



## COVID-19: Montclair residents supporting essential workers

By **GWEN OREL**

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Montclair is showing its appreciation for the health workers, market workers, postal workers and others working hard to keep the country going during the coronavirus pandemic.

Tonight, Monday, March 30, a “clap-out,” part of the #ClapBecauseWeCare movement, has been organized by Montclair resident Darryl Lammin. The 7 p.m. clap-outs have taken place around the world, in Italy, the U.K., and in American cities including New York and Boston.

March 30, Lammin writes on [the Facebook page for the clap-out](#), is National Doctors’ day. She encourages people to cheer from their front doors, balconies, yards and living rooms, “to show all who are working on the front line our appreciation for their ongoing hard work/dedication and fight against this virus.

“Let’s hear it for all the medical staff, grocery store workers, carers, delivery drivers, garbage pickup workers, mail delivery and anyone else who’s putting their lives on the line during this pandemic.”

A group that “met” on the app Nextdoor Park Street joined #ClapBecauseWeCare this past Friday, March 27, writes Andreina Botto Roever. She and this group will clap every night at 7 p.m. for two minutes to cheer for those on the front lines.

Another way people can show their appreciation for front line workers is by feeding them.

Chefs Abraham Dickerson and James Desisto of Laboratorio Kitchen are offering meals to first responders on Mondays for free, and 50 free meals to the public on Thursdays beginning at 2 p.m.

A group of Montclair residents set up a [GoFundMe](#) Help Feed Our Healthcare Heroes to help feed staff and workers at Mountainside Hospital.

Montclair Kimberley Academy has donated 174 pairs of goggles, 700 N95 masks, and 90 boxes of gloves to the ICU at Mountainside Hospital, [according to a Facebook post](#).

Montclair Design Week began a donation drive to collect PPE, and since March 22, has obtained more than 5,000 masks, more than 9,000 pairs of gloves, and has started a collaboration with Montclair State's MIXlab to produce face shields. Donations are accepted at MADLAB Architecture and Design, 7 Oak Place. For details call 973-744-2544, ext. 3, or visit [bit.ly/ppedonationdrive](http://bit.ly/ppedonationdrive).

And [Women for Progress](#), a nonprofit group founded in 2016, is [raising money to buy food from](#) local restaurants to deliver to hospitals. As of 9 p.m. on Friday, after just four days, they had raised more than \$14,000, said founder and executive director Erin Chung.

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The group also intends to feed Planned Parenthood, Chung says. Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey's clinic in Montclair is still open for women who need to be seen, and the healthcare workers there need to be fed as well.

Montclair resident, board member Karen Sacks proposed the idea to the organization. Sacks had been looking for ways to help the restaurants she frequented and heard about the idea of buying food from restaurants to donate to hospitals.

The response was large. Restaurants even offered to discount their food, but, Sacks said, the idea was for restaurants to have some income in order to keep on their staff as well.

The project began in Bergen County, and has expanded to Essex County. They have brought meals to the Montclair Ambulance Unit, Hackensack, and Clara Maas in Belleville.

"Today we are delivering 100 meals to nighttime workers from Mish Mish and Falafel Hut," Sacks said.

"Tomorrow, we will bring meals from Watchung Deli and Toast."

Arizona Iced Tea is donating drinks, and Women for Progress has bought girl scout cookies from local troops for dessert.

The concept, Sacks said, is a 'win win win.' It helps the restaurants, it helps the hospital workers, and it helps the people who buy the food, too.

"People are so eager to do something other than sitting in their homes and watching the incredible heroes do their work," she said.

"People who have donated have been thanking us for giving them a way to make a difference during this time."



## Montclair Eats: hot sandwiches for chilly days



*The "Ben Special" from Watchung Deli. STEVEN DESALVO/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL*

**By STEVEN DESALVO**

*For Montclair Local*

*In Montclair Eats, food writer Steven DeSalvo compares dishes at Montclair restaurants.*



STEVEN DESALVO

*DeSalvo has a degree in hospitality business management from the University of Delaware and has worked extensively in restaurants and hotels.*

*Are you hungry? If you have a restaurant you'd like to see covered, and want to make a suggestion for Montclair Eats, write to us at [culture@montclairlocal.news](mailto:culture@montclairlocal.news).*

Last year, I wrote about my favorite Italian sandwiches in town. I think sandwiches are much too broad a topic to cover in just one article, and feel the need to revisit sandwiches from a different specific perspective: hot sandwiches.

