailored specifically to Character Milestones, so that students can understand the importance of what it means to earn each badge
- A community service form for teachers to share with participating students who can be eligible to get community service hours with the City Mission



This year's program will also feature a Video Challenge to engage students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. Through the challenge, teachers and students will be asked to create their own Sleep Shelter using items such as cardboard boxes, paper bags. The initiative is designed to provide students with a mindful, hands-on exercise on what it can be like for a homeless individual on the streets.

This year's Mission Possible challenge is sponsored by key community partners, Chick-fil-A, Citi, East Hill Foundation, GEICO, Independent Health, Rich Products, and Wegmans Food Markets, with supporting sponsorships from National Grid and New Era Cap. Together, these partners have provided more than \$80,000, which helps support the Mission's Afterschool and Summer Camp Programming for children who reside at the Mission, and the surrounding community.

"Citi is proud to sponsor for the fifth year in a row, the Mission Possible Food Drive Challenge of the Buffalo City Mission," said Robin L. Wolfgang, Chief Communications Officer at Citi. "Citi values the opportunity to work with the City Mission in helping to encourage education of young people about hunger in our community – what it means and the detrimental effects it has on others. In this unique year, the Mission Program brings this experience to life, and we encourage students to get involved, get engaged, and think about what they can do to help the hungry and homeless."

"Rich Products salutes the continued growth, success and impact of the Buffalo City Mission and its Mission Possible program," said Howard Rich, Vice President of Corporate Relations at Rich Products. "As a longstanding partner of the City Mission, we continue to be inspired by the positive change that they make in our community. Many of our city's poor and homeless deal with food insecurity – the lack of access to affordable and nutritious food that can have serious long-term effects. Every participating student in this program has the power to make a difference for these individuals in need. This is an opportunity to do good, and we look forward to seeing their ideas in action."

"Chick-fil-A Cheektowaga is excited to join the Mission Possible program this year," said Cassandra Sheedy, Franchise Owner at Chick-fil-A in Cheektowaga. "As a first time partner with this challenge, we look forward to being a part of the energy and creativity that this region's students will bring to helping the homeless. We love this program because it rallies our schools to help serve our community through growing awareness and facilitating can drives and donations. In fact, we will be donating food to the classroom that drives the most donations. We look forward to serving our community together. May the best team win!"

To learn more about Mission Possible and how to register your team, visit <https://bcmpossible.org/register>, or call 854-8181 ext. 407.

### **About the Buffalo City Mission**

The Buffalo City Mission, founded in 1917, is a nonprofit organization providing preventative, emergency, and transitional housing programs to thousands of people who are homeless and impoverished every year. The Mission includes a Women and Children's Shelter (Cornerstone Manor), the Men's Community Center, and the Dick Road thrift store to serve the Western New



York community. For more information, please visit [buffalocitymission.org](http://buffalocitymission.org) or call (716) 854-8181.

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### **About Chick-fil-A**

Atlanta-based Chick-fil-A, Inc. is a family owned and privately held restaurant company founded in 1967 by S. Truett Cathy. Devoted to serving the local communities in which its franchised restaurants operate, and known for its original chicken sandwich, Chick-fil-A serves freshly prepared food in more than 2,500 restaurants in 47 states, Washington, D.C., and Canada.

A leader in customer service satisfaction, Chick-fil-A was named top fast food restaurant in Newsweek's 2019 America's Best Customer Service report and received several honors in QSR's 2019 Reader's Choice Awards, including "The Most Respected Quick-Service Brand" and "Best Brand for Overall Experience". Additionally, Glassdoor named Chick-fil-A one of the top 100 best places to work in 2020. More information on Chick-fil-A is available at [www.chick-fil-a.com](http://www.chick-fil-a.com).

### **About Citi**

Citi, the leading global bank, has approximately 200 million customer accounts and does business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions. Citi provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services, and wealth management. <http://www.citigroup.com/citi/>

### **About East Hill Foundation**

East Hill Foundation is a privately funded family foundation, which was founded in 1986. It identifies and funds innovative, charitable projects designed to enhance the quality of life of the residents of Western New York, primarily in Erie and Niagara counties. For additional information, visit <http://www.easthillfdn.org/> or call 716-204-0204.

### **About GEICO**

GEICO (Government Employees Insurance Company) is a member of the Berkshire Hathaway family of companies and is the second-largest private passenger auto insurance company in the United States. GEICO, which was founded in 1936, provides millions of auto insurance quotes to U.S. drivers annually. The company is pleased to serve more than 16 million private passenger customers, insuring more than 27 million vehicles (auto & cycle). For more information, go to [www.geico.com](http://www.geico.com).

### **About Independent Health**

Independent Health, a not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Buffalo, New York, serves nearly 380,000 members and provides innovative health care products and benefits designed to engage consumers in their health and well-being. Established in 1980, our comprehensive portfolio of progressive products include HMO, POS, PPO and EPO products, Medicare and Medicaid plans, traditional indemnity insurance, individual and small group Exchange products, consumer-directed plans and health savings accounts, plus coverage for self-funded employers.



Our subsidiaries and affiliate companies include pharmacy benefit management and the Independent Health Foundation. To learn more, go to [www.independenthealth.com](http://www.independenthealth.com).

### **About Rich Products Corporation**

Rich's, also known as Rich Products Corporation, is a family-owned food company dedicated to inspiring possibilities. From cakes and icings to pizza, appetizers and specialty toppings, our products are used in homes, restaurants and bakeries around the world. Beyond great food, our customers also gain insights to help them stay competitive, no matter their size. Our portfolio includes creative solutions geared at helping food industry professionals compete in foodservice, retail, in-store bakery, deli, and prepared foods, among others. Working in 100 locations globally, with annual sales exceeding \$4 billion, Rich's is a global leader with a focus on everything that family makes possible. Rich's®—Infinite Possibilities. One Family. Learn more at Richs.com or join the conversation on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

### **About Wegmans Food Markets**

Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. is a 103-store supermarket chain with stores in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts and North Carolina. The family company, recognized as an industry leader and innovator, celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016. Wegmans has been named one of the '100 Best Companies to Work For' by FORTUNE magazine for 23 consecutive years, ranking #3 in 2020. The company was also ranked #1 for corporate reputation among the 100 most visible companies, according to the 2019 Harris Poll Reputation Quotient® study.