COVID-19 RELIEF EFFORTS
Life as we know it stopped for New Yorkers in March.

That was when COVID hit home.

Restaurants and bars shut their doors. Schools closed.

Hospitals were suddenly overrun with patients. Grocery store shelves were emptied of milk and bread. Toilet paper and hand sanitizer were more coveted than gold.

Thousands of New Yorkers were getting sick and many were dying.

Millions lost their jobs.

And the Queens communities of Corona, Elmhurst and Jackson Heights were at the center of it all. Just down the road from Citi Field was the epicenter of COVID-19.

The Mets HAD to do something. We had to help. Any way we could.

For 10 months, the Mets and Mets Foundation leveraged all resources and tapped connections to help the people hurting the most in our city.

We fed doctors and nurses, families on the pantry lines for the first time, school children in need of technology to learn and basic school supplies.

We all became “New York Tough” and flattened the curve as cases in the rest of the country began to climb. As the second wave takes it grip, we know we are resilient. We know we can get through this.

This book chronicles the response by the Mets and Mets Foundation to the crisis and what we did and will continue to do to help our community.

We are forever grateful to the doctors, nurses and all essential workers who put themselves at risk to keep the rest of us safe.
As the COVID-19 pandemic spread throughout the world, New York found itself to be the new epicenter. NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo took unprecedented action to close schools and non-essential businesses to slow the spread. Hospitals were overwhelmed. Doctors and nurses worked around the clock and put themselves at risk to save others.

The Mets sprang into action speaking with partners on how we could work together to help the community. We laid the groundwork that allowed the Mets Foundation to feed more than 7,500 medical staff and supply food to hunger-relief agencies that would assist more than 150,000 families.

1 New York records its first COVID-19 case.

12 MLB suspends spring training games. Delays start of regular season.

16 New York City public schools close.

17 Mets reach out to community partners to determine biggest needs.

18 NYS Governor Cuomo orders non-essential businesses to reduce workforce by 50%. State caseload jumps to 3,437.
26 The Mets and Aramark donate fresh produce and bags to the River Fund NY to help with its pantry. The River Fund would see the number of clients on its pantry line jump from 1,000 to 3,500.

27 St. Lucie Mets donate 200 drawstring bags to the local Boys & Girls Club to help with food pantry deliveries and pick-ups.

30 The Mets and long-time partner Mama’s of Corona work together to send 500 box lunches to the doctors at Elmhurst Hospital, who literally found themselves in the epicenter of the pandemic.

31 The Mets and Coca-Cola delivered more than 400 cases of water and plus 1,000 tote bags to the Inn in Hempstead Long Island. The lines at The INN swelled from 200 clients a day to 450.

IN THEIR WORDS...

“Again, our team can’t thank you and the Mets enough. Thank you, thank you again.”

–Pierre Pham, Chief Experience Officer, Elmhurst Hospital Center
As the pandemic grew exponentially in New York and started to appear in other parts of the country, the Mets continued outreach to hospitals and community groups. The Syracuse Mets and St. Lucie Mets provided food and other items to groups in their communities upstate and in Florida. The Mets also transitioned community programs including Baseball FUNdamentals and Mets on the Move to a virtual platform to engage with children who were now entering their second month of staying at home.

1. Mets and Dunkin' deliver coffee, bagels and donuts for 300 medical staff at Elmhurst Hospital.

7. New York records 1,036 COVID deaths, which would prove to be the peak of the first wave.

8. Mets partner with Nick’s Gourmet Deli and the Mansion Diner to deliver more than 700 box lunches to medical staff at Queens Hospital, NYU Langone Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital. The Mets would partner with 19 different business and spend more than $60,000 to provide food and beverages for hospital staff.

13. The Pajama Program launches Mondays with the Mets with employees reading bedtime stories to foster children live on Instagram.

14. The Syracuse Mets work with five local restaurants to provide 475 meals and beverages to medical staff at six medical facilities.
The Mets post the first of seven Baseball FUNdamentals videos with Mets coaches and community staff showing kids how to work on baseball skills while at home.

The Mets and Melissa's Produce help organize a food pantry at P.S. 19 for 250 students and their families. Prior to the pandemic, more than a third of the 2,000 students at the school lived at/below the poverty line.

IN THEIR WORDS...

“It was great to be able to provide food for the hospital workers that are doing so much right now. It was also a much needed boost for business during this strange time that we are going through.”

