

Somebody Cares Testifies of God-Given Supply of N95 Masks

Houston-based Somebody Cares is living up to its name, serving people in need across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges of ministering in a time of social distancing, Somebody Cares Vice President Jodie Chiricosta says the organization, which is led by Doug Stringer, is adapting well in the areas the ministry serves.

“Compassion ministry is very hands-on, helping people in practical ways, but also comforting them in the midst of what can be really trying times in their lives,” she says on the *Charisma Connection* podcast. “So social distancing, quarantines, limits on the number of people at any gathering—of course it makes it much more difficult to meet those needs, but the needs are still there. In fact, they’re even growing.”

Operating a food pantry during the time of the coronavirus pandemic has become much more demanding. Not only is there a greater need for staple and nonperishable items with people increasingly out of work, but volunteers and staff must follow additional health practices imposed to combat COVID-19.

“So normal activities, like even distributing food in a food pantry, it all requires rethinking if you need volunteers to pack your groceries but you have to limit the number who can come and they have to be 6 feet apart when packing groceries,” Chiricosta says. “During times of unemployment, a lot more people are going to be coming for services, but you have to limit who can come into the building. Some of our pantries have even turned to drive-in pantries or delivering food.”

Along with ministering to the able-bodied, the organization was also able to help with some sectors in society that have

ongoing needs.

“You have the most vulnerable groups like the homeless and the seniors and low-income families,” she says. “They’re vulnerable even before a crisis like this. It is even worse now because a lot of the services they counted on in the past have been shuttered during this time.”

Personal protective equipment, known as PPE, is in short supply across the country. But God supplied N95 facial masks in advance of the pandemic to Somebody Cares.

“Because we’re a disaster relief organization, we have been given N95 masks in the past to help with delivery, and we distribute these during times when there’s wildfire smoke in the air,” she says. “We had almost 100,000 N95 masks in storage, which God had providentially given us for other disasters.”

Somebody Cares distributed the masks to health care systems, nursing homes, clinics and underserved neighborhoods. They also distributed some to first responders and front-line community service workers across the U.S.

“We’re actually in the process of distributing the last of our masks, several thousand to the Navajo Nation, which is covered through our network but is also in desperate need of PPE.”

Along with handing out supplies to meet physical needs, Somebody Cares addresses spiritual needs as well.

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“We even have provided crisis and trauma chaplaincy,” she says. “Of course, that’s generally done face to face because you need to feel someone’s love and compassion, but that’s no longer possible.”

Meetings with chaplains are now conducted through Zoom, GoToMeeting or another type of conference-call system. Thankfully, most people have cellphones, so they can participate at least by calling in to a meeting.

Ministry now is “a little bit different” without the physical contact of hugs, says Chiricosta. “We can certainly tell people that we love them when we’re helping, but we also have been helping with practical needs because we want to be a tangible expression of God’s love.”

[Click here](#) to hear more great stories about what God is doing through Somebody Cares during the pandemic.