

Applaud Our Kids: A New Jersey Nonprofit leading the way for Performing Arts access

By Kaitlyn McCormick

August 29, 2022



Zzak G. “Applaud Our Kids” Foundation Inc.

Two sisters, a deathbed regret and a spare \$100 started the Zzak G. Applaud Our Kids Foundation (AOK), a unique New Jersey nonprofit that funds students ages 7-22 pursuing the performing arts.

When their father died from ALS(Lou Gehrig’s disease), sisters CEO Jodi Grinwald and President Melissa Grinwald-Bartz racked their brains to find a way to honor him. Knowing that their father was a songwriter and opera singer who lamented up until his death that he was unable to afford vocal lessons until his 30s, the sisters decided to start a nonprofit that would help spare kids in the area from sharing in that same regret. And when it was time to open up an account for the foundation, the sisters remembered their dad’s wallet that had been sitting in a drawer since his death almost two years prior, along with the \$100 inside of it. “We let him start the bank account,” Grinwald said.

AOK, which launched in 2017, fully funds students aged 7-18 who meet the foundation’s financial aid requirements to take ongoing performing arts lessons, including dance, acting, instrumental music or vocal instruction. Along with the one class per week in the student’s desired area of study, funding includes any added expenses where necessary, such as instruments or dance costumes.

Grinwald explained that when starting this organization, the co-founders didn’t want to create a “one and done” deal for students by funding only a limited schedule of classes, fearing they

would introduce kids to something they love only to have it taken away after a short period of time. This same theology is what brought the founders to developing the Applaud and Give Back Program to support young adults who normally would have aged out of other services.

Grinwald said, “We did not want to be another organization that, as [the students] are in love with something, they’re losing something else again. And so we said, well, now that they’re adults, what can we do?”

This program allows young adults aged 18-22 to continue to receive funding from AOK for their weekly lesson, so long as they commit to dedicating 40 hours of their time between September and June to volunteer for the organization. They can assist in computer work, do phone calls or even perform at events.

Lovey Durrue, a 19-year-old from Manahawkin, NJ, involved with AOK’s Applaud and Give Back Program, lauded the organization for the work it does to support kids and young adults pursuing the performing arts. Durrue has been a part of AOK for roughly 2 and a half years, and met co-founders Grinwald and Grinwald-Bartz at an open mic. After learning about the program, Durrue applied and began receiving funding to attend a weekly vocal lesson. When she aged out of the initial funding phase at 18, she became a part of the Applaud and Give Back Program, which would allow her to keep attending her lessons.

During her involvement with AOK, and with the help of her vocal instructor through the organization, Durrue was able to write and release an original song on Spotify. “It’s been really rewarding. I’ve loved having singing lessons every week. ...I can definitely tell that I’ve come a long way,” Durrue said.

What sets AOK apart from a lot of other performing arts centered nonprofits is how hands-on they are. Opposed to many programs that take place primarily in school buildings, “we’re after school and we’re personal,” Grinwald said. With AOK, every aspect of a student’s funding and experience is thought out to give them the most fitting option.

“We do a lot of research on every single studio...we meet the owners, we do background checks on the teachers, we take tours. ...We know that we’ve got to place them in places that are safe,” Grinwald explained. And if AOK can’t find a suitable studio or lesson option within a student’s vicinity, they will fund teachers to participate in that student’s community.

Because of this in-depth nature, funding and donations are extremely important, especially as the nonprofit hopes to expand and service more students.

AOK hosts two signature fundraising events throughout the year. In the fall, AOK holds their Step Into the Spotlight Soiree and Talent Competition. Tickets are sold and sponsors are gained for the event, where celebrity guests from TV, film and Broadway judge a night of performances. Last year’s panel included the executive director from the Grammy’s and Fredi Walker Browne, who originated the character Joanne in the Broadway musical “Rent.”

In the spring, all of the foundation's students get together for a Scholarship Showcase. At this sponsored event, students perform the talent they've been nurturing through their lessons made possible by AOK, and tickets are sold to attend. The AOK Performance Group, a sponsored group of auditioned kids 7-22 who are not students funded by the foundation, also performs and joins the funded students for a combined finale that is learned that same morning.

The Performance Group is a fundraising pillar in and of itself, and they've performed at Feinstein's 54 Below in NYC for two fundraisers, as well as at the JBJ Soul Kitchen many times where they've met John Bon Jovi.

While many nonprofit organizations had major setbacks due to the Coronavirus pandemic, especially in terms of funding, Grinwald said that AOK "soared." The foundation quickly pivoted to use Zoom, and they were able to create even more awareness for the organization and reach more students by utilizing an online platform. "We created a way to let people know about the organization, get more kids involved, parents to see us," Grinwald described of their switch to virtual events.

The organization ran three overarching zoom classes that anyone could join — a hip-hop dance party, an acting class and a Broadway dance class — all while keeping up with lessons for students who were already being funded by the organization at the time.

"Our funders actually got really excited about what we were doing because they saw that we were keeping the kids connected during a very difficult time," Grinwald said, recounting that one funder tripled their donation that year.

What started as a local nonprofit in Ocean County has successfully turned into a way to help kids in the performing arts statewide. "In the beginning I felt like I was the CEO of a lemonade stand," Grinwald said, but AOK has surely progressed from its humble beginnings. And while the next goal is to move into the New York area, Grinwald assured that, slowly but surely and funding depending, the nonprofit's biggest ambition continues to be creating a nationally recognized organization. For now, AOK will continue to impact students such as Durrue in New Jersey: "The fact that there's people out there who do want to help you, who do want to give you a line to you know, performing arts is absolutely amazing. And I'm so proud of what they stand for," Durrue said.

Ronald McDonald House Charities relied on innovation to service families during the pandemic

Jul 20, 2022



Children at the Ronald McDonald House of Greater Cincinnati. Photo courtesy of RMHC.

By Kaitlyn McCormick
Nonprofit Sector News

When the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown hit in March 2020, most nonprofits that provided services could not just stop operating, and many organizations had to find new ways to provide for their beneficiaries in light of many uncertainties.

In November of 2020, the Ronald McDonald House of Greater Cincinnati finally celebrated a grand opening after undertaking a 99-room expansion, making it the largest house in the now international organization. The process of getting the spaces filled, however, was staggered due to health safety measures and the organization's unique job providing services to families of sick kids receiving treatment across the street at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

Sarah Curry Rathel, communications manager for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Cincinnati, explained COVID-19's impact on the house's operations, especially in terms of funding. "One of the ways that we get people involved in the house is by inviting them in...to make a meal for families, to hold an activity...do a group work where they come in and maybe work on a project for us. ...With COVID we had to stop doing that."

She explained that external events such as their golf tournament and gala were canceled for two years, taking a toll on funding. Luckily, Rathel said, community engagement and internal fundraisers were able to fill the gaps. "[Our 990s] look great over those years. And that is truly thanks to the caring individuals who realized, 'Hey, they still have to make this possible.'"

While Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) are commonly known for their physical houses that provide places for families to stay while children are in treatment, the organization provides other services, including more than 265 Ronald McDonald Family Rooms and more than 40 Ronald McDonald Mobile Care Units globally.

The new global Chief Operating Officer (COO) of RMHC, Rodney Jordan, explained that, much like the Cincinnati house, the entire organization had to band together to find innovative ways to service families as well as healthcare workers because of complications caused by the pandemic.

Jordan explained that during the height of the pandemic the RMHC system “strategically pivoted” to repurpose spaces not being used for families to support healthcare delivery and front-line workers. He said that the organization also provided more than 54,000 hotel night stays for families when space was unavailable or House and Family Programs were closed in the pandemic.

(Jordan joined RMHC in June 2022, from an executive position at McDonald’s. He previously had been a manager at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Coca-Cola, and United Parcel Service.)

The Cincinnati House, like most US nonprofits, also experienced difficulty and changes in fundraising efforts.

Jordan said, “RMHC relies on millions of donations each year. Over the course of the pandemic, Chapters have experienced financial strains due to the cancellations of in-person fundraising events and reduced volunteer numbers, which greatly impacted meal programs and other important functions.” He further explained that the pandemic pushed RMHC Chapters around the world to lean digitally for fundraising.

While the expansion at the House in Cincinnati makes it the largest, RMHC as a whole has continued to grow, with more than 700 programs globally, including 10 new Family rooms and 10 new House programs opening in 2021.

Outside of physical care spaces, Ronald McDonald House Chapters in the US have initiated take-home kits, which may include items such as grocery and gas gift cards, toothpaste, shelf-stable meals and more, as a means to “help ease the transition for families going home from an RMHC program,” Jordan said. Some chapters are also focusing on the mental health needs of children and their families, using podcasts, apps and staff education efforts.

As the newly appointed COO of RMHC, Jordan said he is “incredibly proud and excited” by the continuous work the organization is doing to expand its impact.

League of Women Voters national and state organizations working to pass Freedom to Vote Act

By Naga Prudhvi Panguluri
Nonprofit Sector News
January 4, 2022

The League of Women Voters (LWV) has been working at both the national and local levels for months to help pass the Freedom to Vote Act, a new comprehensive revamp of the voting reforms that has been repeatedly delayed in Congress.

The bill, introduced in the US Senate on September 14, is designed to expand voting opportunities, modernize voter registration, and promote election security. The bill is supported by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and most, if not all, other Senate Democrats.

Key provisions of the bill include mandating that all states offer same-day voter registration, online voter registration, early voting, and mail voting periods. The bill also includes new ideas such as an election day holiday, protection for voters with disabilities, and election infrastructure improvements. The bill includes several important provisions from the For the People Act (last session's H.R.1 in the House), which failed to pass in the Senate.



**The best tool to counter denials
of the freedom to vote is the
For the People Act.**



The League of Women Voters in 2020 supported the For the People Act bill, which had many provisions similar to the current Freedom to Vote Act bill.

Virginia Kase Solomon, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States, said in a League press release last fall, “The League of women voters supports the freedom to vote act,” said Solomon. “This bill protects and expands the right to vote, decreases the influence of money in politics, and curbs partisan gerrymandering.”

She added, “The Freedom to Vote Act is the bill the American people want and need to make the promise of democracy real for us all. The League of Women Voters strongly urges every senator to support this bill.”

Solomon expressed her gratitude for the idea of mandating same-day voter registration in all 50 states, with the league being a longtime advocate for same-day voter registration in federal voting legislation.

“We are proud to see same-day registration in the Freedom to Vote Act,” said Solomon. “It protects Americans who fall through the registration cracks and ensures that the largest number of Americans can exercise their constitutional right to vote.”

Meanwhile, at the local level, all or almost all LWV clubs around the nation have made their intentions clear by supporting the position of the national organization.

In the western half of Washington state, the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County, Vice-President Noel Hagens summarized her organization’s support of the bill. “Voting rights is a primary concern of the League of Women Voters and based on the studies that the League (LWV) has done, I would say that all of the Women Leagues, including our League, would be strongly in for the freedom to vote act. It contains many measures that are important to us that we work on a local and state level.”

“Expanding the right for voter registration and the opportunity for people to vote, eliminating the influence of dark money has been a very important issue for us, therefore we strongly support this (the national League’s) decision,” she added.

Hagens reckons that this bill, if passed, potentially will turn out to be the most comprehensive democracy reform enacted in decades due to the inclusion of several new ideas such as the election day holiday and mandatory same-day voting registration in all 50 states.

“Well, such a huge overhaul (of the voting process) improves the security of our elections and builds confidence amongst the public,” said Hagens. “I think that it could really give lots of opportunities for people to register and will quite certainly improve the election voting percentage.”

She added, “I think that some people just become more interested at the last minute (to vote), and I think it’s important to be able to preserve it there. This bill will make that happen with the same-day voter registration.”