–Nick Dakic, Nick’s Deli
After recording 8,000 new COVID cases per day for most of April, New Yorkers flattened the curve in May. The month ended with just over 1,000 new cases and less than 100 deaths. As the spread slowed, social unrest and the need for justice was at the forefront after the killing of George Floyd.

1. New York closes all schools for rest of school year.

4. Mets donate 2,800 trucker hats and 1,200 t-shirts to Elmhurst Hospital medical staff.

5. Mets & Aramark donate 50 cases of food and 1,000 t-shirts to Catholic Charities Bronx Chapter.

8. Mets employees assemble bags full of pantry items and Mets gear for New Immigrant Community Empowerment to deliver to 100 families in Elmhurst and Jackson Heights who were unable to leave their homes. The Mets would support NICE with groceries and other items for their clients through the rest of the year.

12. Mets launch the first of four Mets on the Move videos to provide children with a fun way to stay active and healthy while quarantining at home.
Mets and Nick's Deli provide lunch and t-shirts to 500 medical staff at Northwell Health’s North Shore University Hospital & Long Island Jewish Medical Center.

Mets deliver 4,000 jerseys for staff at Queens Hospital.

Mets and A&S Fine Foods deliver lunch to 500 doctors and nurses at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn.

George Floyd is killed during an arrest in Minneapolis.

Mets and Mansion Diner deliver 500 lunches and 3,000 t-shirts to frontline workers at Lenox Hill Hospital.

More than 800 people are arrested during three days of protests in NYC in response to George Floyd’s death.

IN THEIR WORDS...

“Thank you so much for the meals today. They were a huge hit and everyone was so appreciative.”

–Catie Greer, External Relations, Lenox Hill Hospital
New York slowly began to reopen following a three-month lockdown. The warmer weather brought more people outside while following social distancing and mask protocols. Baseball announced its return along with the other major sports that were on hiatus. However, the economic impact of the shutdown continued to ravage many New Yorkers as the need for food and other essentials only grew.

8 On the 100th day since New York’s first COVID case, Gov. Cuomo announces plans for a phased reopening. Cuomo describes those first 100 days as “hell.” The following day, NYC would welcome back workers in the construction, manufacturing and retail businesses.

9 The Mets Foundation sends 100,000 blue and orange “New York Tough” masks to the MTA for its employees working on Metro North, the Long Island Rail Road and New York City Transit.

21 The Foundation donates 100,000 “New York Tough” masks to New York State to distribute to essential workers, and begins giving away 50,000 to the local community.

23 MLB announces the 2020 regular season will start July 23 with an abbreviated 60-game schedule. Players will report to Spring Training in their home cities July 1.
Mets pledge to support The Bowery Mission for three months, paying for three meals a day for 70 homeless New Yorkers, amounting to a total of 18,870 meals.

IN THEIR WORDS...

“I thank the New York Mets for this terrific delivery – it’s a homerun for the MTA and its entire workforce who are the heroes moving heroes of this pandemic.”

–Patrick J. Foye, MTA Chairman and CEO

“Thank you so much for your generosity, especially during these difficult times. Your support is so encouraging and means more than ever as we work to meet the ongoing needs of those struggling with homelessness and food insecurity in this season – we are grateful for your partnership.”

–Audrey Cooper, Bowery Mission

Mets donate 75 swag bags to pediatric cancer patients at Memorial Sloan Kettering in Manhattan. Due to COVID precautions, many children in hospitals were confined to their rooms with limited visitors. The Mets distributed t-shirts, bobbleheads and activity books to pediatric patients throughout the area to help lift their spirits.
As the summer heated up, New Yorkers kept COVID in check by enjoying activities outside. Beaches and parks were packed and outdoor dining proved to be a hit. However, the need for food only grew with more and more people out of work and struggling to feed their families.

**1** The Mets Foundation sponsors the Island Harvest Drive-Up Pantry at Nassau Coliseum. More than 4,000 cars received two pantry boxes and a gallon of milk to help feed their families.

**3** Players report to Citi Field for “Summer Camp.”

**6** The Mets Foundation pays for three months of warehouse fees for the River Fund NY to store 350,000 pounds of food it serves its clients.

**10** Mets start the Amazin’ Alumni Series with Regency Grande Assisted Living facility in New Jersey. Dwight Gooden, Edgardo Alfonzo and Bobby Valentine are some of the Mets legends who have participated in the weekly Zoom Q & As that have helped lift the spirits of seniors at more than 20 centers.
The Mets send pantry items for more than 50 families helped by the Hispanic Brotherhood on Long Island.

