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**Locally Founded. Locally Funded. Locally Focused.**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**March 14, 2020, Traverse City MI**

**Subject: COVID-19 Update**

**We are still here for our neighbors in need but we are changing the way we provide essential services.**

**Our mission to care for the most vulnerable in the community remains the same but we are taking immediate steps to keep our guests, volunteers, staff and visitors safe and healthy.**

As you know, updates about COVID-19 have been changing daily.  Consistent with the closing of all schools from Monday, March 16, 2020, through Sunday, April 5, 2020 we will also be closing our building. **Beginning on Monday, March 16** we will be closing our building to all guests and visitors. **We will be offering food and emergency financial services only.**

During this unsettling time, especially for our neighbors in need, we are continually grateful for our generous community. We received a heartwarming call this morning from 5th grader Emma from The Children’s House that said she was worried about the children and wondered what they could do to help.

**What you can do to help?**

We have temporarily suspended donations of food, clothing and furniture since we have very limited volunteer support.

We greatly appreciate and continue to need financial donations. Please visit our website fatherfred.org or mail a check if you prefer.

**Guests need to call The Foundation at 231-947-2055 on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10-2pm and on Wednesday from 2-6pm to access these services. Guests will not be allowed to enter the facility.**

**Food Pantry Assistance/ Call and Pick-Up Service**

* Intake will be done via telephone
* Pantry bags/boxes will be prepackaged based on family size.
* Pantry bags/boxes will be distributed using the current donation door.
* Families with school age children (K-12) will receive a “boost” bag (extra food) in addition to the Pantry regular order

**Financial Aid Assistance**

* Intake will be done via telephone
* Financial Aid will be available for medical/dental needs, housing and utilities only.
* All checks issued during this emergency will be mailed to the vendor

We will make the decision to open the building with guidance from Governor Whitmer and information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The Father Fred Foundation is a grassroots charity that assists our neighbors in need with a variety of essential resources such as free food, clothing and financial assistance. What we have to offer local families in need is a direct result of the generosity of our community.

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