**REAL FOOD FOR KIDS RAPID RESPONSE**
*Free Plant-Based Meals for Kids and their Families during Arlington County School Closure*
*Real Food for Kids Partners with Chef David Guas of Bayou Bakery in Arlington, VA*

It’s March 12, 2020 at 7:45 pm and celebrity chef David Guas had just prepared a meal for his family to sit down and share for dinner.  In that very moment, Guas received a text alert that school would not be held on Friday the 13thand Monday, the 14th as it was a teacher workday to prepare for the upcoming weeks of school closure. Guas’ 15-year-old son, Spencer, immediately asked, “But, what about the kids that sit near me in the school cafeteria whose lunch is maybe the only meal they have all day? What will they do?” The Arlington County chef and owner of a small business, Bayou Bakery, Coffee Bar & Eatery, instantly thought of his employee’s children who also rely on regular access to school lunches. Without hesitation, Guas drew on his experience as a New Orleans native, having rapidly responded to the loss of his family’s home and the devastation of his community during Katrina. Guas knew he had to set out to work immediately – creating a make-shift kitchen outside his restaurant to serve Red Beans and Rice to Arlington’s families in need. Guas also partnered with the non-profit **Real Food for Kids** in this rapid response with **Chefs Feeding Families** to serve the Arlington community. With the County’s blessing, Bayou Bakery is continuing to serve FREE lunches again in its second week to in-need Arlington County children and their families during the closure of the school district.

**Monday - Friday, between 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM**, Guas and Real Food for Kids continue to cook **vegetarian** **meals for grab-and-go** distribution at his Arlington restaurant, Bayou Bakery, located one block from the Courthouse metro.  The nourishing New Orleans favorite, Red Beans and Rice, was served in the first week. And now, a meal of Black Beans and Rice is being served in the second week – Guas chose to go with home-style, slow food dishes. Each week Guas will continue to serve plant-based dishes that are rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals that are also compatible with a broad range of dietary and religious restrictions. **The Real Food For Kids taskforce will provide meals each weekday until schools reopen. Updates will be posted on the Real Food for Kids**[Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/realfoodforkids)**if meals are unable to be served due to changing circumstances.**

Bayou Bakery is taking all the steps recommended by the CDC, as well as precautionary measures beyond its normally strict health and sanitation practices to give families in need a nutritious meal, made with love —a definite bright spot in anyone's day.

Underserved Arlington children and families can come to Bayou Bakery to pick up a meal, no questions asked. And this offer has now been expanded to support **Blue Star Families**, an organization that assists military families across the country. As an advocate for military families, Guas and the Real Food for Kids taskforce are now also providing a free grab-and-go meal to military families in the Arlington community.

**Bayou Bakery is located at 1515 N Courthouse Rd, Arlington, VA 22201 | 703.243.241
DONATE-** [www.RealFoodforKids.org](http://www.RealFoodforKids.org)**/chefsfeedingfamilies**

This effort has been made possible by three initial generous donations to the program: **Camellia Brand** beans [est. 1923,] the family-owned company at the center of plant-based eating and environmentally friendly practices for nearly a century; **ZwillGen**– a law firm counseling leading internet and tech companies in their high profile online legal issues; and the **Sampson Foundation**, which strives to create healthy communities by promoting access, awareness, research and education on healthy food choices and integrative medicine.  Guas encourages other companies to come on board and strengthen this relief effort with additional donations.

Guas has been an active advocate for the community's less fortunate for the past ten years, and Real Food for Kids knows it can count on him for a quick response in maintaining a stable hot nutritious lunch source for local children.  His experience is personal:  shortly after Hurricane Katrina devastated his family's home and much of New Orleans with it, he launched into recovery mode raising significant relief funds through food sales.

**Real Food for Kids** is a non-profit  working in collaboration with our partners to fight childhood obesity and hunger by increasing the quantities of healthful foods in our school systems, developing and delivering programs that educate our students and their families on making healthier lifestyle choices, and ensuring access to real whole foods for all school children.