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Giving Kitchen Announces Substance Abuse Recovery Initiatives for Food Service Workers

*Georgia Nonprofit Organization Addresses Overwhelming Need for
Treatment Assistance Among Local Food Service Community*

ATLANTA (Dec. 8, 2020) – [Giving Kitchen](#) is pleased to announce that the nonprofit organization will include a substance abuse recovery initiative for members of the food service industry. Beginning Dec. 8, Giving Kitchen is accepting applications from food service workers who have recently undergone inpatient treatment for substance abuse and need help with cost of living. In addition to financial assistance for living expenses such as rent and utility bills, the organization will also be able to make referrals to affordable inpatient facilities by early 2021.

“Substance abuse is rampant in the restaurant industry, and resources to help employees recover from addiction are very limited,” says Andrew Zimmern, Giving Kitchen partner and Emmy- and four-time James Beard Award-winning TV personality and chef. “Giving Kitchen is actively addressing this issue by reinforcing that substance abuse is an illness and making recovery a qualifying crisis for financial support and resource allocation. This is a significant step toward providing the life-changing services that are long overdue and is more important than ever during a time when the industry itself is fighting to survive.”

Long hours, a fast-paced environment, demanding nature of the job and proximity to alcohol are just some of the factors contributing to drug and alcohol abuse within the service industry. This year’s pandemic has intensified two of the known drivers of substance abuse and misuse: loneliness and isolation. A 2020 study¹, when compared to the same study in 2019, reveals that U.S. adults were three times more likely to be experiencing mental health issues, substance use disorder and suicidal ideation. Adults 18-24 were more likely to turn to substance abuse to deal with the pandemic, and Black and Hispanic respondents reported higher rates of depression, anxiety and substance use.

“There is an overwhelming need within the food service industry to support those in recovery. Many food service workers are forced to choose between housing stability and addiction. When they make the brave decision to get the help they need, GK will be here with the support they deserve. We will keep the lights on and a roof overhead when they come home,” says Giving Kitchen executive director Bryan Schroeder.

After examining the food service industry’s high risk for substance use disorders and continuing its commitment to supporting mental health by offering free suicide prevention training through [QPR Institute](#), Giving Kitchen’s mission to help food service workers in crisis has evolved to include substance abuse recovery in the organization’s existing illness crisis category. As a result, qualifying Georgia food service workers who have completed time in inpatient treatment in the last six months and those considering substance abuse recovery can now ask for help. Interested applicants should start the process at givingkitchen.org/help and will be asked to provide current documentation of income and expenses as well as medical verification. Assistance will be provided only once per crisis.

Since its inception, Giving Kitchen has awarded \$4 million in financial assistance to food service workers. Continued support of donors makes this aid possible. Those interested in donating can visit givingkitchen.org/support to explore opportunities for making a difference.

For more information on Giving Kitchen and the substance abuse recovery initiative, please [click here](#).

About Giving Kitchen

Giving Kitchen (GK) is a nonprofit organization that provides emergency assistance to food service workers through financial support and a network of community resources in order to create a community where crisis is met with compassion and care. Since its inception, GK has helped over 6,600 food service workers in Georgia. GK's shift starts when theirs can't. Giving Kitchen is the 2019 recipient of the Humanitarian of the Year by James Beard Foundation. For more about Giving Kitchen, visit givingkitchen.org, follow @givingkitchen and download the GK app (available on iPhone and Android).

About Andrew Zimmern

Andrew Zimmern is an Emmy- and James Beard Award winning TV personality, chef, writer, teacher and social justice advocate. In February 2020, Andrew returned to television with What's Eating America, which premiered on MSNBC, and in 2021, he will premiere Family Dinner on Chip & Joanna Gaines' Magnolia Network. Both shows were created by Intuitive Content, the full-service television and digital production company that Andrew heads as both founder and CEO. As the creator, Executive Producer and Host of Travel Channel's Bizarre Foods franchise, Andrew Zimmern's Driven by Food and Emmy Award winning The Zimmern List, he has devoted his life to exploring and promoting cultural acceptance, tolerance and understanding through food. Andrew is also the founder and CEO of Passport Hospitality, a restaurant and food service development company. He is passionate about his philanthropic endeavors and sits on the board of directors of Services for the UnderServed, Project Explorer/EXPLR, and Soigne Hospitality. He serves on City Harvest's Food Council and is the International Rescue Committee's Voice for Nutrition. Andrew is a founding member of the Independent Restaurant Coalition, fighting to save restaurants affected by Covid-19. He resides in Minneapolis.

1. Czeisler, M. E., Lane, R. I., Petrosky, E., Wiley, J. F., Christensen, A., Njai, R., Weaver, M. D., Robbins, R., Facer-Childs, E. R., Barger, L. K., Czeisler, C. A., Howard, M. E., & Rajaratnam, S. M. W. (2020). Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic – United States, June 24-30, 2020. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 69(32), 1049-1057.

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