

# CORONAVIRUS HEROES

**A salute to people on the front lines of the nation's battle with COVID-19**

Rice Medical Center team members Maribel Gasca (seated), Janelle Willis (center), and Dr. Alyssa Molina (right). Dr. Molina also serves as the County Health Authority/Medical Director for Colorado County, has been seeing her own patients, and is homeschooling her children. *Courtesy | Shelley Thompson*

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO  
The COLORADO★COUNTY  
**Citizen**



*Frances & I  
appreciate all the extra  
time everyone in the  
community has put in  
to help keep us safe!*

**If you think  
you are going  
through Hell...  
KEEP ON  
GOING.**

**Stan and Frances  
Warfield  
Eagle Lake, Texas**



Courtesy | RMC

Rice Medical Center's Victoria Moore enters information at the nurse's station.

## Doctors and Nurses

Even in normal times, doctors and nurses play a heroic role in saving lives.

Now, however, they are working tirelessly to protect citizens who are susceptible to the COVID-19 virus while working under, in some cases, unthinkable conditions.

### Working Conditions

Doctors are working under extreme pressure and high risk to save the lives of citizens who are defenseless to the coronavirus. At the same time, many hospitals are short on personal protective equipment — including gloves, masks and gowns — due to high demand during the global outbreak. This means the staff who need to treat patients are more at risk of catching COVID-19 themselves.

Luckily, some people who are sheltered at home and have plenty of time on their hands have found ways to be helpful. By doing a simple Google

search, anyone can find the best methods and materials for making basic face masks that are almost as efficient as the factory-made ones.

Coffee or vacuum filters offer more protection than scarves, according to a New York Times article. If the fabric is dense enough to not let light pass through it easily, it is dense enough to help slow the transmission of viruses.

People have begun to craft these masks, and many donate what they make to their local hospitals for the doctors and nurses to use while treating and testing patients with symptoms of the coronavirus. Others may donate the masks to people who need the extra protection, including elderly neighbors.

If you're interested in donating masks or supplies to your local hospital, make sure to check with the hospital and find out what they need first.

# Hospital Support Staff

*Critical workers are behind the scenes but on the front lines*

Janitors, technicians and food service staff are just a few examples of the people working behind the scenes of the coronavirus pandemic.

Hospitals around the nation are staying functional and open in part because of these frequently overlooked groups of people.

## Cleaning Staff

Dusting, sweeping, mopping and changing out bed sheets are all normal duties of hospital janitorial personnel. However, with the outbreak of COVID-19 in America, hospital maintenance and cleaning crews have had to step up their game.

An important part of their job is sanitizing every surface in every room the staff visits, and these workers are rising to the occasion.

Hospital housekeepers risk infection every time they walk into a patient's room, whether that patient shows symptoms of the virus or not. Keeping a hospital clean and functional is no easy task and these professionals are

keeping up with admirable persistence.

## Maintenance Workers

The technicians who keep respirators and other essential equipment functional are also indispensable.

Machines that provide life-giving air to those suffering are in high demand, so the technicians who maintain them are of utmost importance.

The workers who specialize in other systems in hospitals are also doing their part to fight this illness. They keep the lights on, the water running, the heaters and air conditioners functioning at their optimal levels and the hospital grounds up to a high standard.

## Technicians And Therapists

While COVID-19 is showing up everywhere in America, there are patients who are in the hospital for other reasons.

Patients still need physical therapy, dialysis treatments, and other life-saving procedures.

■ **SUPPORT,** 6



Courtesy photos | RMC

Food service employees at Rice Medical Center Latanya Black (front) and Stephanie Gayton.



RMC cleaning team member Eva Vega.

## LET'S ALL THANK THE COVID-19 HEROES



**Thanks to Our Team & Community!**

I just want to say how thankful I am to our people on the front lines in this fight! Our nurses, doctors, EMS paramedics and technicians, and law enforcement, and others on the frontlines, know when they go to work that they will more than likely be exposed to the virus, and still they carry on and perform their roles in our community.

**Colorado County**  
*Judge Ty Prause*

For updates visit our website [www.co.colorado.tx.us](http://www.co.colorado.tx.us)



# Emergency Medical Technicians/First Responders

While people working inside hospitals are clearly playing a heroic role, the first interaction many people have with the health care system happens in their own homes and offices.

Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are in the middle of it all, out in the community as a first line of defense against a potentially deadly virus.

## Risky Conditions

While hospitals are known for having sterile, somewhat controlled environments for treating medical conditions, EMTs have to work in the real world.

That means they're dealing with unknown variables.

In addition to working through all kinds of weather and fighting traffic to quickly get to patients, they have to be prepared for the possibility that every person they interact with could potentially be carrying the COVID-19 virus.

They are also dealing with the same supply shortages as hospitals. Personal protective equipment is in high demand all around the globe, and EMTs are forced to make the best of a less-than-ideal situation in many cases.

## Dispatchers

While they are not physically on the front lines fighting the coronavirus, the dispatchers who take emergency calls and communicate with first responders are no less impacted during the pandemic.

Calls for emergency services are reaching record levels in many areas. The same calls for regular emergencies continue to come in from car wrecks, heart attacks and other health problems, and the coronavirus only compounds an already stressful job.

The safety of first responders also rests on how well dispatchers communicate. They have to gauge whether a patient has coronavirus symptoms so EMTs can arrive with the right protective equipment. Not only that, but they have to relay accurate information about addresses and other details that can save lives when time is at a premium.



Courtesy | CCEMS

Colorado County Emergency Medical Services staff: From left: Raven Kocurek, EMT, Laure Chollett, TCP and EMT, Brittany Harkins, EMT, Jan Willette, TCO, FTO Jadrien Urias, Paramedic, Capt. Pam Epperly, Paramedic, Alyssa Lindemann, AEMT, Brenda Henkes, Dispatch Supervisor and Michael Furrh, CCEMS Director.



We're shining a spotlight on our  
**HOMETOWN HEROES**  
who provide healthcare and all  
the essential services under these  
challenging circumstances!



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As an elected official, I was and remain thankful for the dedicated men and women who make this community safe and productive as an employee or volunteer.



This is taken for granted in normal times but becomes even more vital during extraordinary times. In a small community taking care of each other becomes more natural because we tend to be closer to each other.

**THANK YOU** to **EVERYONE** working every day to take care of the community, and for **EVERYONE** taking precautions to protect the vulnerable.

Working together we will be stronger – SOON!

*Duwan Dungen*





Citizen | Alesia Woolridge

Long time checker at Brookshire Brothers in Eagle Lake Janet Schunka.



Citizen | John Jones

Truck drivers have played a major role in keeping stores stocked with needed items.



Citizen | John Jones

Team members at Columbus Walmart continue to serve customers at the store.

# Grocery and Delivery Workers

Among those who are doing their part to keep the economy and Americans afloat are grocers, delivery people, pharmacists and long haul truck drivers. Not only do individuals need these people, but the economy does, too.

## Grocers and Retail Stores

Grocery stores and stores like our local dollar stores and Walmart have seen unprecedented floods of people coming in to buy essential items to tide them over during mandatory stay-at-home orders or true quarantine.

They also deal with attempted hoarders who try to buy more than their fair share of items in high demand.

Many grocery retailers have decided to close earlier to help keep shelves stocked for the next day's influx of purchasers. Checkers, stockers, custodians and managerial staff have to face a nervous clientele each and every day and still manage to do so with a positive attitude.

Grocery workers' dedication to keeping their shelves stocked and customers safe makes them heroes of the coronavirus pandemic.

## Delivery Services

Special care is being utilized by many delivery services to keep goods contaminant-free. They're also playing a key

role in keeping small businesses afloat, including many restaurants that are only offering delivery and takeout services.

Many people who can eat at home are ordering in to help keep their favorite restaurants in business during this extremely unusual time when dining rooms are closed and the option to eat out is impossible.


Many of us have that favorite restaurant where the ambiance is perfect, the wait staff is wonderful, and we make some of our happiest memories. Delivery people allow consumers to help out in the only way they can to keep those businesses operational during this difficult time.



Courtesy | Dollar General

Brandon at Dollar General in Eagle Lake unpacks boxes of toilet paper to restock shelves.

■ SERVICE, 6



THANK YOU to ALL the essential businesses and workers, everyone that are out there taking care of the community, and for protecting us!