The League of Women Voters of Missouri, based in St. Louis, has emphasized that the Freedom to Vote Act “improves access to the ballot for Americans, advances commonsense election integrity reforms, and protects our democracy from emerging threats. This bill includes many provisions of the For the People Act (HR1/S1) but reflects feedback from state and local election officials to ensure that the people responsible for implementing these reforms are able to do so effectively.”

Maine’s League of Women Voters issued a statement after the bill was introduced in the US Senate, saying, in part, that it supports the “Freedom to Vote Act, a bill that protects and expands the right to vote, decreases the influence of money in politics, and curbs partisan gerrymandering. The Freedom to Vote protects and expands ballot access for millions of Americans, especially those who are often targeted by anti-voter laws, voters of color, voters with disabilities, formerly incarcerated voters, women voters, young voters, and elderly voters.”

The League of Women Voters in Marin County, in northern California, agreed with the national League and other local Leagues, saying the “Freedom to Vote (Act) will put power back into the hands of American voters by prioritizing voting access and participation while also modernizing future elections to ensure a system that everyone can trust. Contact your senators today and tell them to vote yes on the Freedom to Vote Act. Return control of our government back where it belongs – into the hands of the people.”

National Urban League provides housing counseling for citizens facing foreclosure

By Emely Salguero
Nonprofit Sector News
December 10, 2021

A National Urban League program designed in 2009 to limit home foreclosures during the Great Recession has been overhauled to limit home foreclosures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program, Restore Our Homes, has been helping Americans, especially low-income and minority homeowners, attain and retain housing for many years, said Ayanna Fortson, the Urban League’s Vice President of Housing and Community Development.

“So whether they are currently behind on their payments or they believe that you know falling behind is imminent, then they’re able to seek counseling from our housing counseling affiliates,” Fortson told Nonprofit Sector News.

Fortson said the program’s housing counselors typically assess a client’s financial situation and do a type of “triage.” These counselors then walk clients through necessary steps and give them a time frame that will best guide them towards minimizing the chances of foreclosure.

The program’s mortgage assistance through federal funds is what most of the program’s clients seek for help, she said. The amount of assistance available varies by location based on location-specific guidelines.

Fortson said, “I think right now, you know, cash is king if you can help people by providing cash resources, that is largely why people are seeking our resources these days.”

The program operated a bit differently than it does now when it was launched in 2009.

Cy Richardson, the Urban League’s senior vice president for economic programs, told Nonprofit Sector News that a big part of Restore Our Homes during its early days were Home Rescue Fairs where people in need could receive assistance, in person, from certified housing counselors.

“Real time, you know in the moment, with folks clutching all their materials and documents from the banks, and so we were providing a real time kind of principal reduction loan modification framework for current homeowners in crisis,” Richardson said.

At the height of the program during the Great Recession’s housing crisis, Richardson said more than 30 Urban League affiliates across the United States locally hosted this program.

⌘ TO BE EQUAL



Current photo from the Urban League's website emphasizing its current work on voting rights legislation.

Although the focus of the program shifted after the Great Recession housing crisis, he said that Urban League maintains the importance of its loss mitigation and home retention work through its current Restore Our Homes program.

“2017 was the last community based operation but again the program is, you know, a ship at sea that never reaches port, right, it’s out there and that’s how we kind of organize and kind of assess the homeownership status in Black America,” Richardson said.

According to Richardson, the next iteration of this program will be a joint effort between the Urban League and the Black Home Ownership Collaborative called 3by30, helping three million more Black Americans become homeowners by 2030. It will leverage 3by30 the same infrastructure as Restore Our Homes.

“Restore our homes would be active in the kind of home retention component to achieving this goal over the next ten years,” he said.

The pandemic’s direct and indirect effects means foreclosures are occurring for a wide variety of reasons. Americans also have been avoiding foreclosure in various ways, most commonly by seeking forbearances, Fortson said. “We’ve actually had a decrease in the amount of outreach or the amount of calls as far as community seeking assistance from our agencies.”

Restore Our Homes services are available anywhere the Urban League has a local affiliate, and Fortson pointed out that many of its housing counselors are from the areas they serve. One problem is that many people eligible for Restore Our Homes' services are not even aware of it, particularly unfortunate for low-income residents.

“It can be very scary, and this is what we’ve heard from the clients, it can be very scary for them to navigate that on their own,” Fortson said.

When people who need Restore Our Homes find it, Fortson said, “They’re excited and appreciative because though us they’re able to talk to someone.” The Washington-based National Urban League, founded in 1910, has about 90 affiliates that serve about 300 communities in 36 states and the District of Columbia. It also provides services in education, healthcare, jobs, and social justice, in addition to lobbying, conducting research, and pursuing civil rights-oriented litigation.

Local Lions Clubs pitched in on pandemic while still pursuing other local and international priorities



Moscow Central Lions Club's newly elected officers for the 2021-22 year. (Photo courtesy Moscow Central Lions Club.)

By Naga Prudhvi Panguluri

Nonprofit Sector News

July 14, 2021

Americans will never know even how many individuals, nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies—let alone all of their names—that volunteered or donated to help the U.S. public through the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting recession. So many jumped in, without being asked and without taking credit.

Around the country, one such organization was Lions Clubs International. The Illinois-based nonprofit is familiar to people around the globe for its [Sight-first project](#), which helps to restore, improve, and preserve vision of millions worldwide. In the last 30 years, the Lions Club (motto: “We Serve”) has built 1,351 eye centers and performed 9.6 million cataract (lens replacement) surgeries in various countries. Founded in 1917, Lions has 1.4 million members in 48,000 clubs in almost every country.

Although the parent organization has set its focus on projects like [Sight first](#) and [Diabetes](#) on a global scale, local Lions Clubs are free to implement service projects of their choice as long as they are feasible.

Under President Tara Lew, who finished her tenure at the end of June, the Moscow (Idaho) Central Lions Club implemented a service project where its members distributed masks, care packages, and sanitizer bottles in downtown Moscow right after the town registered its first case last June. (Moscow is in northwestern Idaho, about 90 miles south of Spokane, Wash.)

Despite such preventive measures by the Lions Club and many other agencies, organizations, corporations, and individuals—including the University of Idaho—the city of Moscow registered 3,052 positive cases and 12 deaths to date.

The Moscow Central Lions Club was not only ramping up its help to others, but faced a host of its own operational issues over the last 15 months, forcing it to make quite a few changes.

“Pandemic pushed us into unprecedented circumstances. Non-profit service in the last 12 months had tons of limitations attached to it. It was tough having gotten used to our old methods,” said Lew, who also heads the club’s foundation. “But we were forced to adapt due to the shortage of volunteers, no in-person meetings, and other challenges pandemic threw at us.”

“A large portion of our club members were older, so we sent emails out to our club members to see if they needed help at home with groceries and such other things,” she added.

On top of their COVID-19 service projects, Moscow Lions Club members also moved forward with the organization’s signature service projects. Providing eyeglasses, eye screenings, and hearing aids to the community members has been a project of top priority for the Moscow-based local NPO before and during the pandemic.

Lew explained the relationship between the international Lions headquarters and local clubs such as Moscow’s. “With respect to what projects we are working on locally, you know we can do whatever we want,” she said. “There is no one telling us like you need to be doing this or that. We take on projects that we want to help with.”

The Moscow Central Lions Club has carried out several local projects based on community requirements. It has partnered with Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit organization based in Atlanta, to build needed wheel chair ramps.

“We do service projects like highway and park cleanups, but our biggest local project is installing ramps for those in need,” said Kelly Zakariasen, current president of the Moscow Central Lions Club. “We have partnered with the Palouse Habitat for humanity to build and install ramps at people’s private homes if they have a medical need where they cannot go upstairs.”

In addition to its various community projects, the club offers \$1500 college scholarships. Zakariasen said, “We give out four of those (scholarships) every year and more sometimes. But to receive the funding they must be from this community and should attend an in-state college.”

Although the Club is heavily invested in building ramps, it makes sure that Lions members spend enough time to bring the community together with activities such as triathlons, 5K races, and cleanups.

But despite their freedom with the special projects at local level, local Lions organizations are obliged to follow protocols laid down by the parent organization, and should emphasize in their communities the projects implemented at the global and national level, such as vision and diabetes.

Lew said, “There are certain protocols like emphasizing our projects to the community, electing officers before the deadlines, reporting our community service hours, and for prepaying our dues, but as far as local service projects go, it is totally up to us.”

Southwestern Ohio’s Urban League Working Hard on COVID Vaccinations



National Urban League website photo

By Megan Finke

Nonprofit Sector News

July 7, 2021

Like so many other nonprofit organizations nationwide, the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio (ULGSO) is fighting to get its community members vaccinated against COVID-19.

This affiliate of the National Urban League serves 12 counties from Dayton to Northern Kentucky and comprises both the Greater Cincinnati Urban League and the Miami Valley Urban League.

Since the coronavirus outbreak, ULGSO has hosted a site where people can get tested and since April 2021, be vaccinated.

The site, at 3458 Reading Road in Cincinnati, and is open every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for free COVID-19 vaccines.

Ashlee Young, vice president for policy and strategic initiatives, says even before the vaccination site opened, the ULGSO worked with local health departments to develop lists of people who were interested in getting vaccinated.

Access for the Black community a primary goal of National Urban League. “We’ve been really committed to ensuring that the black community has access to accurate information around COVID-19, equitable access to vaccines, and testing,” Young said.

As the vaccine became more available, the ULGSO worked with the Ohio Council of Urban Leagues to push the importance of having equitable access. Writing letters to Governor DeWine asking for vaccines and giving the community informational sessions like, Corona 101, is just some of what they did.

“Part of that was really making sure that vaccination distribution included race and ethnic minorities, making sure that there was training around data collection, because there’s still a lot of unknowns,” Young said. “And also just an emphasis for them to make sure that they were partnering with trusted black communities for vaccination rollout.”

With these efforts, a vaccination site was able to be established in Cincinnati that is accessible to many. The site has a bus stop across the street and the League also has community partners that provide free transportation.

The clinic takes walk-ins as well scheduled appointments that are scheduled by texting VACCINE to 2797979.

“People just have questions and they want answers,” Young said. “And we want to be able to make sure we can provide those answers to them so that they can make their own decision around getting vaccinated.”

The ULGSO also has various information about COVID-19, the Cincinnati area, and the Black experience with the virus on its website, such as this video: <https://www.ulgso.org/covid-19>.

Feeding America working overtime on hunger with continued volunteers shortage



The River Valley Regional Food Bank, part of Feeding America, distributes needed food in eight West Central counties of Arkansas.

By Jolie Shave

Nonprofit Sector News

May 20, 2021

At one point during the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Guard was working in about half of Feeding America's food banks to help offset the loss of volunteers. And while many at the national organization—a network of more than 200 food banks—are optimistic about recent rebounding, two thirds of Feeding America sites still are short on volunteers.

A shortage of volunteers would be an issue anytime for an organization normally serving about 50 million people, but as a result of record high unemployment rates, food insecurity rates skyrocketed. Fortunately, major and minor donors to Feeding America, which typically has the second highest annual revenues of any US nonprofit, stepped up to help financially.

For example, in January, Feeding America announced that Subaru of America would be continuing their partnership and donating 100 million meals, doubling a donation of 50 million meals that Subaru of America made in April 2020.

“We were in a very fortunate position, many of our financial donors just continued to step up during what was really a crisis moment for us,” said Lauren Biedron, vice president of corporate partnerships of Feeding America.

When deciding how these donations are distributed, Biedron said that some partners come to them with an interest in a specific geography, such as areas that align with where they're doing business. Otherwise, Feeding America uses its data to determine the areas of greatest need, which are often communities that face hunger at disproportionate rates.

The recent Subaru donation allowed Feeding America to create a COVID-19 response fund, used to support the network of 200 food banks. One food bank that received aid from the response fund was River Valley Regional Food Bank in Arkansas, the state with the second highest food insecurity rate in the country as of 2018.

