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Nonprofit Lender Opportunity Fund Teams Up With Bay Area Small Business to Feed Students During School Closings

With many schools closing due to COVID-19, Opportunity Fund has teamed with local small business Alicia’s Tamales Los Mayas to ensure students in East Palo Alto receive daily meals; Opportunity Fund mobilizing small business clients and donors to scale the program and encourages communities across the country to use the model to help at-risk populations and support restaurant and other food purveyors.

San Jose, Calif., March 17, 2020—With many vulnerable communities at risk amid escalating COVID-19 closures, Bay Area nonprofit lender Opportunity Fund is spearheading a model to benefit both struggling small businesses and students who are without school meals following school closures. Funded by Greg and Anne Avis, small business Alicia’s Tamales Los Mayas will provide 1,000 meals a week for 200 students at Eastside College Preparatory School.

“As a math teacher for 10th graders at Eastside College Preparatory School, I know firsthand how important school meals are to many students,” said Greg Avis, Opportunity Fund Board Chair and Managing Partner of Bangtail Partners. “I know many small businesses are struggling with the economic effects of COVID-19. I’m grateful we’ve found a way to help both a small business and students during this crisis.”

“We are grateful to Opportunity Fund and to Greg and Anne Avis for providing such a generous lifeline for our students. These are challenging times for us all, and Alicia’s delicious meals are sustaining our school community as we navigate our new remote learning environment,” said Chris Bischof, Eastside College Preparatory School Principal.

Alicia Villanueva, owner of Alicia’s Tamales Los Mayas, recently completed a training with the California Department of Public Health to enhance food safety measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Deliveries to students began on March 16 and will continue until the school’s planned reopening in April.

“My business is already feeling the economic effects of this disease outbreak,” said Alicia Villanueva, owner of Alicia’s Tamales Los Mayas. “I typically sell 1,000 tamales a week at the Chase Center and thousands more to tech companies. With these contracts drying up, I’ve been worried about keeping my 25 employees and supporting my family. I am grateful to...
Opportunity Fund for thinking about its customers during these times and asking us to provide meals to students in need while also being able to keep my business afloat."

Opportunity Fund is planning to use this partnership as a model to help additional small businesses and vulnerable communities, matching small business food purveyors with more schools, seniors or others who are currently unable to get meals as they were before this crisis unfolded.

“The economic and personal impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic are growing, and small businesses are being hit especially hard,” said Luz Urrutia, Opportunity Fund CEO. “We’re mobilizing our funders and donors to match additional small businesses with at-risk communities, and we hope other communities consider this model as well. With kindness, generosity and creativity, we can all come together to make a difference during this difficult time. I am deeply grateful to Greg and Anne for their ongoing support and stepping up and responding so quickly in this time of great need.”

To request an interview with Luz Urrutia, Alicia Villanueva or Greg Avis, contact Caitlin McShane at (415) 225-8855 or caitlin@emcstrategies.com.

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About Opportunity Fund

Opportunity Fund, the nation’s leading nonprofit small business lender, believes small dollar loans help hard-working entrepreneurs make lasting change in their own lives and build stronger communities by growing businesses and creating jobs. Opportunity Fund’s community of donors and investors is creating an inclusive financial system that empowers women, immigrant, and minority small business owners. Our strategy combines microloans for small business owners and New Markets Tax Credit investments in high-impact community infrastructure projects. Since 1994, Opportunity Fund has deployed more than $900 million and helped thousands of entrepreneurs invest in their families’ futures. The organization has committed to lending an additional $1.2 billion to small business owners across the country and investing $174 million in community real estate projects by 2023. www.opportunityfund.org