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**We would like to thank all essential workers in our community who are putting in tremendous effort to make sure core services remain available.**

This includes our employees, healthcare workers, first responders, and the many staff who support them in the field and at hospitals, clinics and long-term care facilities. They are on the front lines of this pandemic.

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## Healthcare

Continued from 2

### Accurate Information

Another role medical professionals are playing is delivering accurate health information at a time when it is in high demand.

The spread of information online — not all of which is accurate — has created a need for trained medical experts to help journalists and the general public separate fact from fiction.

Many doctors and nurses have stepped up to help individuals and public policy makers decide on the best course of action. Without their science-based input, the pandemic could have been much more deadly.

### They Need Support

During this time while health care needs in the midst of this pandemic are immense, doctors and nurses need help from the public.

One, we should heed their advice. As more information about the reality of the coronavirus's impact becomes available, Americans should trust doctors and follow their recommendations — whether

that is things we can do as a society or what we should do as individuals who may be sick and worried.

Supporting medical professionals may be even more critical, though, in the aftermath of this pandemic. In many cases, they are dealing with a lack of proper equipment and an overwhelmed medical system, both of which could be improved with proper planning and quick response for future disease outbreaks.

Right now, the best way people can help is by staying healthy. Making homemade masks is fine, but it is much better if those masks aren't needed in the first place.

Following the recommendations of public health authorities — recommendations that are likely to change over time — is the best way to support the doctors and nurses who are fighting on the front lines of a war on the coronavirus.

The choice to order groceries instead of going out and buying them in person when you have a cough could help slow this pandemic and let our doctors and nurses breathe.

And going forward, they deserve the public's support to make the nation's entire health care system better equipped and prepared.

## Support

Continued from 3

Technicians and therapists continue to carry out and perform invaluable services for their patients while risking exposure to the disease. While it's true elective procedures are on hold at many hospitals, there are many patients who benefit greatly from therapy services.

The technicians and therapists who offer those treatments are still showing up every day and helping those who need it.

They're also playing a key role in making patients strong and capable enough to safely leave the hospital, making more beds available when they might be needed the most.

## Service

Continued from 5

### Truck Drivers

Toilet paper, medical supplies, groceries and pet supplies are just a few of the items that are brought to Americans by truck drivers.

### Food Service Employees

Most hospitals across America have shut down their public cafeterias. Preventing the spread of the coronavirus this way is very important by keeping people from congregating in public eating areas.

However, hospital food services continue to feed and nourish patients under their care. Hospital patients need to eat, and someone has to prepare those meals.

Food service in hospitals continues without a hitch, delivering meals to patients throughout the day. It's a mark of kindness and bravery on the part of all those who continue to provide nutritional meals and do so with a smile. Keeping the spirits up of those who fight off COVID-19 is a rare gift.

There are so many things long-haul and local drivers deliver that are necessary during this pandemic. Truck drivers are making things happen, one drive at a time.

We owe much to these men and women who keep our grocery stores shelves stocked and our medical personnel supplied with their protective gear.

*Thank you for all you do!*

We hope you are safe and wish you the best at this unprecedented and difficult time.

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**THANK YOU!**  
**The Mayor and Council of the  
City of Columbus thank all of those on  
the front lines fighting the spread of  
COVID-19 and those providing essential  
services to all of our citizens.**



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# Pharmacists

Where would we be if pharmacies shut down? Nowhere good. Maintaining the necessary medicines Americans need is one of the most important jobs during a pandemic.

Pharmacies and their staff are supplying people with their medications throughout this outbreak and deserve much praise.

Pharmacists are also helping to advise those who are suffering with symptoms to know how best to stay safe at home and when to call their physician or go to the emergency department.




Citizen | John Jones

Darlene at Columbus Pharmacy serves customers through the drive-thru window to limit contact.

## Thanks to Our Community's

# HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

A big shout of appreciation to the dedicated staff of Parkview Manor who have gone above and beyond to provide a safe and cheerful home for our precious residents during this historic event and beyond!



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... FOR YOUR KINDNESS  
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owners on the front line.

## WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN

...all do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 by  
respecting social distancing, practicing healthy hygiene,  
and sending only one family member to shop.

There is no better time than now to remind us all to HOPE.



Christy W.  
13 Years of Service

*Brookshire Brothers*

TOGETHER WE WILL FLATTEN THE CURVE.



