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Area Agency on Aging and United Way Team Up to Deliver Shelf Stable Food to Seniors

St. Joseph, Michigan – The spread of the COVID-19 virus has created unique challenges for area seniors. Many of the vital local systems our older adults have relied on for food and consistent nourishment have been put on temporary pause, leaving many seniors with limited options.

Recently, the State of Michigan purchased 10,000 Quarantine Boxes, also known as “Q Boxes”, for the Area Agency on Aging network of Michigan to help provide relief for seniors in need of shelf-stable food. Three Hundred of these boxes have been designated to the tri-county area of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. Thanks to a coordinated effort between Region IV Area Agency on Aging and United Way of Southwest Michigan, the distribution of these boxes is on target for the week of May 4, 2020.

These boxes contain thirty-three well-balanced, high protein, food items and can provide 22 adult meals. Each box contains breakfast, lunch, and dinner recipe options for the contents in the box. They will be available for seniors (60+) in need of shelf-stable food in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren.

“These boxes of shelf stable food are not only a great gift for our community but will also alleviate some of the worry that many may feel at this time,” explains Area Agency on Aging CEO Lynn Kellogg. “Partnering with United Way of Southwest Michigan for this effort was a logical choice given their proven commitment to the senior population, as well as their ability to tap into a vast network of volunteers and organizers.”

If you are a senior, or know a senior, who would be helped by a Q-Box, United Way of Southwest Michigan will begin accepting calls on April 23rd to sign up for one. The number to call is 269-982-4029. Food pick up times and locations will be given to the seniors the week of May 4th. For homebound seniors there will be an option for some to receive home delivery of a box, which will be determined on a case by case basis.

To sign up to volunteer to help distribute boxes, visit http://volunteer.uwsm.org. All volunteers will receive a background check prior to being assigned. For more information or questions for Area Agency on Aging email Christine Vanlandingham at cvanlandingham@areaagencyonaging.org, or call 269-983-0177. For information or questions for United Way of Southwest Michigan email amanda.drew@uwsm.org or call at 269-982-4038.

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Region IV Area Agency on Aging is a non-profit organization offering comprehensive and coordinated services to assist older persons and other vulnerable adults in maintaining independence in their homes and communities.