

Apple partners with Leonardo DiCaprio, Laurene Powell Jobs to raise money to feed America

The America Food Fund has \$12 million to start and will be collecting donations on GoFundMe to benefit World Central Kitchen and Feeding America.

Apple has partnered with actor Leonardo DiCaprio and Laurene Powell Jobs to launch a new organization to raise money "to feed the country's most vulnerable populations" impacted by the novel coronavirus.

The trio, along with the Ford Foundation, started America's Food Fund with \$12 million. They'll be collecting money through GoFundMe to give to the World Central Kitchen and Feeding America. The groups help feed children who rely on school lunch programs, low-income families, the elderly, individuals facing job disruptions and other people impacted by the pandemic.



"No one can be well if they're not well fed, and we can only overcome this crisis if we make sure that every person has the essentials that they need to care for themselves, their families and the vulnerable people in their lives," Apple CEO Tim Cook said in a press release.

The new coronavirus causes the respiratory disease COVID-19. In March, the World Health Organization declared the virus outbreak a pandemic. As of Thursday, 1 million people worldwide have been infected and over 51,000 lives have been lost. The outbreak has caused cities and entire countries around the globe to issue lockdowns, shuttering stores, canceling events and ordering citizens to stay at home to help contain the coronavirus.

America's Food Fund is just the latest effort by Apple to help during the pandemic. The company has donated millions of dollars -- and over 10 million masks -- to help combat the coronavirus. Its actions come as the company, one of the richest in the world, faces slower demand and manufacturing problems for its iPhones and other gadgets. In January, Apple warned that the COVID-19 outbreak in China would cause it to miss its projections for revenue in the March quarter. It also has closed all of its stores outside Greater China indefinitely.

Feeding America

World Central Kitchen is the organization founded in 2010 by celebrity chef José Andrés in response to various disasters around the world. Andrés has traveled to places like Puerto Rico and wildfire-ravaged California to cook for people hurt by the crises. During the coronavirus pandemic, World Central Kitchen has distributed fresh meals to cruise ship passengers under quarantine and has provided food for vulnerable communities and health workers through mobile distributions and restaurant partners.

"In times of need, a plate of food is both vital nourishment and a message of hope from the community, that we care and we're here to make sure that tomorrow, things will be better," Andre?s said.

Feeding America, meanwhile, is the nation's largest hunger-relief organization, serving more than 40 million Americans each year through its network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs. The group launched a COVID-19 Response Fund to help member food banks secure the resources they need to continue operations while modifying distribution to comply with health and safety regulations during the pandemic.

"Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 37 million people in this country did not have consistent access to nutritious meals -- including 11 million children and 5.5 million seniors," Feeding America CEO Claire Babineaux said. "These numbers are quickly rising, and it is critical that we rally together as a nation to support our neighbors during this time of great need."

Powell Jobs, the widow of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs and one of the world's richest women, has become a major philanthropist through her Emerson Collective. The influential organization -- which has been described as equal parts think tank, foundation and venture capital fund -- acquired a majority stake in publications The Atlantic and Axios and has made other big bets to help society.

Oprah Winfrey, who signed a deal with Apple to produce shows for the company's Apple TV Plus service, featured Andre?s and Babineaux-Fontenot on her series "Oprah Talks COVID-19." The program is free to watch on Apple TV Plus, Apple's service that launched in November for \$4.99 a month.

America's Food Fund will "monitor and map food gaps and will look to partner with additional organizations doing great work in this space including Gate Gourmet, Share Our Strength, Revolution Foods and more," the group said in a press release.

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