

MANGROVE MIKE'S SERVING TO-GO MEALS FOR IMPACTED WORKERS

By Jim McCarthy - March 23, 2020

It's approaching 11 a.m. outside **Mangrove Mike's Cafe** in Islamorada — pasta, salad, fruit and other items are brought out by servers to a table underneath a white tent. Luscious food choices line the table, ready for those impacted by recent closures of hotels and bars to pick up an afternoon meal.

On March 22, hotels, campgrounds and short-term rentals across the Florida Keys were **closed** following a county decision on March 19. At the state level, Gov. Ron DeSantis on March 17 ordered all bars in the state to shut down for 30 days.



Three days later on March 20, DeSantis issued an **order** suspending all dine-in options at restaurants and food establishments around the state. As a result, many restaurants went to take-out and delivery. For Mangrove Mike's Cafe owner, Mike Forster, a different operation was underway.

With help from the local community, free takeout meals are currently being offered daily outside the restaurant to those who recently lost their jobs serving at bars and working at hotels and other service-related businesses. Feeding the masses during this time of need was in the best interest to assist the community, he said.



"We need to take care of each other," Forster said. "We have a lot of employees who are out of work and don't have a paycheck coming this week or next week. "This is what we need to do to be a united, compassionate community."

Monday's meal featured a smorgasbord of food donated by a number of people and businesses in the community. It included homemade sausage and marinara to shrimp and scallops over pasta and salad. Produce items were also available.



Many individuals and businesses in the local community are also pitching with generous donations, from checks and food items to take-out supplies.

Produce, hot meals distribution at Tavernier Towne Center this Thursday
May 6, 2020

Key Largo, Islamorada businesses join forces to provide lunches
April 14, 2020

WE'RE THINKING OF YOU,
MIKE FORSTER
August 26, 2021

JIM MCCARTHY

Jim McCarthy believes in community reporting, giving back and life on the water. A workout fanatic, diver and a bogey-golfer, Jim loves chicken wings, Marvel movies and sports.

5