Justin Bates, marketing and development coordinator for River Valley Regional Food Bank, said his food bank was not alone. In fact, “there are six Feeding America food banks in Arkansas and I know that all six of us have been beneficiaries of Feeding America support throughout this pandemic.”

Feeding America's local food banks also work with a network of 60,000 partner agencies, including local shelters, food pantries and soup kitchens, to coordinate equal and sufficient distribution. With increased need and more donations during the COVID-19 pandemic, communication has been crucial to ensure that resources are shared and nothing goes to waste.

“I have five sister food banks and, if I think I'm going to get too much [food], I'll call one of my sister food banks and offer it to them,” said Tracy Engel, director of River Valley Regional Food Bank. “If there are weeks like last week, where I had four [semi trailer trucks] of produce, I share it with my sister food banks. So we try to make sure none of it goes to waste.”

. Again, however, one thing local food banks have not had in excess during the pandemic is volunteers. Volunteers typically help with anything from packing food boxes to helping run distributions. Staff at local food banks have had to pick up the extra work, in addition to the National Guard in some places.

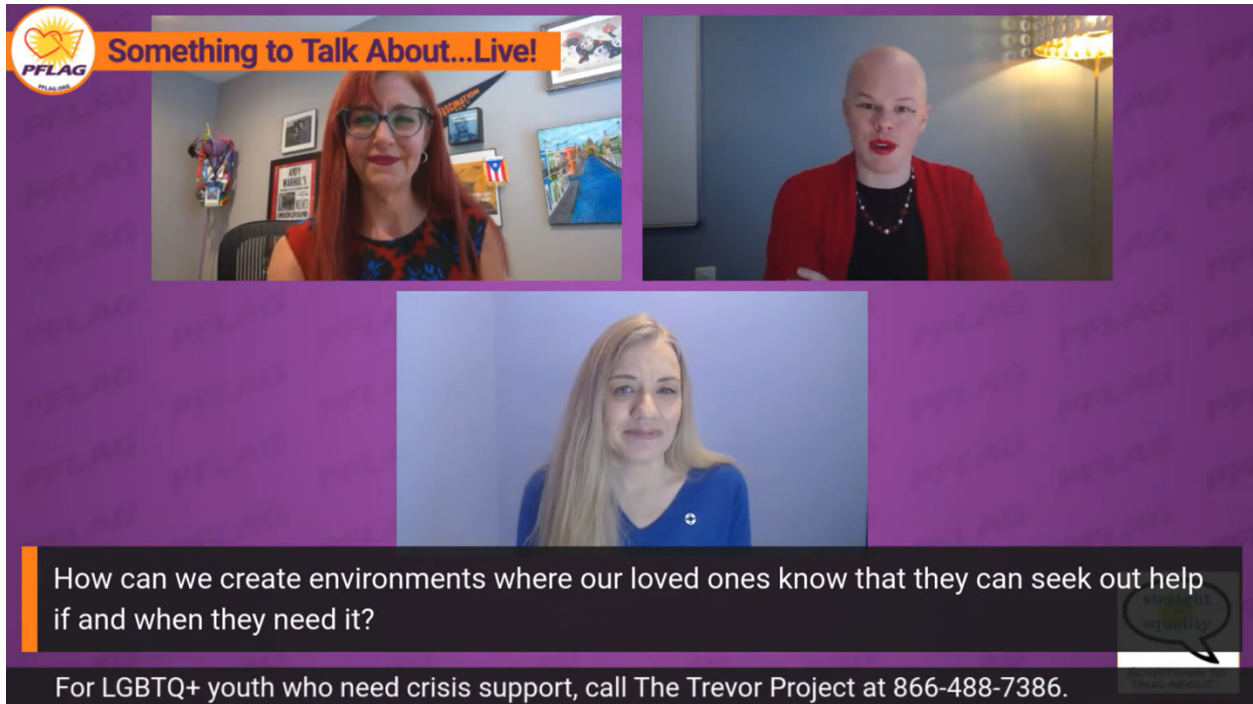
“Annually, the Feeding America network relies on the support of about 2 million volunteers,” said Biedron. “And when the pandemic hit, because of local health restrictions, that labor force very much changed and shrunk overnight.”

For a small-staffed food bank like River Valley Regional Food Bank, volunteers are coming from within their own building. “When it came to Christmas and Thanksgiving when we were going up to really impoverished apartment complexes and things, we would actually take some of the staff from the other side of the building with us,” said Engel. “So all of the departments here are really good to help one another.”

Aside from going directly to apartment complexes, River Valley Regional Food Bank staff members were coordinating pop-up food pantries in more rural communities where local food pantries had been temporarily shut down due to the pandemic. They relied on Facebook and word of mouth to spread word of exactly where the pop-up food pantries would be and what time.

Engel said, “By the time we got there, the parking lot was full and it was people from other communities, which is our purpose.”

PFLAG’s meetings by Zoom increased attendance, are likely to stay after the pandemic



“Something to Talk About Live” on April 15, 2021 discussed mental health and talking about suicide. Clockwise from top left, Jean-Marie Navetta, Director of Learning and Inclusion with PFLAG National; Sam Brinton, Vice President of Advocacy and Government Affairs with The Trevor Project; and Doreen Marshall, Vice President of Mission Engagement, with AFSPNational.

By Mackenzie Mayer

Nonprofit Sector News

April 21, 2021

PFLAG, formerly known as Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, had a long history of regular in-person meetings, so successfully that the national organization has also long boasted of more than 400 chapters and more than 200,000 members and supporters around the United States. But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, PFLAG needed to make a major change, and quickly.

The national PFLAG immediately, strongly recommended all chapters cancel its vital in-person meetings, used for members to support and educate each another on LGBTQ topics. The national organization then provided PFLAG Connects, an enterprise-level Zoom platform for use by all chapters. About 150 PFLAG chapters regularly use the platform, says Laura McGinnis, PFLAG’s media relations manager.

“The program was conceived, developed and launched in a matter of weeks,” she said. “Necessity was the mother of invention in that one.”

Jamie Curtis, PFLAG’s National Director of Chapter Engagement, says chapters that do not use the Zoom platform are still connecting in other ways. Some smaller chapters have partnered with

others to help point people to PFLAG Connects meetings, if their own chapter is not holding them. Some are instead doing phone calls with people who need help in a one-on-one environment or are alternatively reaching out to people on social media.

The Connects program has also provided chapters with information on how to hold the virtual meeting, including the basics of the technology but also ways to make sure everyone feels comfortable to share in a virtual setting.

PFLAG in 2019 had 2019 revenue of over \$2.5 million, which is used to complete the mission of building on a foundation of loving families united with LGBTQ+ people and allies who support one another, and for its members to educate themselves and their communities by speaking as advocates until all persons respect and affirm LGBTQ+ people.

“No matter where you are in that journey of acceptance, and affirmation, even if you are just sort of questioning, ‘how is it that I deal with all these questions?’ you are welcome at a PFLAG meeting,” McGinnis said.

So PFLAG had to figure out how Zoom could be used in the most personal and effective ways for it. Its Columbus, Ohio, chapter reports success with this socially distancing project. Since holding PFLAG Connects meetings starting in May 2020, the Columbus chapter says more parents are attending meetings virtually than usually did in person, including more couples and even entire families.

Jaron Terry, the Columbus chapter’s board president, often leads the meetings. Meetings are private, so pass codes are necessary to enter a Zoom waiting room. The online gatherings typically consist usually of all attendees introducing themselves, followed by a speaker and then a question-and-answer forum. All participants are asked to keep their cameras on during the meeting to increase participants’ comfort levels, and everyone must be called on or raise their hand before speaking to prevent interruptions, Terry said.

Curtis says the virtual meetings were already a thought before the pandemic as a way to involve more people in the organization. The pandemic just vastly sped up the project’s conception. PFLAG plans to continue the Connects program even after the pandemic is over, to accommodate people in remote areas without a chapter near them or anyone who would struggle to get to a meeting anytime they wanted to for any reason. The organization has recently brought on additional staff to continue PFLAG Connects and will soon roll out a survey to get a better understanding of how the chapters are using the program and how successful it has been.

“Something to Talk About Live” on Dec. 3, 2020 discussed the state of H.I.V. for World AIDS Day. Left to right, Jean-Marie Navetta, Director of Learning and Inclusion with PFLAG National; Greg Millett, Vice President and Director of Public Policy with AmFAR.

Since the pandemic’s start, the national PFLAG has also switched its 30-minute live broadcast, Something to Talk About Live, to weekly from monthly. Broadcasts are devoted to discussions of LGBTQ topics in the news media and political issues such as the Equality Act, the recent

Bostock v. Clayton County Supreme Court ruling, and the inclusion of trans people in the military.

McGinnis said that prior to the pandemic, the program was not as interactive as it is now—viewers now can submit questions and discussions proceed as public forums. The weekly broadcast is live at 4:30 p.m. EST on Thursdays on Facebook, and previous weeks' recorded broadcasts also are available there.

Since PFLAG is still necessary, it is “fantastic” that the organization has chapters and members “all over the place,” McGinnis said. “I think something that the pandemic has made clear is that people need PFLAG, they are reaching out to us online, and even if there is not a chapter near you, you can connect with people.”

Since Joe Biden took office as president, the national PFLAG also has been actively working to support the Equality Act, which has been introduced as a bill in Congress. As the PFLAG website puts it, “In addition to adding protections based on sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity, to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Equality Act enumerates what ‘public accommodation’ includes and provides more protection from discrimination to more people in more places. This includes transportation, health care, banking, entertainment, legal services, accounting, shelters and food banks, gyms, travel agencies, salons, and even funeral services. The Equality Act also ensures that the U.S. Constitutionally protected right to freedom of religion is preserved.”

National Urban League works on broadband internet access for all Americans with its report and comprehensive plan



National
Urban League

THE LEWIS LATIMER PLAN FOR DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

By Megan Elaine Finke

Nonprofit Sector News

April 13, 2021

The National Urban League already has had conversations with “senior leaders in government” about its new plan, released in late January, to get broadband internet access to all Americans.

Although about 85% of all Americans have broadband access, the Urban League stresses that only about 54% of households with total incomes less than \$50,000 have broadband access.

Broadband internet is a high-capacity transmission technique using a wide range of frequencies, which allows simultaneous communication of large amounts, and many types, of internet content.

The Urban League's comprehensive report, The Lewis Latimer Plan for Digital Equity and Inclusion, addresses the continued and increased digital divide and those impacted. During the pandemic, many Americans lost access to broadband internet and relatively few gained it. "This disproportionately impacted African-Americans, people of color, those in rural America, and low-income families," the NUL said.

Edward Smith, senior director of the Lewis Latimer Plan, says the digital divide has increased due to the "economic crisis," left by COVID-19, "social and civil rights," following the killing of George Floyd and the "political and civic crisis that we've seen with the extremely divided political climate that we have in America."

"Not having access to broadband and not being able to afford broadband and then not be able to utilize broadband are going to have terrible, terrible consequences, far worse than they've had up until now," Smith said. "And we're seeing it already."

Ongoing "digital divide" issues, "...have been recognized for a long time by policymakers, and scholars and experts as being extremely harmful from social economic health, educational and employment," Smith said.

The Latimer Plan has "certainly sparked conversations and it started people talking through ideas and, and to be honest, the principal goal here is to create a more equitable and inclusive society," Smith explained. "And so that's our objective."

The Urban League says "the Latimer plan addresses 'the three A's'—availability, adoption, and access to economic opportunities." Furthermore, it explores five digital gaps: the availability gap, the adoption gap, the affordability gap, the access-to-economic-opportunity gap, and the utilization gap.

The availability gap covers the issue of people being unable access to broadband networks and various results on what happens in these situations. The adoption gap covers those who have not brought broadband into their homes and why.

The affordability gap explores the issue of millions of Americans not being able to afford broadband internet access. "Surveying indicates that the biggest reason by far that people don't adopt is affordability," Smith said. The utilization gap covers how people use digital platforms and the services on them. The access-to-economic-opportunity gap explains how opportunities through internet access are not equitably distributed through society, particularly Black and Brown communities.