The Mets defeat the Atlanta Braves 1-0 at Citi Field with no fans in attendance to open the truncated 2020 season.

New York State enters Phase Four of reopening, paving the way for schools to open in September.

IN THEIR WORDS...

“We are continuing our food drive as we haven’t seen a decrease in the need. But I’m remaining hopeful... We are grateful for everything you’ve already done for us. I know that we would not be able to give food out if not for you and the Mets.”

–Marguerite Keller, Co-Director, Hispanic Brotherhood

“With the Mets Alumni Series, you provided us with an exciting and different way to enhance the lives of our residents. What this meant to our residents, I don’t believe anyone will fully be able to comprehend. It gave them a day they will never forget.”

–Sam Schwebel, Director of Client & Provider Relations at AristaCare Health Services
The resumption of baseball and other sports provided some sense of normalcy to New Yorkers. The state’s COVID cases continued to fall while troubling signs were brewing in other parts of the country.

1. Mets team up with MLB to distribute 1,000 bat and ball sets and 400 Mets-branded baseball gloves to the children at the Greater AME Church in Jamaica.

9. New York State’s seven-day COVID positivity average falls below 1% for the first time.

12. Mets fans flock to the ballpark – or at least pictures of them did – with the popular Fan Cutouts program. By the end of the season, the Mets had installed more than 10,000 cutouts, filling the lower bowl and the second decks in the outfield. The program also served as a fundraiser for the Mets Foundation’s COVID Relief Efforts, generating net proceeds of over $290,000.

18. Mets sponsor and volunteer at Island Harvest’s Drive-Up Food Pantry in Hicksville, Long Island. More than 1,000 cars received pantry items, personal hygiene products and school supplies.

20. Mets community staff assemble and deliver school supplies for 10,000 NYC students at 18 schools and community groups. Each child received a Mets Foundation backpack, folders, notebooks, glue sticks, pens and pencils.
IN THEIR WORDS...

“Retweet if you’re a Mets fan because they just made nearly a thousand kids @ps143queens so happy! Thank you @Mets for always supporting the local community & our children! These supplies will make a big difference! I can’t wait to take them to a game one day! Thank you!”

~Justine Lucas, Principal, P.S. 143

“The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented need among Long Islanders seeking food assistance, many for the first time. We are exceptionally grateful to the New York Mets for their continued support and generosity in helping us provide essential food support for our neighbors struggling to feed their families.”

~Randi Shubin Dresner, President & CEO, Island Harvest Food Bank.
New Yorkers were cautiously optimistic as a semblance of normalcy emerged: Students slowly began to return to school and indoor dining resumed in New York City. The 19th anniversary of September 11 served as a reminder that New York has overcome adversity before and will do so again.

5 New York recorded its 30th straight day with a COVID infection rate below 1%.

In honor of Pediatric Cancer Awareness Day, the Mets work with Cohen Children’s Medical Center to bring awareness to childhood cancer. Patients received their own fan cutouts at Citi Field and did a virtual “play ball” before the Mets game. The children also received “New York Tough” t-shirts and Mets blue and orange baseball gloves.

The Mets continue the tradition of visiting with FDNY firefighters around the anniversary of 9/11 with a special edition of the Amazin’ Alumni Series. John Franco, Al Leiter, Robin Ventura and Todd Zeile jumped on a Zoom call with four FDNY members who were on site that day and thanked them for their heroics.

9 Michael Conforto took his Conforto Cares platform virtual by holding a Zoom call with pediatric cancer patients at Cohen Children’s Medical Center.
New York City public schools open remotely for all students. Limited in-person education would begin Sept. 21 with most students only attending once or twice a week.

New York records more than 1,000 COVID cases, the highest number since June 5. The increase was attributed to clusters in Brooklyn, Queens and Rockland counties and restrictions and closures were implemented in those areas to contain the spread.

IN THEIR WORDS...

“Thanks to you and the METS, our students have supplies needed for school whether they are in person or working remotely from home. This was such a great opportunity to provide our students the supplies they needed to start the school year successfully. Ethan said it best: “This is so cool! Thank you Mets! I will put these supplies to good use!” Thanks to you and the Mets Foundation, Ethan’s family doesn’t have to worry about how to pay for his supplies this September.”

–Kristen Niven, Principal, Elm Tree Elementary/P.S. 211 in Corona
With the pandemic picking up in New York and the rest of the country, communities began to brace for a long winter. The Mets Foundation continued its hunger-relief efforts and launched a program to help bridge the digital divide by providing devices and Internet connectivity to students at schools surrounding Citi Field who lacked the technology to participate in remote learning.