# Shop Safe. Shop Smart. Let's All Do Our Part.

Lufkin - Brookshire Brothers thanks its shoppers for joining with them to help contain the spread of COVID-19. The Lufkin-based grocer appreciates the care its customers have shown for our employee-owners and each other by practicing social distancing and healthy habits while shopping. This way the community grocer can continue to provide food and essential goods in the safest manner possible. Here are some of the ways our folks on the front lines are working to keep our stores safe, stocked and open to serve our communities:

- Urging customers to send someone else to shop if you believe you, or anyone with whom you have had close contact with may have an active case of COVID-19 or are tested and the results are pending, or have symptoms of fever, dry cough, or shortness of breath.

- Reminding customers to have only one family member in the store shopping at one time.

- Encouraging social distancing through store signage, floor decals and ongoing in store announcements.

- Installing plexiglass partitions at each check lane, pharmacy counter, deli counter and courtesy booth.



**LEFT:** A Brookshire Brothers grocery store employee in Texas wears PPE (personal protective equipment) while restocking fresh produce. **RIGHT:** Brookshire Brothers clerks around the state have been working hard to keep customers supplied with products they need.

and courtesy booth.

- Sanitizing high touch areas continuously and reinforcing proper handwashing, disinfecting and cough covering practices.

- Monitoring the wellbeing of our employee-owners.



Courtesy| Brookshire Brothers, Lufkin

employee-owners.

- Reminding shoppers to leave their reusable shopping bags at home.

- Inviting our customers to bag their own groceries if they'd like. Please let your

cashier know when you enter the check lane that you'll be sacking your own.

- Encouraging shoppers to only purchase what they need for their family, be mindful about leaving product on the shelves for others and offer to shop for a friend or neighbor in need.

- Keeping updated on COVID-19 through official websites like [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.dshs.texas.gov](http://www.dshs.texas.gov) and [www.lhla.gov](http://www.lhla.gov)

Brookshire Brothers President and CEO John Alston says, "Every day we receive messages from our shoppers across Texas and Louisiana describing our front line employee owners and their efforts as heroic. They are our heroes, working tirelessly to ensure our customers have access to essential products and services." To recognize that, the company implemented bonuses in mid-March for all hourly workers. Brookshire Brothers and its team members are doing their best along with the rest of the country to contain the spread of the novel Coronavirus. Alston adds, "We believe it is our shared responsibility to help flatten the curve. We appreciate the support of the community as we walk through this together."

## Do your part and stay apart.



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# THANK YOU

Thank you to all employees and especially Rice CISD food service staff and teachers for their dedication to the students during this time.



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# Police Officers

Law enforcement workers have some of the toughest jobs in America any time, but the difficulties and potential dangers of police work have only gotten more complex in the current pandemic.

Law enforcement authorities have taken on a major role in controlling the spread of COVID-19. Police officers have been under pressure to make sure shelter-in-place laws are being followed while still maintaining good relations with the community.

This means most officers are going to be face-to-face with multiple people in one day who may or may not be carriers of the virus.

They are at risk of getting sick, just like everyone else, but they put others before themselves in order to stop the

spread of the coronavirus and keep their communities safe.

Police officers and other law enforcement workers aren't typically medical experts. Most of them are having to take this situation one step at a time, unable to stay home and avoid contact with others.

## Still Serving

Even in a pandemic, though, police officers are responding in a way that keeps communities safe and orderly.

If a crime requires an immediate response, or citizens are in danger of imminent harm, it's America's brave and often under-appreciated police officers who will show up, ready to help, as always.



Courtesy

Columbus Police Department participated in the Easter drive-thru parade at Columbus Oaks Healthcare Community, as the facility has been closed to visitors due to COVID-19.



Citizen | John Jones

Steven at HEB helps customers maintain social distancing by limiting the number of customers allowed in the store at one time.





Courtesy | Columbus Oaks Healthcare Community

Not being able to have visitors can make senior citizens vulnerable to depression and feeling isolated. Staff members of Columbus Oaks Healthcare Community keep residents busy with games and activities.



Citizen | John Jones

Thank you to the men and women who work in public works, garbage disposal and sanitation.