"That is in recognition of the fact that the benefits and wealth creation that has been driven by this digital economy, that we have hundreds of billions of dollars of wealth creation, has been driven by the deployment of broadband networks," Smith said. "And the internet economy that has come out of it, that the access to an opportunity to benefit from that has largely not been equitably shared."

Through the Latimer plan, resolutions to each gap are proposed and four achievable goals are set: “Deploying networks everywhere, getting everyone connected, creating new economic opportunities to participate in the growth of the digital economy and using the networks to improve how we deliver essential services, in particular in workforce deployment, health care and education.”

Smith emphasized, “There are parts of the plan that address and look for solutions to all of those and recognize that today, when the internet is a major and, frankly, in our opinion, nearly indispensable medium for social interaction, and economic activity....We’re living in the future.”

Aside from the Lewis Latimer plan, the Urban League has engaged in telecommunications policies, studied and advocated for the digital divide for years.

Smith is not an Urban League employee but has worked in telecommunications policy for a “long time.” He said the “National Urban League has been an active player in working to make sure that technology and telecommunications are equitably, are being equitably availed of the people [so they] are able to access them and afford them regardless of their economic situation or their station or their race or their geography.”

United Way plans rebuilding year in 2022 following recovery year of 2021



Image Copyright United Way 2021

Lindsey Potter

Nonprofit Sector News

April 9, 2021

United Way Worldwide has been serving its mission of improving lives by mobilizing the power of communities to advance the common good since 1887. This year, their mission in providing accessible healthcare for all shifted to focusing on COVID-19 recovery.

United Way Worldwide, for its 2022 agenda, is hoping to focus on rebuilding rather than recovery.

“And we are continuing to move forward with that with the new Biden administration,” said Dave Wallace, health policy director for United Way Worldwide. “And we’ve, you know, focused on a number of issues that will, one will just will help the nonprofit sector at large with the charitable deduction and a PPP program to include the nonprofit sector, but also helping families specifically that are impacted not only by the pandemic, but the economic crisis that ensued because of it.”

Usually, when it comes to advocacy work in health, United Way Worldwide creates an agenda that covers a two-year term of Congress. He said that, for 2021, the organization decided to set a one-year agenda instead.

“And then refreshing the agenda for 2022. So 2021, we’re really focusing and drilling down on COVID recovery. Whereas next year, we’re hoping...we could focus more on rebuilding,” Wallace said. “So specific to healthcare and in our past versions of our health policy, federal policy priorities, it’s always been focused on expanding access to affordable health care, and ensuring that health care coverage is accessible, affordable and adequate.”

United Way not only focuses its lobbying on healthcare, but education and financial stability as well. He said that United Way has been actively engaged in supporting the Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES).

Wallace said the largest change that United Way made in its health care policy priorities has been addressing the impacts COVID-19 had on communities of color.

“We know that deep inequities have always existed in access and affordability of healthcare, and in health outcomes. And so COVID hasn’t just amplified that and made it worse. And so we are being much more specific and deliberate in making sure that that expanding access to health care, increasing access to Medicaid, protecting Medicaid, and is reaching communities that are hardest hit by the pandemic,” Wallace said. “COVID has really changed the lens and how we are seeing health inequities and how we’re trying to address those by the ACA and Medicaid and making them more affordable and more accessible.”

Wallace said that United Way’s advocacy work for the 2021 year is pushing for a larger Medicaid program and protecting the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

According to its website, “Medicaid provides health coverage to millions of Americans, including eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults and people with disabilities. Medicaid is administered by states, according to federal requirements. The program is funded jointly by states and the federal government.”

With Medicaid, United Way is working to expand access to it especially in states that have yet to. Wallace explained that Medicaid is a federal-state ownership, meaning that states fund these programs and then the federal government matches them, usually with a 70-90% match. Many states, however, saw a fall in tax revenue when COVID-19 created an economic crisis. (Many other states saw little difference and a few had increases.)

“COVID has had a dramatic impact on people’s access to health care. First is because of job loss, people have lost their employer based coverage. So they’re having to turn to Medicaid to find health care and affordable health care,” Wallace said. “So we’re seeing this vast increase in the amount of people trying to enroll in Medicaid.”

He said that increasing the federal tax rate became the United Way’s main priority in 2020.

The ACA, usually referred to as “Obamacare,” is a health care reform law that went into effect in March of 2010. People who are eligible can enroll as long as they meet a set deadline in the fall. Wallace said that in circumstances where people lose their jobs, losing their health insurance, there is an extended enrollment period outside of the annual deadline.

“What we’re trying to do now with the pandemic is expand that special enrollment period so that somebody who’s uninsured, regardless of the stark circumstances, can enroll in an ACA plan at any time during that extended special enrollment period. So we’re seeking the federal government to open up and expand the enrollment period for the ACA. And to put in place more funding that will increase the tax subsidies that are part of that. So plans will be more affordable,” Wallace said.

Wallace explained that the way United Way’s lobby is that United Way Worldwide provides tools and resources for the nearly 1,800 local United Way units across the country to use in advocating with their own members of Congress and districts. Federally, Wallace said that all United Ways advocate for the same thing.

In Tennessee, Mary Graham, President and CEO of United Ways of Tennessee, said that her organization works with United Way Worldwide to speak with their state’s congressional delegation in Washington. “And we get a lot of policy done in partnership where we can with the governor’s office and state agencies too. It’s not all legislative—sometimes it’s just about the implementation and the practical, how things play out that we work on that and and we do try to support our members as they work on local politics.”

Graham pointed out, “All of my members have relationships with their mayors, city and county mayors and are working with them on local policies and we support them in that wherever we can.”

She said her United Ways of Tennessee's main focus right now is allocating unspent Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to help low-income families and customizing their work to meet the needs of their communities.

United Way also has a free and confidential service called 211 that helps people find local resources across North America, 24/7. It is a helpline as well as website that anyone can turn to for any assistance and support.

Southerlyn Reisig, director of media and public relations for United Way Worldwide, said Wallace and his team uses 211 to accurately assess needs that people have. Call rates increased significantly since March 2020, in some places by 400%, she said.

Reisig said so many calls into 211 are allowing data collection that informs the group about needs. During the pandemic and job losses, a lot of calls have been about mental health needs, other healthcare and access to food.

ASPCA Fights Factory Farming



Courtesy of ASPCA. Farm animals that are Animal Welfare Approved

By Ronnie Allen Campman

Nonprofit Sector News

April 7, 2021

Not only has the COVID-19 pandemic brought attention to public health, but also to the inhumane treatment of animals due to factory farming. In a survey taken six months into the global COVID-19 pandemic, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or ASPCA, found that 89% of Americans are concerned by the impacts of industrial animal agriculture on poor animal welfare, worker safety and public health risks.

In factory farming conditions, chickens, pigs and cows are kept in overcrowded cages, undergo painful procedures and are regularly dosed with antibiotics to prevent disease outbreaks. At any moment, tens of thousands of animals suffer unnatural conditions in these industrial facilities.

Daisy Freund, the ASPCA's vice president of farm animal welfare, said, "The problems with factory farming stem from the system's single-minded focus on efficiency and ultimately profit, which is consistently at the expense of animals, workers, consumers, rural communities and the environment."

ASPCA's report on its survey stresses the many COVID outbreaks at slaughterhouses due to unsafe working conditions, resulting in thousands of workers catching the virus and hundreds of workers dying because of it. As a result of slaughterhouse closures, animals backed up on farms and hundreds of thousands were killed using inhumane "depopulation" methods.

With this in mind, the ASPCA is working to eradicate factory farming by helping consumers find food from higher welfare sources, partnering with companies to commit to better practices and asking lawmakers to ban inhumane factory farming practices.

Freund says animals almost no on-farm legal protections, but the ASPCA is working with local, state and federal lawmakers to change that. "We're helping to pass state bans on some of the worst factory farming practices like cage-confinement, fighting for greater transparency in agriculture, advocating for government funding to support higher welfare farming, and working to strengthen existing laws so they keep farm animals safe from suffering."

U.S. Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Elizabeth Warren (D-NJ) are among the prominent politicians against factory farming. In a statement supporting Sen. Booker's bill to phase out factory farming by 2040, Warren said, "The COVID-19 crisis will make it easier for Big Ag to get even bigger, gobble up smaller farms, and lead to fewer choices for consumers."

In a December 2020 tweet, Booker wrote, "These cramped warehouses of livestock are breeding grounds for infectious disease. Ending the cruel practice of factory farming can help prevent future pandemics."

Most recently in November, the ASPCA has been working towards terminating "ag-ag laws" across the country. These laws silence people who work to reveal animal abuse on industrial farms.

"Ag-gag laws are unconstitutional and have no place in our society," Freund said. The ASPCA has actively defeated ag-gag bills in more than 20 states by lobbying and organizing on the ground wherever they appear. (Such laws are reminiscent of so-called "veggie libel" laws, which allow farmers and ranchers to sue for damages when news coverage may have damaged the market value of farm products; rarely invoked or challenged, they probably also are unconstitutional.)

Along with fighting whistleblower bills, ASPCA launched its Shop with your Heart Program in 2016. When a consumer "shops with their heart" they are refusing to buy factory-farmed dairy, eggs and meats. Some products can bear terms that indicate meaningful animal welfare standards but actually don't. The program clears up this confusion by providing label guides, lists of products that have animal welfare certifications such as Animal Welfare Approved, Certified Humane and plant-based products—and where to buy them, according to Freund.

She explained that terms such as "natural" or "free range" sound like they require more humane treatment for animals, but in reality the product can showcase these claims while coming from farms that raise animals in crowded conditions.

The ASPCA was founded in 1866 with the mission "to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States." According to the ASPCA website, more than 1500 animals were adopted from the ASPCA Adoption Center and more than a thousand animals were placed with foster families in 2020 during the pandemic.

“While individual consumer action is important, the changes we so desperately need will not be made without collective action,” Freund said.

Broad cross-section of Asian-American nonprofits fighting new wave of violence and prejudice



Protests against violence aimed at Asian-Americans and Asian immigrants are being held nationwide.

By Megan Finke

Nonprofit Sector News

April 4, 2021

National nonprofit organizations for Asian Americans have quickly moved to add their voices and their resources to a growing fight among a broad cross-section of all Americans against violence against and other prejudice affecting Asian Americans.

A year ago, when the intensity of coronavirus grew, the World Health Organization (WHO) urged the entire world to avoid using phrases such as “Chinese virus” or “Wuhan virus” due to the potential backlash such language could cause for Asians and persons of Asian descent. But, on March 16, 2020, then-President Trump tweeted Chinese virus for the first but not the last time. The NYTimes said Trump first argued that these phrases are not racist or discriminatory because the virus came from China. However, about eight days later, Trump rescinded his statement and stopped linking the COVID-19 with China, at least for a while.

However, the damage was apparently done. The Washington Post has connected language and claims made by Trump to the exact result WHO had feared. Other news outlets such as CNN “determined that that name is both inaccurate and is considered stigmatizing.”

Flash forward a year, and on March 19, 2021, three days after Trump again tweeted “Chinese virus,” eight people were shot in various Atlanta spas, six of the victims being Asian or Asian-American women. Multiple reports tied the attack to racism despite initial denials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Of course many have come together to #StopAsianHate, according to The New York Times, such as hundreds of activists gathering in Atlanta and marching from Woodruff Park in downtown Atlanta to the Georgia state capitol, where many more activists were waiting for them.

But in recent weeks, the Asian American Bar Association of New York, in cooperation with Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP—one of the nation’s most prestigious law firms—has published an indepth review of the increase of violence against Asian Americans since COVID-19. An extensive list of examples can be found throughout the 49-page report.

The Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce has issued a statement regarding Asian-targeted hate crimes and how they damage the Asian community as a whole.