2 The Mets provide almost 40,000 tote bags to the INN, New York Common Pantry, River Fund and Catholic Charities to help with their food pantries.

5 The Mets Foundation distributes 15,000 “New York Tough” t-shirts featuring Mr. Met and “New York Tough” face masks to essential workers to thank the doctors, nurses, teachers and police officers for their hard work and sacrifice throughout the pandemic to keep the community safe.

6 New York institutes a micro-cluster strategy aimed to slow the spread of COVID in specific communities. In Queens, Rego Park and Far Rockaway were among the first to experience new restrictions.

9 The Mets Foundation distributes 350 tablets to three elementary schools in Corona, Queens for students. Over the next month, the Foundation would send 650 additional devices to five more schools and team up with Verizon to provide hot spots and Internet access to 500 students through the end of the school year.
The Mets Foundation teams up with New Balance to purchase 5,000 new sneakers to give away to children at seven schools and community groups in Queens and Brooklyn.

IN THEIR WORDS...

“On behalf of Pioneer Academy, and myself I want to express our most sincere gratitude to you, all members of the Mets Foundation, and partners for your Samsung Tablet Donations. We are truly grateful for the continued support and more importantly for the beneficial impact of your generosity; assisting so many of our scholars in need of a device. Thank you so very much :)... We can’t thank you enough!”

–Maria Caraballo, Pioneer Academy/P.S. 307

“We at NICE would like to thank you and the NYMETS for all the support you have shown our community, especially for the sneaker donation. On Saturday we distributed the sneakers and we had a line from three blocks down. Everyone on the line got sneakers.”

–Francisco Tecaxco Munoz, NICE
As COVID cases spiked across the country, local governments advised against traveling for Thanksgiving. While New York still had the second-lowest positivity rate in the country, it steadily rose throughout the month leading to hours-long waits at COVID testing centers. In New York City, more than 1.5 million residents were struggling to feed themselves and their families, a 38% increase from pre-COVID levels. The Mets Foundation doubled the number of turkeys it distributed to help meet the growing demand.

The Mets Foundation continues to roll out its technology donation to give elementary school students the tools they need for remote learning. The community team delivered 200 tablets each to P.S. 143 and P.S. 110 along with “New York Tough” t-shirts and masks for the school staff.

New York orders all bars, restaurants and gyms to close at 10 p.m. and limits non-essential gatherings to no more than 10 people. The number of new COVID cases in the state jumps to almost 5,000.

The Mets Foundation begins distribution of 4,000 turkeys to families for Thanksgiving. Twelve community organizations received anywhere from 100 to 600 turkeys to help their clients. At New Immigrant Community Empowerment in Jackson Heights, the Foundation also provided Thanksgiving dinner fixings for 300 families.

New York City announces public schools will close the next day for in-person learning as the city’s seven-day COVID positivity rate climbed over 3%. Pfizer announces that its COVID vaccine was 95% effective in trials.
IN THEIR WORDS...

“We are facing an insurmountable mountain of the needs of struggling families as we prepare to face Thanksgiving and the arm of compassion extended toward us has made all the difference in the world. Two hundred families will be able to sit around the table on Thanksgiving day because you cared. God bless the New York Mets and sustain them in the months ahead. “

–Constance SanFilippo-Hulla, Coney Island Gospel Assembly
The country is optimistic that the approval and distribution of a COVID vaccine will bring the virus under control in the months ahead. Still, officials caution citizens to remain diligent as the nationwide death total from the virus surpassed 300,000 as the first vaccines were administered.

1. New York announces it will receive 170,000 doses of Pfizer’s COVID vaccine in the coming weeks.

3. The Mets team up with New York Cares for the Winter Wishes program which helped fulfill underserved children and teens with their holiday wishes. The program focuses on family shelters, public housing facilities and Title I public schools in areas that have been hit hard by the pandemic.

10. The Mets Foundation starts distributing 30,000 winter hats and gloves and “New York Tough” teddy bears to bring holiday cheer to children living in shelters or transitional housing.

11. The U.S. Food & Drug Administration issues an emergency use authorization for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to be distributed.

14. An ICU nurse at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in Queens becomes the first person in the country to receive the COVID vaccine.
IN THEIR WORDS...

“They were so excited! The teddy bears were a hit. There are not enough words to thank you for this. The smiles on their faces were priceless!”

–Danielle Lammering, Guidance Counselor P.S. 280