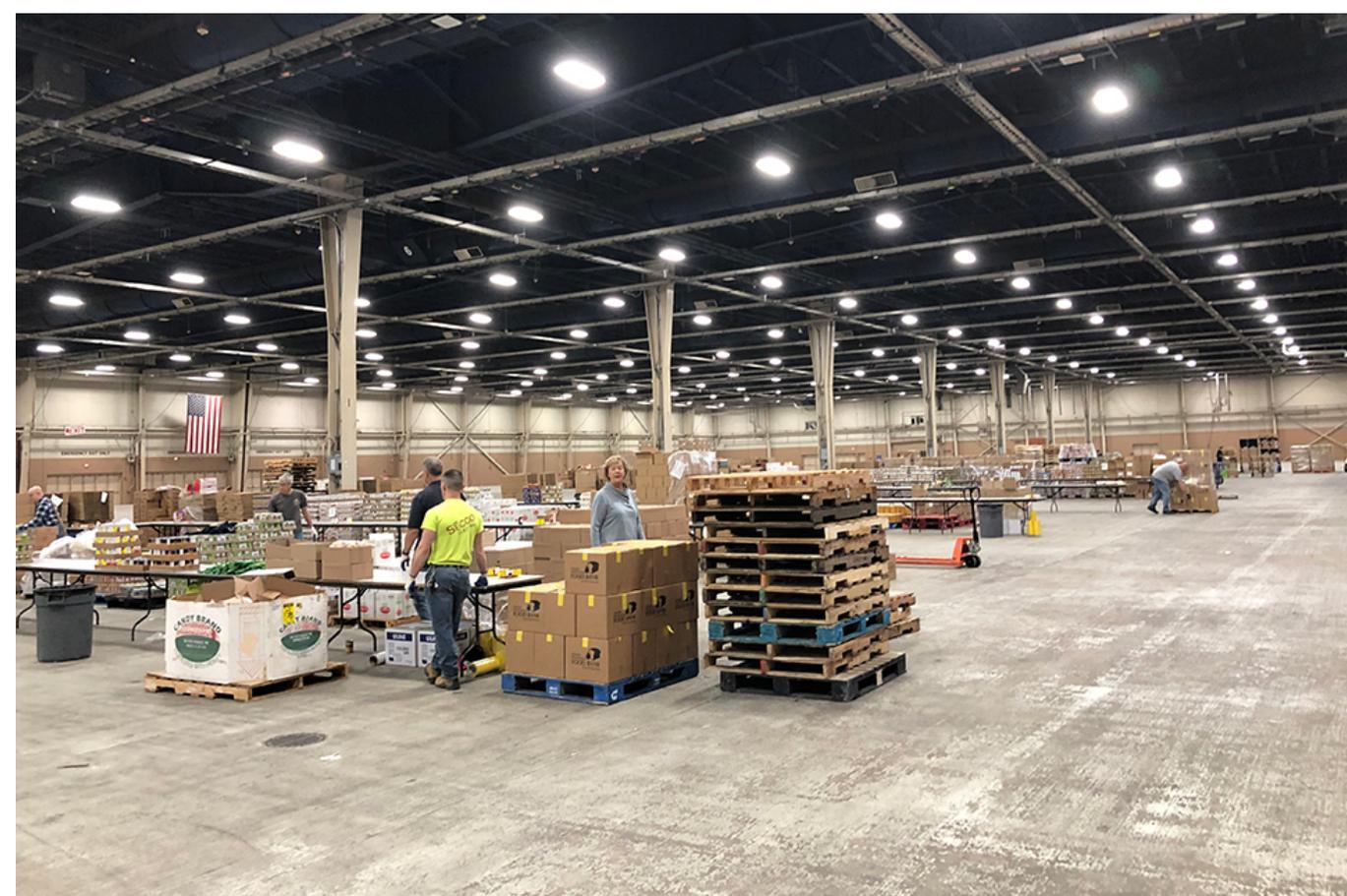




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HELPING HANDS: VOLUNTEERING AT THE FOOD BANK



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Written By: Ron Lay, BSP '78, School of Pharmacy Alumnus

Editor's Note: This post is part of a series of [Helping Hands](#) stories authored by School of Pharmacy faculty, staff, students, trainees, and alumni who stepped up to assist their family and friends, colleagues, and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am volunteering two afternoons a week at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank in Harrisburg, Penn. Under normal circumstances, the Food Bank works with nearly 1,000 partners in a 27 county area in central Pennsylvania providing food for 43,000 families. In the past month, the demand has tripled. With businesses closing and people staying home, the most needy are hit the hardest. Others who were previously self-sufficient now find themselves in need of assistance. To meet this increased demand, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank is operating out of a new, larger facility from where they package and deliver food donations to their network of 1,000 partners — individual food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and the like.

The new location not only helps with the increased demand for food, but it allows volunteers and staff to practice social distancing and all of the necessary protections as they contend with the coronavirus. Volunteers and staff members are also packaging food in pre-packed boxes. That way, food pantry clients can just pull up, pop their trunks, and volunteers can place pre-packed boxes, along with some frozen meat and fresh fruit, in their cars. This cuts down on both long lines and person-to-person contact. It is nice to know that I can participate in an activity that can directly help so many people in this time of need.

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