But narrowing down this category to three options in this town is virtually impossible! There are so many options! Somehow, I managed to make my choices. If I missed your favorite place, I do apologize. Sincerely. Here are the three hot sandwiches I decided to feature this month:

- The “Ben Special” from **Watchung Delicatessen**.
- The “Italian Cooked Ham” from **Cafe Giotto**.
- The “Clam Strip Po-Boy” from **Jack’s Seafood Shack**. I had so much fun sampling these sandwiches, mainly because they are so different, yet from the same general food category.

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2. The **“Ben Special”** from **Watchung Delicatessen** is a very nostalgic sandwich for me. I have been ordering it for more than 10 years now and it is among my favorites that the deli has to offer. Its simplicity is its strength. Consisting of “only” chicken cutlet, bacon, melted cheddar, and barbecue sauce, this sandwich contains a massive amount of flavor, texture, and mouthfeel that all participate in a wonderfully complete experience. The smokiness of the bacon and barbecue sauce, the crispiness of the chicken, and the really nice creamy-fatty element from the cheese brings everything together into a thrillingly warm, lasting flavor experience. I would definitely suggest exploring the entire “Special Sandwich Menu” at the deli if you haven’t already. They are worth a try, every one of them!



4. Another one of my local favorites is the “Italian Cooked Ham” sandwich from **Cafe Giotto**. This sandwich was first recommended to me by a coworker, and based on the sincerity and the passion in his endorsement, I knew before I even tried the sandwich that I was going to like it. This sandwich consists of perfectly sliced Italian “prosciutto cotto” (cooked ham, in English) which has more of an herbaceous and meaty quality to it than typical store-bought ham. This ham is grouped with caramelized onions, melted white cheddar, thinly sliced roasted potatoes, and homemade garlic aioli. These special ingredients are sandwiched between fresh ciabatta. For me, the roasted potatoes on the sandwich are the real game-changer. Once again, this sandwich perfectly executes the balance of flavors while also paying attention to textures. All of the different tastes here compliment one another. I really enjoy the concept of a “full meal” on a sandwich and I think that this is a perfect example of that. Another fantastic sandwich to try is the “Leg of Lamb.”



*Clam Strip Po'Boy from Jack's Seafood Shack. STEVEN DESALVO/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL*

6. Finally, the “Clam Strip Po-Boy” at **Jack’s Seafood Shack** is yet another example of a multi-sensory eating experience. The sandwich consists of freshly fried clam strips, arugula, sliced tomato, pickles, and a delicious tartar sauce. This is all served on an expertly grilled piece of bread, which is a fantastic touch. The layers of flavor in this sandwich are varied and intense. Each bite also has a fantastic blend of crunchy pickle, crispy clam and soft tomato, and the peppery flavor of the arugula adds more of an effect than you could imagine. The tartar sauce ties all of these robust flavors together with subtle herbaceous notes and much needed acidity to cut through the fat of the fried clams. This sandwich comes with two side options: salad or potato chips. My advice? Get the potato chips, which are house-made, and put them on your sandwich. You are welcome in advance.

I would suggest trying other sandwiches at Jack’s as well, with the lobster grilled cheese being quite good, especially if you aren’t counting calories.

I love all three of these sandwiches and they are remarkably similar despite using distinctly different ingredients. They are texturally compelling, as well as flavorful and exciting. The ingredients used in them aren’t frilly. On the contrary, they serve an actual purpose. I would implore that you try them all but, as always, try not to do it all in the same day!

In this column:

- • Watchung Delicatessen  
117 Watchung Ave.  
[watchungdeli.com](http://watchungdeli.com)  
973-744-1452
- • Cafe Giotto  
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- • Jack’s Seafood Shack  
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