*Thank you to all the community heroes  
working hard during this difficult time and  
a BIG Thank you to our employees..*

*Dawn, Elijah, Nathaniel  
Courtney and Stephanie*

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# Mental and emotional well being professionals

Stressed and overwhelmed with Covid-19? Rice Medical Center Lighthouse has a confidential support line to help you! Call 979-234-5571 (option 1) to talk to a member of the support staff.

Please note the following limitations:

- Unable to provide medical or health information we advise you to refer to your healthcare provider, or call 911 in an emergency.

- Unable to provide mental health or counseling. The support line can only address matters related to stress, nervousness, sadness, and significant feelings of loneliness.

- Mental health counseling can be arranged with one of our licensed therapist through telemedicine if needed.

- Hours of Operation Monday -Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Thank you to our local mental health professionals for helping residents get through these times together.

*If you or someone you know are having a mental health crisis, please call the Texana hotline at 1-800-633-5686.*



Some Texana team members pose in the professional grade masks donated to the Behavioral Healthcare Crisis Center.

"I wanted to nominate and say thanks to those who work at the local office of Texana Center's Behavioral Healthcare here in Columbus. Without their support, especially during our current times of uncertainty, I'm unsure of where I would be...I can't emphasize how important it is to take care of/manage one's mental health."

— **Colorado County resident**

***BIG THANK YOU***  
*to our employees, all frontline workers and to our community!*  
***We are all in this together!***  
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Citizen | John Jones

Colorado County Women, Infants and Children (WIC) staff members are still on the job making sure mothers and children have access to nutritious groceries and infant formula.



Courtesy | TLC

TruCare Living Center staff works hard to keep residents engaged and busy year round. Residents enjoy activities like bingo at the facility regularly.



Sending a heartfelt thank you to all medical staff, law enforcement and essential workers for the great sacrifice each one of you make daily, especially during this pandemic — from the Diversitech Corporation team. Your dedication, commitment and courage deserve our deepest gratitude and admiration. Your service to patients is saving countless lives and making insurmountable differences in our communities. Often, the term “hero” is loosely used but when we say, “YOU ARE OUR TRUE HEROES”, your courage, continued commitment and devotion truly exudes what defines a true hero. Your selfless determination to help others, in these uncertain times, is truly awe-inspiring.

To all the Diversitech employees who continue to serve diligently to provide an essential service to so many, we are extremely honored to have you as part of the Diversitech family.

***Blessings to all of you working on the front line  
and keeping our friends and families safe.***

***You are true heroes and  
should be recognized as such!***

***Thank you for all you do!***

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Parkview Manor staff members are among the true heroes of the COVID-19 fight.

Courtesy | Parkview Manor



Colorado County Judge Ty Prause, County Health Authority and Medical Director Dr. Alyssa Molina and County EMS Director Michael Furrh provide daily updates to the public via social media to keep residents informed.



Courtesy | Colorado County Butane

Jaclyn Blankenship and Jeremy Hanak of Colorado County Butane keep residents supplied with propane gas for their homes.

**Thank You COVID Frontline Workers!**  
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# The citizens of Colorado County



The staff members at Columbus Community Hospital and Columbus Medical Clinic have braved the front lines of the COVID-19 battle to serve patients.

Citizen archives

Finally, while there are plenty of heroes who are helping in big ways — the pastors comforting grieving families and many people who continue to work in essential professions — one hero is making a major difference: the ordinary citizen.

Many of the well-known virus-fighting heroes don't have the option to stay home in a pandemic. Doctors, nurses, hospital workers and other medical professionals are working harder than ever.

By following the advice of public health experts, everyone gets to hold the title of "hero" as we can help front line workers do their jobs. Social distancing, avoiding exposure whenever possible, following CDC guidelines and staying informed with reliable information makes us all heroes in the fight against COVID-19.

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**We're all in this together.**

We want to say thanks and show our gratitude for everyone out there doing their part.

- Healthcare workers
- First responders and law enforcement
- Those tirelessly stocking shelves
- All the delivery drivers and postal workers
- Those keeping our heat on and water running
- Those who are still grinding on the front lines and exposing themselves to potential risk every day in order to fulfill their mission of service to others
- Those who are staying home and practicing social distancing and to everyone in between who has remained vigilant and disciplined for the greater good of society.

**THANK YOU!**



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