Can You Still Dine Out to Fight HIV During COVID-19?

Yes! Many events of the annual Dining Out for Life fundraiser are still on. Here's how to get updates about your city.

September 8, 2020 By Trent Straube

Amid the continuing COVID-19 crisis and subsequent shutdowns, it's vital that we raise money for our local community HIV organizations, many of which are struggling. With the restaurant industry also facing extreme hardship this year, the annual Dining Out for Life AIDS fundraiser is your chance to support both at once.

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Repost from @bisoncoffeehouse Each year we are happy n proud to be a part of #dineoutforlife as we will

continue to make positive efforts in helping our community to stay healthy. #healthylifestyle

#healthyfood #hiv #aidsawareness #communitysupport #pdx #portland #doingourpart #helpinglives

#givinghope #sendinglove

A post shared by Dining Out For Life Portland (@dineout4lifepdx) on Sep 5, 2020 at 5:30pm PDT

Here's how it works: Participating restaurants donate a portion of the day's sales to local HIV groups. Different cities across the nation hold Dining Out for Life events on different days. Most years, all you had to do was eat out at one of the restaurants and—voila!—you helped fight AIDS.

Of course, 2020 is not most years. Many of the events usually slated for the spring—such as those in New York City, Atlanta and San Francisco—have been canceled. Some are being rescheduled. But plenty of others are still on the books, albeit reconceived to meet public health regulations for that city—for example, some restaurants allow limited outdoor seating or only pickup orders.

Visit DiningOutForLife.com for a list of participating cities and restaurants and the local HIV organizations being supported, or to click on a map for status updates on Dining Out for Life events.

Below is a list of the events coming up this month:

- September 10, Thursday: Indianapolis; Lexington, Kentucky
- Week of September 14: Portland, Oregon
- September 17, Thursday: Tampa Bay
- September 24, Thursday: Seattle; Birmingham; Oakland, California; Louisville, Kentucky; Chicago; Juno and Anchorage, Alaska; Brevard County/Space Coast Area, Florida; Minneapolis

This week's event in Lexington, for example, will include 30 restaurants supporting AVOL Kentucky, which has provided HIV services since 1987.

"Lexington's generosity and support of AVOL and Dining Out for Life, over the past decade, has truly been humbling," AVOL executive director Jon Parker, told WTVQ.com. "We are so appreciative of our restaurant partners and the community for their continued help in fulfilling our mission and delivering essential resources to our most vulnerable neighbors in need."

He added: "Dining Out for Life allows AVOL to raise critically needed funds while making people

more aware of the good work being done by our volunteers and staff in the communities we serve."

While Dining Out For Life NYC 2020 was cancelled, we encourage all our supporters to continue ordering from our...

Posted by Dining Out For Life - New York City on Thursday, August 13, 2020

Some HIV groups, such as House of Ruth in Louisville, are not seeking a portion of the sales this year. Instead, they want to thank restaurants for their past support and are encouraging people to eat out and generate business during the pandemic. Similarly, Dining Out for Life NYC 2020 was canceled, but event organizers are asking folks to donate to The Alliance for Positive Change and to order food from a list of establishments that have participated in the event in the past.

Minnesota organizers are raising money for the Aliveness Project and supporting local eateries by hosting a Dining IN for Life event on September 24. The event encourages people to order takeout (all the money spent goes to the restaurants) and join a virtual dining party.

Dining Out for Life is sponsored nationally by Subaru and Ponaman Healthcare Consulting plus numerous local sponsors in each city. For more details, visit DiningOutForLife.com.

In related news, to learn about AVOL's campaign to reach African Americans in Kentucky, read "#UncoverHIV Reveals Startling Statistics—and Some Torsos Too! [Slideshow]." As one of seven rural states with high HIV burdens, Kentucky is receiving targeted federal resources to fight its epidemic. It's part of the national initiative "Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America." For a recent POZ article on that topic, see "How to Visually Track Data From the Plan to End the U.S. HIV Epidemic."

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