“We believe it is important for everyone to consider the impact of their words and actions on the country’s estimated 21 million Asian American Pacific Islanders, and to not tolerate aggression in the workplace, or the public arena,” the statement reads. “Hate against some of us, harms all of us.”

In addition, they encourage those around them, like members, partners and sponsors to, “acknowledge, amplify, and denounce racism and the ongoing hate crimes targeting the Asian community,” the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce said.

Asian-American organizations such as the South Asian Bar Association have allied themselves with Asian-American and Pacific Islander nonprofits to try to help.

The South Asian Bar Association's president-elect, Samir Mehta, asserted that violence and prejudice against East Asian-Americans has broader affects and wider importance. "Most of the actions that have been unfortunately targeting the Asian American community but has not focused on the South Asian community, distressingly at the East Asian community, which is a group that we're allied with and we care about."

Mehta added, "Our biggest goal in all of this is to support our community, but to see ourselves in the context of what's happening to other communities that we are going to be expanding our initiative and efforts to."

Meals on Wheels obtains federal aid, raises large sums, but demand just keeps increasing



Greater Spokane County (Wash.) Meals on Wheels is just one of thousands of local Meals on Wheels operations nationwide.

By Lindsey Potter

Nonprofit Sector News

April 2, 2021

The American Rescue Plan Act passed by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden last month included \$750 million for nutrition services, some of which will assist Meals on Wheels America continue its efforts to deliver food to the elderly in thousands of US communities.

Prior to the bill's passage, Meals on Wheels was concerned about solving its funding needs as the COVID-19 pandemic stretched out over a year and counting. Jenny Young, Vice President of Communications for Meals on Wheels America, said the national organization had previously been able to secure over \$975 million in emergency funding from the government plus raise over \$31 million in donations.

But, she said, there was still concern about sustainability, since seniors needing meals during the pandemic will still need them after it. "Even before COVID funding hadn't kept up with the pace of the need," Young said.

(Normally Meals on Wheels locally offer food delivery to homebound seniors who do not have others to rely on for necessities. A volunteer personally delivers the meal and socializes with the individual as well. Once the pandemic began taking a toll, these homebound seniors were also the ones at largest risk.)

Young recounted that when the pandemic hit, "We saw a huge surge in the need because seniors that weren't homebound prior to COVID are now realizing, 'I'm high risk, I need to stay at home as advised. But that means that I don't have the support I need for just basic necessities.' So while we were attempting to pivot our model, we were seeing our... local programs phones were ringing off the hook."

From that point, Young said, not only was there a need to quickly adapt to a new system of delivering meals but to do so at a larger scale as well.

Fortunately, Young said, the pandemic shined a spotlight on Meals on Wheels specifically because of social isolation, because everyone felt the ripple effects of that through different stages of lockdowns. For example, on Inauguration Day (January 20), a meme, consisting of a photo of Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) attending the event, went viral and Sanders began selling sweatshirts that became extremely popular. All of the proceeds went to Meals on Wheels Vermont, according to Sanders' official website.

Young said, "Using this COVID sort of microphone that has thrust us in the spotlight because we're so needed at this time, which a lot of a lot of nonprofits are really suffering at this time because of COVID and not expected to survive and we just happen to do something that was super relevant to the crisis at hand. So like how do we continue that momentum."

Details from local Meals on Wheels organizations around the country show local situations on the ground. For example, at the Meals on Wheels of Chicago, Executive Director Elise Geiger said that in March 2020 the meals her organization provided increased by 67% essentially overnight, serving 10,400 people a month.

“And so what we found though with COVID is that the senior centers closed,” Geiger said. “So those people were transferred over to home delivery. Of course families couldn’t get to their loved ones to help them where they typically would be supportive. And then, the typical home delivered meal program also increased because no longer could people sometimes go to the grocery stores.”

Geiger said that Meals on Wheels Chicago was able to adapt easily because of its private-public partnership with the city of Chicago. She said the city does intake and assessment for the program. Meals on Wheels Chicago also has a private contract with a company that prepares, cooks, packages and delivers the meals through a fleet of trucks.

“I think it’s been a little bit of a blessing that we have had a contracted delivery service and meal provider because...we didn’t have to suffer the absence of volunteerism, as some other people in different Meals on Wheels that I read. So I feel like that may be something that is a strategy to add in for other markets and I’m curious about that,” Geiger said.

Geiger said her organization focused on receiving grants from Meals on Wheels America, which is how funds are allocated to the local programs.

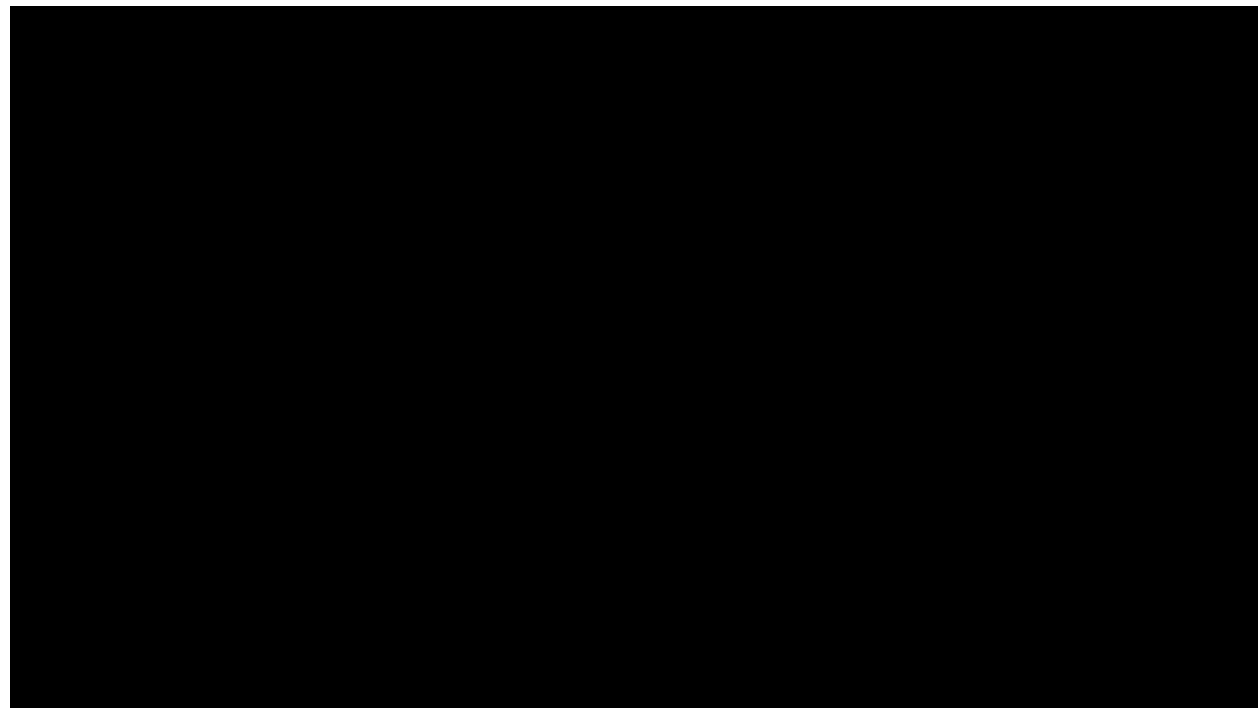
“We had to do away with our in-person event fundraisers, which took a hit so we concentrated a lot on grants,” Geiger said. “(We saw a) large increase in kind donations of food and hand sanitizer, masks and so on. And then, individual giving increased quite a bit as well.”

Janet Dixon, Director of Development and Communications for the Greater Spokane County (Wash.) Meals on Wheels, said that her program doubled the meals they were providing a month by October 2020, and now serve 27,000 meals a month including frozen meals prepared for weekends.

In Greater Spokane County, Meals on Wheels relies heavily on volunteers. The nonprofit had to retrain all of its volunteers because of COVID restrictions.

“Our volunteers are very close with their clients. You know, they go into their home, they talk to them about their grandkids, what they’re doing and that couldn’t happen anymore,” Dixon said. “You can’t go into the house so we had to retrain all of our volunteers to wear masks, make sure that they’re sanitizing coming and going.”

The need for volunteers increased drastically as result of doubling the food delivered. Dixon said that many of their volunteers suspended their work because they were above 65 years old and at risk themselves.



Tom Smith volunteers for Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels.

“So we’re down, probably 150 volunteers,” Dixon said. “And those meals have to be delivered. It’s not like you can just say ‘well you’ll have to wait.’ No. So we desperately need people. We need people in every single neighborhood so whatever neighborhood you live in, we’re working in.”

Young said that programs began shifting to provide frozen meals once or twice a week to limit the interaction between volunteers and clients, but then the social interaction need that Meals on Wheels usually provides is limited.

Some programs, including Dixon’s, began a volunteer program where clients would have a telephone call with a volunteer.

Young said, “So a lot of programs have shifted to doing like telephone reassurance type programs so volunteers that didn’t feel comfortable delivering meals anymore because of the risks of COVID we’re shifting to calling these people on a daily basis just check in connect, talk about nothing even or to check in on well-being so that’s been a very popular shift that we’ve seen to fill those gaps.”

Dixon said that her organization’s services go even beyond food delivery and social interaction. Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels is also continuing to advocate for homebound seniors to make sure seniors have access to testing and vaccination registration, since many seniors do not have Internet or cellphone services and can’t stand in line for hours to be seen.

Donation centers across US collecting convalescent plasma from those who recovered from COVID-19



Grove Church Blood Drive 2020. Courtesy of the American Red Cross.

By Ronnie Allen Campman
Nonprofit Sector News
February 17, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic is continuing to trigger blood shortages across the United States. However, new programs are now calling for not only blood donations but also convalescent plasma to fight the virus.

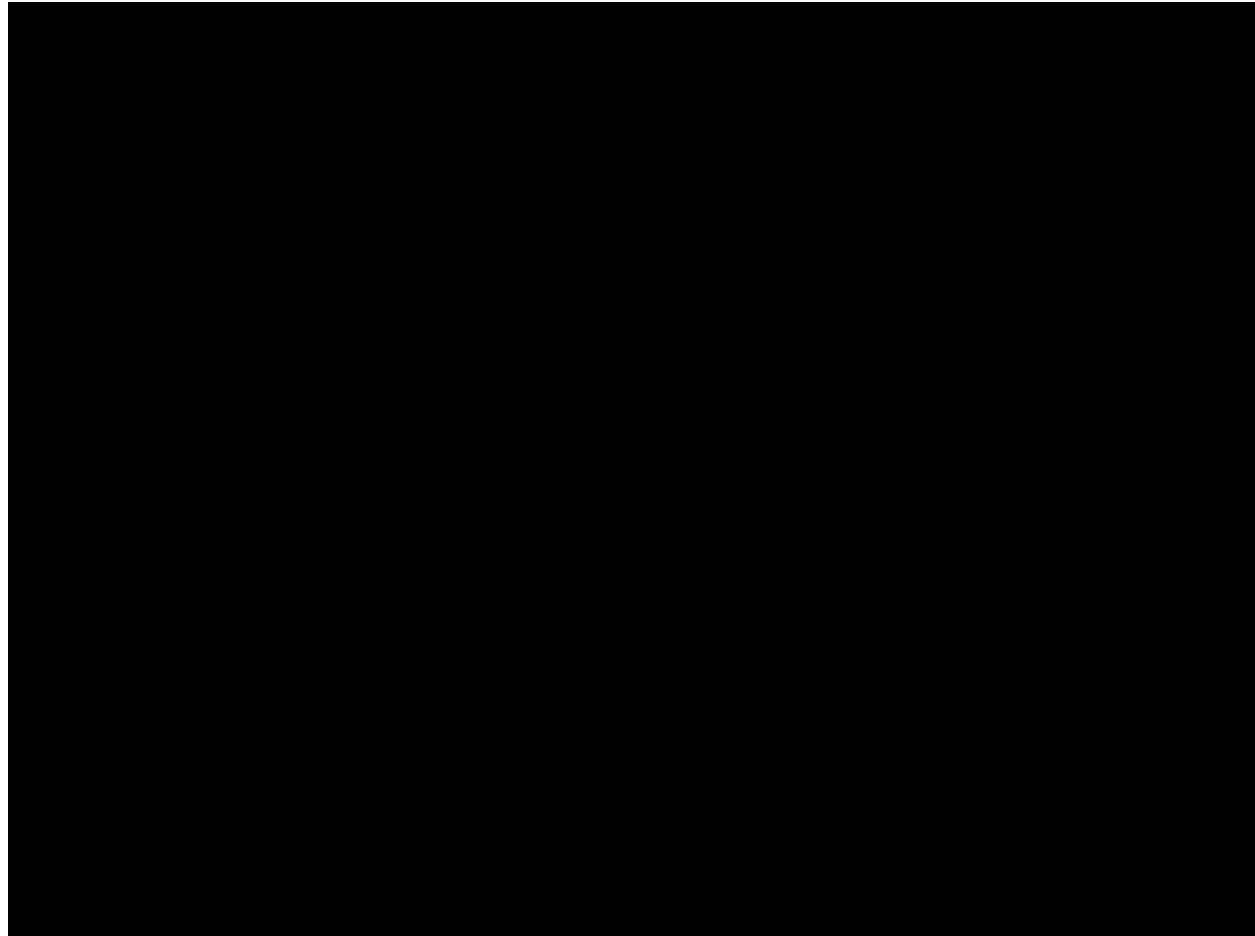
The blood shortage started when schools and businesses shut down in early March 2020, canceling thousands of blood drives that were planned, explained Rodney Wilson, an American Red Cross spokesperson. Along with the location of blood drives, posing a challenge is the current extreme winter weather. Snowstorms and more canceled more than 4,600 blood donations from late January into early February, especially in the Northeast.

