



Looking back, I can remember the days in late March, early April, when things first started changing. There was confirmed spread in [Redmond](#), cruise ships around the coast were being told they had to [wait at sea](#), and a general feeling of uncertainty was making its way into all of our thoughts. In Belltown we had rumors. Rumors of confirmed cases nearby, of supply chain breakdowns and shortages, and rumors of city-wide lockdowns. We didn't know what any of it really meant, but we knew things would be different.

I have to remind myself of all the facts we didn't know at the time. How Covid spread, how infectious it was, how deadly it was. We weren't even sure how to best protect ourselves. A few weeks later we knew so much more.

We learned about Covid's main vector of [airborne transmission](#) and how beneficial mask wearing and outdoor settings could be. We also learned what shelter in place mandates felt like and which grocery store shelves clear the fastest in a panic.

At PSLA, we learned more about our place in the community. After establishing our version of outdoor grocery distribution, we could be a source of stability and consistency for our clients as everything else became abnormal. For others who found themselves stuck inside, secure, but feeling an urge to help; we could become their social outlet and a way for them to connect with their neighbors who too easy go unseen.

Before long, we settled into a new routine. Local national guard had been deployed to provide consistent help and support to food banks across the state. Federal CARES money had allowed us to purchase new refrigerators and freezers, increasing our capacity to distribute produce, dairy, and meat products. Through neighborhood connections, we were able to improve our

database and start implementing plans to build a strong foundation for growth. At the same time, other CARES funds had been put towards preparing to continue the food bank's outdoor distribution through the winter. It had been seven months of working through the pandemic and there was no end in sight.

I remember a particularly cold and windy fall morning in late November. The tall, narrow, walls that formed the alley behind the Labor Temple where we distributed food acted as an accelerant for the wind blowing in off of Elliot Bay. Nothing was safe that day. Tables, milk crates, anything not physically held down was being pushed, and in some cases thrown down our alley. After a long clean up, I remember sitting inside and asking myself if outdoor distribution would even be possible, let alone fun or something we could enjoy doing. In the end, like so many other times in the past year, we learned what we could from that day and continued on.

Now it's April again. The cherry and magnolia trees are in full bloom. I dawned on me, like it had last year, that while we are stuck, waiting for vaccines and the official all clear to visit loved ones again, spring is not. It came this year like it did last year, similarly to how it will next year. The PSLA Food Bank supports its community members again this year, like it did last year, similar to how it will next year. Unlike so much, we are uninterrupted in our patterns. We try to do well by our neighbors, learn from our experiences, and take things one day at a time.

This year you can support the work we are doing through our GiveBIG campaign, running from April 20<sup>th</sup> – May 5<sup>th</sup> 2021. Please visit our [GiveBIG fundraising page](#) and our [website](#) for more information about PSLA and the work we do.