

Giving thanks to Minnesotans caring for each other during COVID-19

Minnesotans look out for each other. It's what we do. And even though it's been months since the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Minnesota, our friends and neighbors still recognize the urgency of the situation and haven't stopped finding ways to help those in need.

With the holiday season just around the corner, it's time to give thanks. So here are just a few of the reasons why we're thankful for Minnesotans.

Thank you for keeping us moving

Exercise is a great way to maintain your health and stave off the winter blues. But keeping up a workout routine can be tough while fitness centers are closed. And nobody wants to risk a twisted ankle by jogging outside on icy sidewalks.

That's where Minnesota's virtual trainers come in. In true Minnesota fashion, fitness gurus like [Connie Sheehan](#) are bringing us together, even while we're apart. Through virtual fitness classes, Minnesotans can work out, have fun, and connect with one another from the safety of our homes. Sheehan's classes welcome everyone, but her work focuses in particular on uplifting Black Minnesotans, who face unique health challenges and have been [disproportionately affected](#) by COVID-19.

[YMCA of the North](#) offers virtual fitness classes, including [free exercise and meditation sessions](#) on Facebook Live. Just like [the song](#) says, "I'm sure you will find many ways to have a good time!"

(Embed this very soothing meditation video:

<https://www.facebook.com/YMCANorth/videos/867394177367744>)

Thank you for caring for grieving families

Health care workers are the heroes on the front lines of this pandemic. Unfortunately, across the country, over 1,400 health care workers have passed away from COVID-19. That's why Minnesotans [created a national fund](#) to support their families after these devastating losses. The fund's goal is to cover families' immediate expenses and provide scholarships for children of frontline workers. Visit front [frontlinefamiliesfund.org](#) to learn more and donate.

Thank you for providing shelter

In light of the crises facing our communities, homelessness is on the rise in many parts of Minnesota. With another cold winter on the horizon, it's imperative that every Minnesotan has a place to lay their head. Shelter workers and housing advocates are [working tirelessly](#) to keep our neighbors safe from the cold *and* from the pandemic.

Across the state, Minnesotans are also [opening their homes to homeless young adults](#). Through YMCA and Avenues for Homeless Youth programs, young Minnesotans experiencing homelessness can stay with a temporary host family while they find permanent housing.

Have a room to spare? To sign up to be a host home or for more details about the program, call the YMCA at 612-208-7381.

Thank you for protecting each other

Mask up. Sanitize. Repeat. It's a familiar routine for Minnesotans now. And ever since COVID-19 drove up the demand for personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer, Minnesotans have stepped up to the plate.

Earlier this year, Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan put out a call for homemade facemasks. Minnesotans delivered, and made [a whopping 137,430 masks](#) that were distributed at congregate living facilities around the state. Meanwhile, everyone from [distillers](#) to [packaging manufacturers](#) to [high school robotics teams](#) have used their expertise to create essential supplies. It just goes to show that no matter what your skills are, you can do something to help your community.

Thank you for providing food and essentials

While some of us are thinking ahead to our Thanksgiving meal, many Minnesotans are more concerned about whether or not they'll get dinner on the table tonight. That's why Minnesota businesses and organizations have stepped up to the plate to keep our families fed and our pantries filled. Many restaurants still offer [free meals for kids and families](#). Across the state, communities have come together to create [mutual aid sites](#) where Minnesotans in need can pick up food and essentials.

(embed the mutual aid map)

Thank you for doing what Minnesotans do best

If you've donated to local organizations during this difficult year, thank you. If you mask up and wash your hands every time you go out to the store, thank you. If you support your community through small acts of kindness, thank you.

Thanksgiving may look different this year, but it's still a time to reflect on gratitude. And to all the Minnesotans who have cared for each other during this pandemic: we're grateful for you!