On the opposite end of the USA, donations for the Blood Bank of Hawaii decreased about 15% in 2020, according to Chief Operating Officer Todd Lewis. (The Blood Bank of Hawaii is not affiliated with the American Red Cross.)

Yet, with blood drives cancelled and stay at home orders in place, a Hawaii man continues to donate blood and even hit a milestone of 600 donations during the pandemic. Gerald Yamane, 62, has donated blood every two weeks since 1976 with the Blood Bank of Hawaii.

“It is my purpose, my duty to help save the lives of the people and children of our ohana (family),” Yamane said. “If it’s not me, then who will? It’s my personal responsibility to do that.”

He says donating blood is beneficial for not only those who need it but also for himself. “I have to be healthy to donate so I try to watch my weight and blood pressure so it’s a good beneficial relationship.”



During the pandemic, a Hawaii resident donates blood a 600th time with the Blood Bank of Hawaii. Courtesy of the Blood Bank of Hawaii.

In Hawaii and other states, donating blood has remained an essential activity allowed during lockdown. “Mothers are in the hospital delivering babies who might hemorrhage, grandfathers can still have severe heart attacks and need immediate heart surgery and people injured in car accidents with severe trauma need medical treatment,” Wilson said. “All of those things must be able to continue and blood donations make that possible.”

Those who have recovered from COVID-19 are encouraged to donate their convalescent plasma. These individuals contain COVID-19-targeted antibodies. Antibodies are found in plasma, which can be donated to hospital patients to strengthen their immune system while fighting COVID.

The American Red Cross’ Convalescent Covid Plasma Program launched in April of 2020. In the first three months of the program, the Red Cross distributed more than 14,000 convalescent plasma products to critically ill COVID-19 patients, according to the program’s 2020 annual report.

In January 2021, The Blood Bank of Hawaii also announced its “Fight COVID with COVID” campaign to increase COVID-19 convalescent plasma inventory until the vaccine is widely distributed, Lewis said. With the new, more contagious COVID-19 strains reaching the U.S. and

the depletion of the national CCP supply, the goal of the campaign is to welcome 100-150 new donors a month, according to a Blood Bank of Hawaii press release.

“Only COVID-19 survivors have powerful antibodies to help hospitalized patients fight off the virus,” Lewis said.

However, now that there are more donors and less spaces available to host blood drives, donation centers are thinking more creatively. The Red Cross started working closely with churches, sports venues, police and fire stations—locations that don’t typically have a regular schedule of blood drives.

Safety protocols are in full effect at Red Cross blood drives across the country. Before donors walk in, temperatures are taken and hand sanitizer is used throughout the process. All donor touch-points are wiped down between each session. Every element of the blood drive is spaced further apart, like the blood donor beds, in accordance with the CDC guidelines.

At both Red Cross and Blood Bank of Hawaii blood drives, masks are required to be worn by staff and donors at all times.

At some blood drives, such as the Blood Bank of Hawaii, donations are being taken only by appointment to ensure social distancing. Health screenings are done prior to appointments as well.

To donate convalescent plasma, individuals must have a prior, verified diagnosis of COVID-19, but are now symptom-free and fully recovered. They must also meet regular blood donation eligibility requirements of being at least 17 years old and weigh 110 pounds. Donating convalescent plasma can take up to two hours while a regular blood donation takes 10 minutes.

Founded in 1941, Blood Bank of Hawaii is a nonprofit organization. Its mission is to provide a safe and adequate supply of blood, blood products and related transfusion services to Hawaii patients. As reported in a Hawaii Business magazine article, Blood Bank of Hawaii is the only provider for all 18 hospitals across the state of Hawaii, and a secondary provider for the military hospital at Tripler Army Medical Center, said CEO Kim-Anh Nguyen.

The American Red Cross was founded in 1881. Now the organization has more than 19,000 employees and 300,000 volunteers in the United States. Each year, the Red Cross collects more than 4.5 million blood donations and more than a million platelet donations. In 2020, the Red Cross distributed more than 6.4 million blood products to hospitals and transfusion centers, according to its 2020 annual report.

Many US YMCAs have been partially reinvented by the pandemic



Photo courtesy of YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago

By Lindsey Potter
Nonprofit Sector News
February 19, 2021

Coming up on a year now that the pandemic has forced widespread closures, and caused humanitarian and economic crises, YMCAs across the United States have taken the opportunity to support their communities in a new way.

Paul McEntire, chief operating officer for YMCA of USA, said that during the course of the pandemic no Y fully ceased operation unless it was permanently closing. If the physical location was closed, other services were still being offered. (However, several YMCAs around the country have merged with another YMCA, and some YMCAs have closed one or more of their branches.)

“Virtually all Y’s actually expanded some of their services, especially in the area of child care and feeding, especially feeding of children,” McEntire said. “And that’s

something the Y has gotten much more into in the last five years. But we've really expanded that work in COVID."

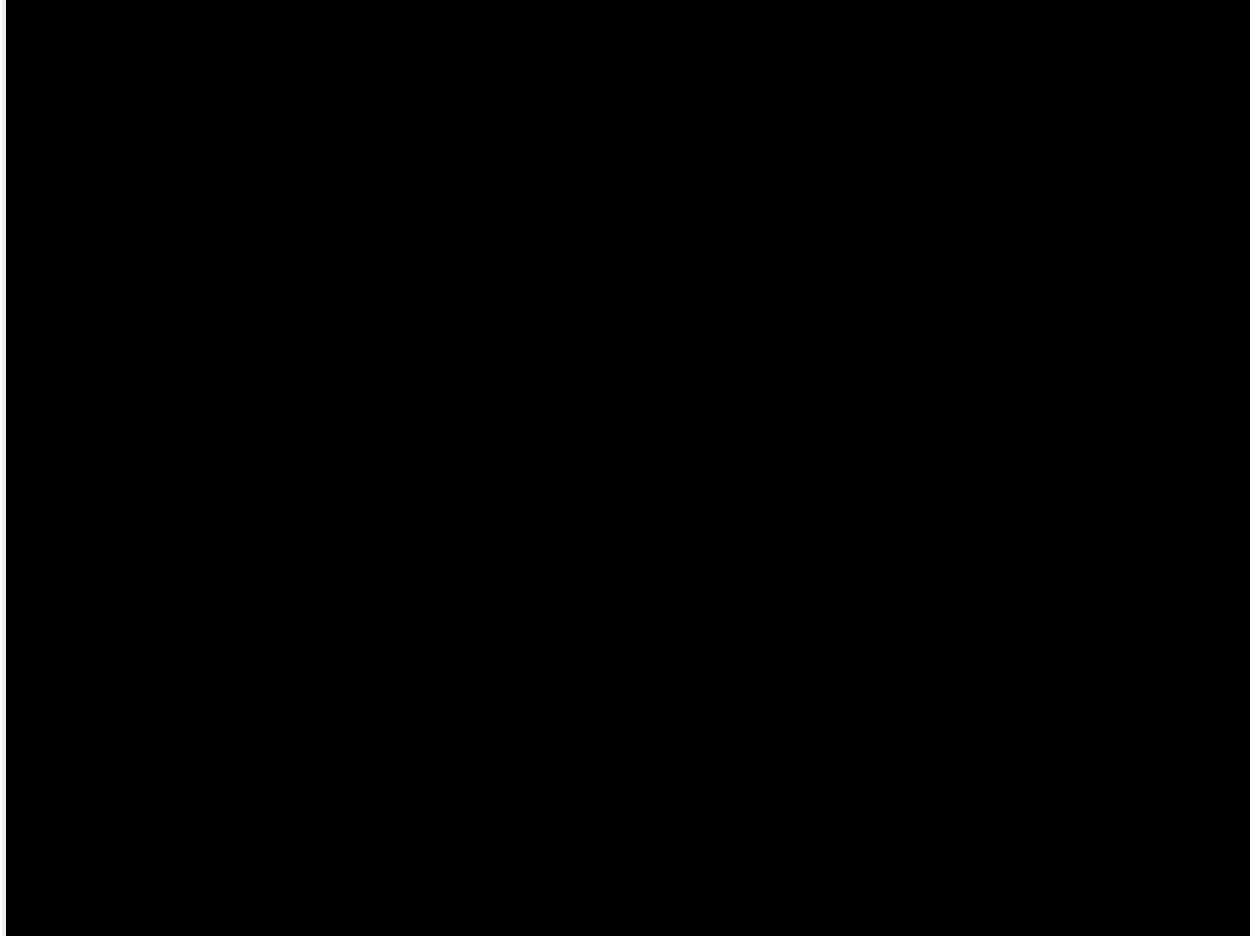
According to McEntire, about 1,500 Y's across the country have partnered with food banks, restaurants, churches and community groups to provide meals.

Stephen Ives, CEO and President of the YMCA of Greater Houston, said that when his Y's physical locations closed, they redeployed staff into food distribution.

