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FEATURED

## Mount Clemens realtor, Madison Heights grocer team up for hospital personnel

By Jim Evans [jevans@medianewsgroup.com](mailto:jevans@medianewsgroup.com)

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Sam Lumetta of Lumetta Produce delivers free boxes of fruit and vegetables to front line hospital workers at M Thursday morning.

By George Spiteri

Some folks just do good.

Forget what the cash flow might say, they do something absolutely altruistic.

That's the charitable story of Joe Sowerby and Sam Lumetta.

Both are involved in businesses that have been, to say it plainly, busted in the chops by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Sowerby is a partner in Anton, Sowerby & Associates, a professional real estate brokerage firm in Mount Clemens.

Lumetta Produce is based in Madison Heights. Before the current shelter in place climate, at least 80 percent of its business was delivering fruits and vegetables to places like restaurants and schools.

"I am not sure this was a prudent business decision. I don't think we could afford to do this, but I don't think we could afford not to, either," said Sowerby.

Sowerby and Lumetta delivered boxes stuffed with fresh fruit and vegetables to the frontline workers at McLaren Macomb Hospital and Henry Ford Macomb Hospital on Thursday.

"As a business, we are basically shut down," said Sowerby. "You can't really go out and show buildings or tour real estate now. We quarantined our office a month ago. I hope we get back to business sooner rather than later but if you get sick or die from coronavirus, then what is more important?"

"We are very appreciative of what front line workers and first responders are doing. They are putting their lives on the line daily. They are busy. They deal with uncertainty every day. They work 12-hour shifts. We just put together boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables for them to show our appreciation," said Lumetta.

Forget the fact that the cash flow has slowed to a trickle for both Lumetta and Sowerby.

Lumetta Produce has been in business since 1903. Sam Lumetta's great grandfather delivered produce from a horse drawn wagon in Detroit.

Each box distributed Thursday contained apples, grapes, grapefruit and oranges; as well as green beans, broccoli, carrots, onions and potatoes.

"My brother and I represent the fourth generation of family members in the produce business. Selling fruits and vegetables is how we provide for our families. We are a wholesale produce distributor. Among the places we were servicing were restaurants, schools, hospitals, country clubs and banquet halls," said Lumetta.

"Obviously when things changed due to the coronavirus, it was an immediate blow to the face. We lost at least 80 percent of our business," he continued.

Two local business owners who are hurting just like many others. Somehow, they still found it in themselves to donate thousands of pounds of produce to medical staff that is both saving lives and putting their own lives on the line.

Sowerby's business is basically on hold until the quarantine lifts. Lumetta has adapted and is selling produce to individuals. The new venture is called Lumetta Fresh Market.

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