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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Thornwell Responds to COVID-19 with Free Meals for Children***

Clinton, SC (March 16, 2020) – Thornwell has announced free breakfast and lunch meals for children aged 18 and younger during the extent of the school closures.

The health and well-being of our staff, the children and families we serve, and the community where live and work are our top priorities. While schools are closed, nutritionally balanced lunch and breakfast \*meals will be provided to all children aged 18 or younger regardless of race, color, sex, disability, age or national origin.

“We join with Laurens County School Districts 55 and 56, along with other schools, in supporting the local and federal leaders who are calling for social distancing to slow the spread of COVID-19, but we also recognize the challenge this creates for many children and families we serve,” said President Elliot Smith. “We have DHEC and FDA approved kitchens with certified staff equipped to stand in the gap. That’s why we’re offering families an alternative way to find nutritionally balanced lunch and breakfast meals. For many children, these meals will be the only meals they can count on, so we’re encouraging families—regardless if they are currently served by Thornwell or not—to take advantage of this service.”

Families can pick up meals from **302 South Broad Street, Clinton, SC** effective Monday, March 16, 2020 **during weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** USDA National School Lunch Program requires children to be present during the time of meal pick up.

\*Meals are prepared in our school facilities by trained Food and Nutrition Services Staff. All existing DHEC and FDA approved procedures for meal prep, storage, service, and sanitation will be observed.

Founded in 1875, Thornwell is a diverse non-profit ministry serving South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida committed to the most innovative and effective solutions to help children and families in need. Thornwell serves to prevent child abuse and neglect, to build up and reunite families, and support healthy communities in the name of Jesus Christ. Learn more about Thornwell and the services they provide for children and families in need at <http://www.thornwell.org>.