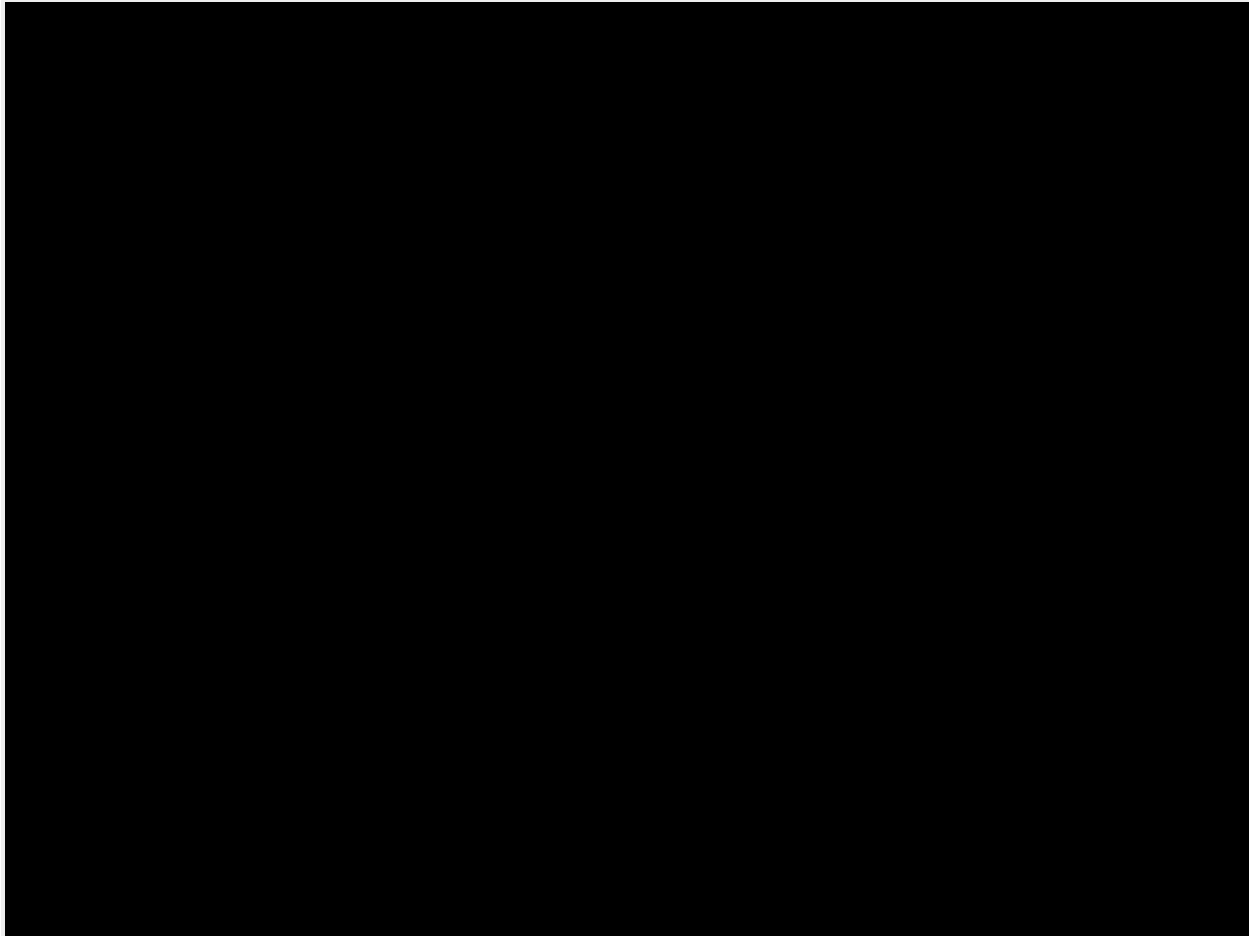
"So, we got very actively involved," Ives said. "We went from operating a few food pantries to now, at one point, over 20 distribution sites that we were managing...in partnership with the Greater Houston Food Bank and Brighter Bites."

YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago also worked with other nonprofits to respond to the community's most urgent needs.

Man-Yee Lee, director of communications for YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, said that YMCA partnered with new nonprofits to distribute not only food but other essential items. The Metropolitan Chicago YMCA branches offered their spaces for other organizations to use, since the buildings were closed for CDC and state regulations, she said.



Photos courtesy of YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago



“And that’s when the city of Chicago, actually, the mayor came to us,” Lee said. “And when she heard that we had said ‘hey we’ve got space, if any organizations need anything, let us know.’ And the mayor herself called us and said, ‘you know about that, have you ever sheltered the homeless because we’re having a problem with the homeless because...they can’t social distance.’ And we were like ‘oh, we can do that...we’ve got the space.’”

This YMCA also partnered with the American Red Cross to use Y facilities to host blood drives, said Lee.

In Nevada, Mo., the Osage Prairie YMCA has been feeding children through its program for nine years. Its CEO, Jeffrey Snyder, said his organization was well positioned to respond to the crisis that was created due to COVID.

“We haven’t stopped the feeding program as USDA waivers are still in place and currently we’re serving approximately 2,000 kids a week,” Snyder said, whose

organization is in a town of only about 8,300 residents. “Or a day really is what it comes down to, but we’re doing it through one pickup time.”

Not only have Ys adapted to their specific communities’ needs for meals but also for childcare. For example, Snyder said that the Osage Prairie YMCA transformed its facility in order to provide emergency childcare while also meeting CDC safety guidelines.

Snyder said, “In the summer, we are normally a day camp so it wasn’t out of the realm of what we could do. It was just out of season for what we normally do and just looked a little differently and obviously with...a lot more urgency than what we would have during a normal seasonal program that we would offer.”

In the Greater Houston Y’s, Ives said that childcare has disrupted normal operations but it is an important community need. Its facilities have provided childcare for essential workers as well as a place for children to do online learning once school started its virtual session.

“When there was so much uncertainty back in April (2020)...we were starting up childcare that initially was only serving essential workers,” McEntire said. “That’s why we hired (an) outside group to learn all the things to be certain we were being as safe as possible.”

In April of 2020, YMCA of USA hired the consulting company Environmental Health and Engineers to provide a “Field Guide” for resident camps. This help then advanced into assistance in writing guidelines for safe operations in all facility activities.

“So what we ended up doing was providing then a whole lot of follow-up trainings on all of that and then regular webinars that were significantly Q&A time so we developed a lot of papers in expertise,” McEntire said. “And so instead of every Y having to do all that work themselves we did that and then through different vehicles communicated that and make that available to them.”

The US currently has 795 YMCA corporate entities with more than 2,500 YMCA branches among them. YMCA of USA provides resources and coordination for those entities and branches, said McEntire. Y-USA oversees each YMCA to make sure that it is meeting its membership standards.

“Really the biggest thing is creating the network of Y’s across the country...to have that platform that we all can communicate together on and through and so forth,”

Snyder said. “And that’s something that the Y-USA really kind of keeps for us and manages that piece of it.”

Snyder said that having Y-USA’s help has been key for his small YMCA, where he is currently the only full-time staff member. Larger YMCAs located in metropolitan areas are able to have larger budgets, with larger sources of funding. With the help of Y-USA, small Ys can still have the same marketing and hire similar resources even though the income is lower.

The YMCA of Greater Houston has 20 branches currently open, compared with 26 before COVID forced closures, Ives said.

“One won’t get reopened for sure,” Ives said. “The other five are under consideration... and the board will be making final decisions on those in March or April. So we’ve been careful and deliberate about which centers we are able to open.”

These considerations include the facility’s ability to hold people while socially distanced and the volume of activity prior to the pandemic, according to Ives.

McEntire said that four or five local Y corporations have permanently closed because of COVID closures. “It’s an ongoing concern, but part of what we’re doing and then they’re doing with their local boards and volunteers is everything they can to get resources.”

Individual YMCAs situations vary significantly. Some YMCAs continued construction or planning for new facilities throughout the pandemic because capital project funds already were raised and committed separately from operating funds.

For example, Winona Family YMCA in Winona, Minn., started construction on its new building in May of 2020 according to its website. In Bloomington, Illinois, the Bloomington-Normal YMCA held a groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 22, 2020 for its \$23 million building. KWQC reported that the new R. Richard Bittner YMCA in downtown Davenport, Iowa, opened its \$24 million facility on Dec. 21, 2020.

Out of the 795 corporate Y entities, more than 600 received Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration website, this program provides loans for businesses to “keep their workforce employed during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.”

The biggest challenge with PPP funding, McEntire said, was the restriction of being an organization with less than 500 employees. McEntire said that eliminated at least 75 of the top Ys.

Lee said, “In terms of assistance or financial assistance from the federal government, we have received next to nothing. We were considered..too large for the Payroll Protection Program...and any of the other grants or stimulus that they offered.”

“We want to continue doing all this great work,” Lee said. “You know, let’s face it, we don’t have an endless supply of money funds and we need that. We need the federal government to start thinking about how they can help us continue helping our families.”

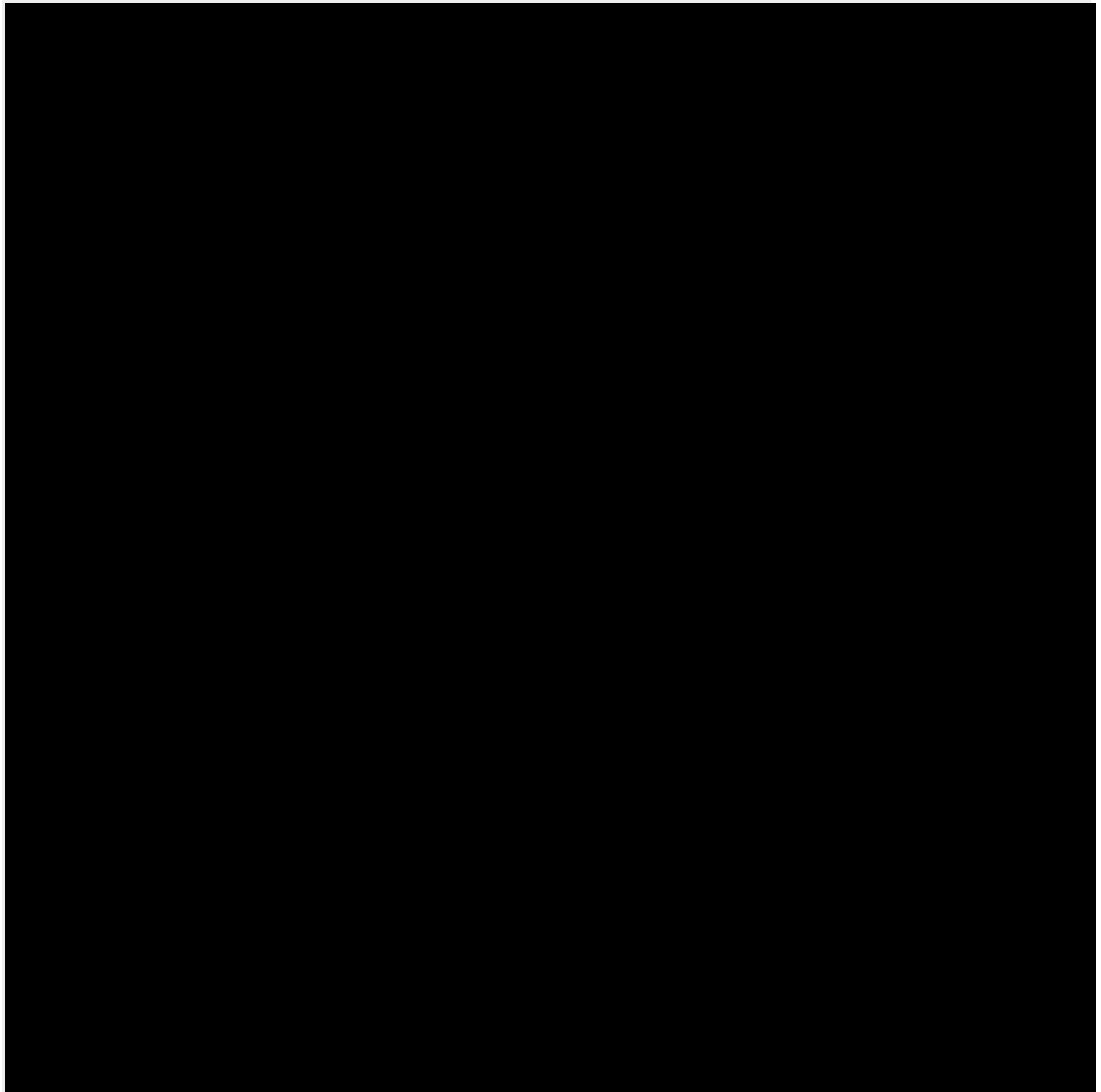


Photo courtesy of YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago

McEntire said that the YMCA of the USA has worked with other nonprofit organizations to get more funding for YMCAs, as they turn to both donors and government funding—in addition to memberships.

