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## Groom Construction teams up with Root to provide emergency meals

June 05, 2020 - Front Section





Salem, MA Groom Construction has teamed up with Root to provide emergency meals for area organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In their local headquarters and professional kitchen, Root alumni and staff are preparing meals, funded by Groom, for agencies serving the homeless, youth in foster care, formerly homeless youth, and individuals with disabilities. These organizations include Lifebridge North Shore, Northeast ARC, Plummer Youth Promise, North Shore Community Development Coalition and the YMCA Grace Child Development Center.

Groom first approached Root in early April to ask if they would prepare a dinner for clients at Lifebridge North Shore, a Salem-based homeless shelter. “By using Root to prepare the meal, we were helping two essential organizations that are serving those in distress during this time,” said Dave Groom, principal of Groom Construction. “The initial meal went so well that we asked Root if they could do more.”

This partnership has allowed Root to provide over 420 nutritious and wholesome meals to date to people in need. With the help of volunteers, these packaged meals have been hand delivered to organizations all over the North Shore.

“Lifebridge North Shore has been able to provide meals to hundreds of vulnerable members of our community because of the partnership between Groom Construction and Root. To see this kind of

generosity and thoughtfulness during these times is both touching and inspirational.”

In early March, Root suspended its youth training program in the culinary arts due to the pandemic and within a week was able to redirect their resources and begin producing meals for people in crisis, while employing graduates of their program. Since March 20th they have provided food for over 3,600 people, including older adults in senior housing and school-age children, and they have been able to employ Root alumni for over 280 hours.

Root’s vision is to prepare youth to enter the workforce with confidence, self-agency, and a competitive edge. To do this, the organization combines 240 hours of culinary and food service training, workforce preparedness, on-the-job experiences, life skills workshops and social capital, into an intensive 12-week program. Through their food service businesses, The Root Café, Catering by Root and their HarborPoint event space, trainees get first-hand experience in the culinary arts.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540