“Virtually all Y’s are doing much better at least in 2020 in their fundraising,” McEntire said. “Local donors and communities and foundations and even government...in many many cases have been extremely generous especially when they realized the sort of essential type work we were doing of feeding children and providing childcare so parents could work and, and then really even in some ways I

would say taking on the role of schools in some communities when the schools were either out or are doing every-thing virtually. The financial support of donors has been tremendous.”

Snyder said that his YMCA received immediate funding from donors, “\$5,000 here, \$10,000 there” to continue its food programs.

“The philanthropic community, we found, has stepped up for us when we just do the right thing,” Ives said. “So our approach was do the right thing because it’s what’s needed and we have people and we have buildings that we can put into use, particularly for the alternative school age, all-day care for essential workers, as well as food distribution, as well as some meals.

Ives explained, “we’re finding every place that we can work and in each incidence there was either a contract that got signed by the county that helped fund that to another partner or philanthropic support people just sort of cheered us on with their dollars.”

Snyder said YMCAs have been able to redefine themselves and what they are capable of providing to communities, including childcare and feeding children, and people are going to continue to look to Y’s for expanded services.

Ives said, “In the future when the buildings are gone, but people are members because it’s the Y. Not just because it’s a building that they get to go take programs (at). And I think that is going to be a major shift for us, and it’s not an easy lift to move a 135-year-old organization down a path of reimagining itself, but that is certainly what we are up to and will continue to be up to in the months ahead.”

Goodwill Scrutinized on TikTok



By Ronnie Allen Campman
Nonprofit Sector News
February 5, 2021

Videos scrutinizing how Goodwill Industries International treats its employees have been circulating on TikTok during the COVID-19 caused quarantines.

TikTok, a social media platform with the capability of users short videos going “viral,” has gained popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic as an app to share dances, comedy sketches and also opinions about controversial topics such as Goodwill’s treatment of its employees. (*Forbes* magazine, for instance, reported in September that TikTok usage had increased by 75% since the beginning of the year. By June 2020, TikTok had more than 100 million different American users each month. TikTok was downloaded more than 700 million times worldwide during 2019.)

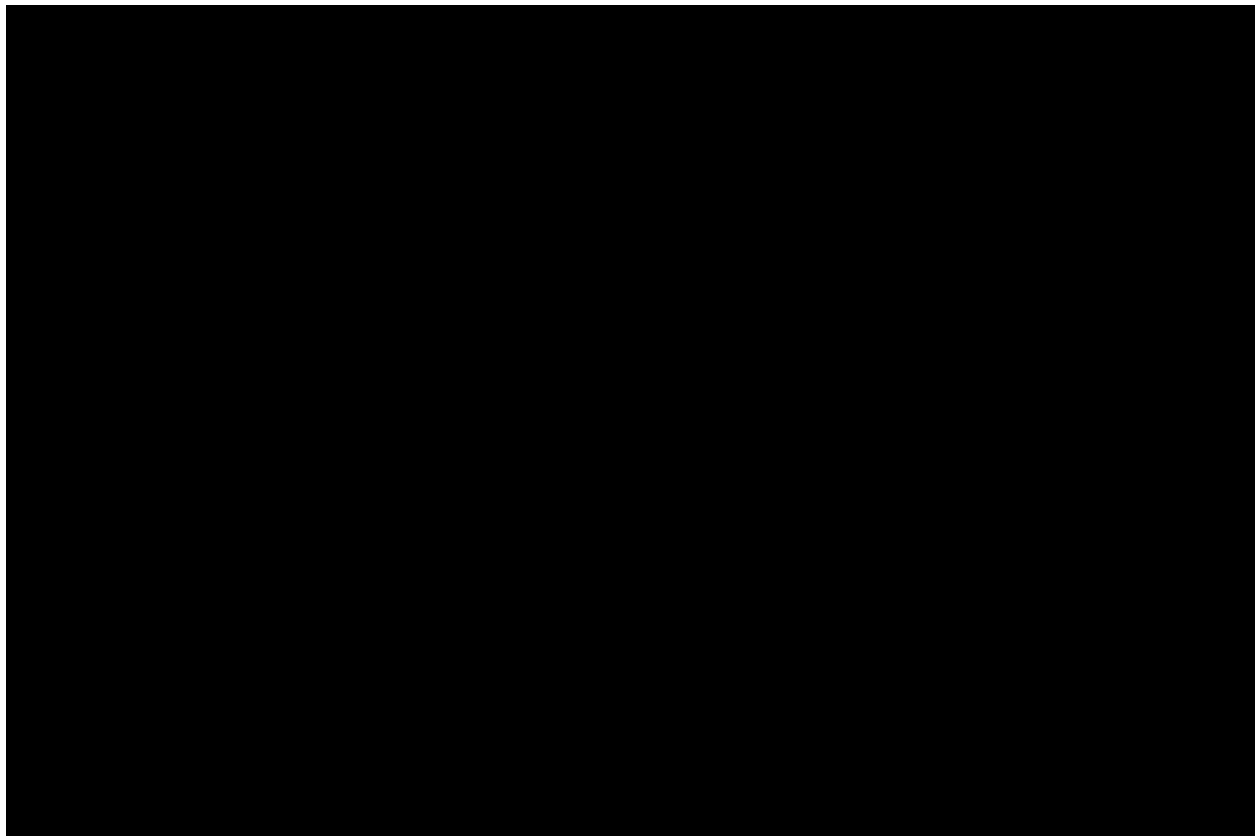
A national nonprofit organization, Goodwill consists of 156 locally operated organizations across the United States and Canada plus more affiliates in 12 other countries.

A Tiktok user under the name Facingkc posted a video back in August about Goodwill. It quickly went “viral” with more than 66,000 likes and more than 200,000 views.

“Goodwill disguises itself as a nonprofit that helps disabled people find jobs, that’s their mission,” she (Facingke) said in her video. She explained how Goodwill prices are going up, while disabled workers are being paid less than the minimum wage. She then claimed that less than an eighth of Goodwill’s profits go back into its national job programs.

(Although the public face of Goodwill is primarily its retail stores, local Goodwill units nationwide offer varying combinations of occupational skills training; assistance with job searches, writing résumés and building interview skills; rehabilitation programs assisting individuals with physical recovery; job readiness/soft skills/work adjustment; on-the-job training; intensive placement services sessions; supported employment; and E-learning. It focuses on people with disabilities, those with lower education levels, women, minorities, immigrants, those over 55, the previously incarcerated, and others with special needs for obtaining employment.)

Facingke’s voiceover was also used over other videos more than 70 times between August and the end of 2020. For example, TikTok user “Tsukada.Studios” used her art platform to share the message with her niche audience. The video gained 633,500 likes and 2.9 million views within the first few months.



Former Goodwill employees also spoke out on TikTok about the nonprofit. TikTok user “Zenith,” an individual living with Dissociative Identity Disorder, posted in August that he was treated like “absolute garbage” while working at Goodwill. Despite this, his post said that

Goodwill made him sign a waiver that would allow the nonprofit to use him for advertisement purposes.

This is not the first time Goodwill has come into the public eye for its treatment of disabled workers.

In 2013, *Forbes* reported on the issue, pointing to Sheila Leigland, a blind Goodwill employee in Great Falls, Montana, who was being paid \$3.99 an hour. The minimum wage at the time there was \$7.65.

“It’s not just me—all Goodwill employees deserve the same,” Leiland told *Forbes* in 2013. “They call themselves leaders in providing opportunity for the disabled, but since when did opportunity look like a quarter an hour?”

The practice of paying disabled workers less than the country’s minimum wage is not illegal. In fact, when legal, it is called the special minimum wage. According to the most recent U.S. Department of Labor data, about 20 percent of the more than 150 U.S. Goodwill organizations hold the certificate allowing them to pay the special minimum wage.

Goodwill representatives point out that not even all employers who hold a special minimum wage certificate actively use it. Morgan Waldron, marketing & communications manager of Goodwill of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas, said the practice of paying the special minimum wage is outdated.

“Most Goodwills have seen that paying people minimum wage is necessary to have a positive community impact,” Waldron said. “It’s always our goal to respect the community and give people livable wages.”

Zenith’s TikTok post also mentioned that less than one-eighth of Goodwill’s profits go back into its national job programs. Waldron said it’s important to note that all Goodwills are operated independently of each other and the national umbrella organization.

For example, Waldron said, “When you donate to Goodwill of Southern Nevada, 100% of that goes towards providing the mission services, it doesn’t have any deductions for overhead or expenses because it’s covered by the retail stores, so it’s truly 100% of every penny towards your community.”

She said she is proud to say that more than 90% of every dollar earned at Goodwill of Southern Nevada goes back into its local programs and directly benefits the community’s unemployed.

Goodwill’s national media contacts as well as local Goodwill operations in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas did not respond to Nonprofit Sector News’ inquiries about viral criticism of the organization on TikTok.

League of Women Voters met new and old challenges in pandemic-election year 2020



The League of Women Voters get out the vote and census march at Pasadena City Hall on Friday, February 14, 2020 in Pasadena, Calif. The march was held on the 100th Anniversary of their founding. Photo Courtesy of The League of Women Voters of the US

By Lindsey Potter
Nonprofit Sector News
February 3, 2021

If it seemed like the League of Women Voters (LWV), which turns 101 years old on Feb. 14, 2021, was more active or just more visible in 2020 than before, it wasn't just a hunch.

LWV has branched out in recent years to work on immigration, environment, and healthcare reform issue, and just the combined national budgets of the LWV and its Education Fund total more than \$12 million. (This does not include state or local budgets.) The national office shows 34 employees on its website.

But the organization's heart is still with voter registration, voter access, the US Census and Congressional redistricting, and fighting voter suppression. So 2020 turned out to be a very busy year, and would have been even without the COVID-19 pandemic.

The national LWV's Senior Director of Mission Impact, Jeanette Senecal, said that the organization's primary goal always has been protecting and educating voters.

"The issues that we focus on have changed over the years, but the fundamental goal of ensuring that our democracy is equitable and inclusive has long been the goal," Senecal said. "Our mission is defending democracy and empowering voters. And that remains constant across all of the work that we're doing."

According to LWV's website, its members are working in all 50 states and in more than 700 communities within them. If that isn't daunting enough, state and local Leagues have been challenged during the pandemic with registering and informing voters through a virtual or social distanced format. LWV was still able to register 250,000, which is also its usual annual number of registrations.

The "nature of the work" was the same as in past years but it was the execution where things differed, Senecal said. "And our leagues really were able to step up and make the pivot and learn these new skills and implement them successfully at the local level." The LWV national organization offered bi-weekly training videos to help members learn how to conduct the League's activities in virtual formats.

In Virginia, Deb Wake, president of LWV of Virginia, said that her organization utilized online forums and debates to educate voters and a program through local high schools to register new voters.

A law that took effect in July set aside school time in Virginia to register high school students to vote, Wake said. However, she said, Virginia's motor vehicles division has been closed, and students typically use identification from the DMV to vote, so there a "bit of an access issue right now with that."

Susan Simpson, president of LWV of Wyoming, said that in Wyoming voter registration is not allowed by third parties. So those leagues have to find different ways to register voters.

"What you can do instead is people can register to vote on election day. And we are a closed primary state. And so people will come in on Election Day, primary election day, and get their ballot and look at it and say 'the person I want to vote for is not on my ballot.' And there can be two reasons for that," Simpson said. "One is that they don't live in the district where the candidate is running to represent. And the other reason is that the candidate belongs to a party that the voter does not belong to. And so people can change their registration to be able to vote for the candidate they wish to vote for. And there have been several efforts through the years to take away the right to change your affiliation on election day."

This year in Wyoming, Simpson said her organization used VOTE411.org more than in past years to get voters' questions answered about the people running for different levels of office. (VOTE411 was started by the League of Women Voters Education Fund [LWVEF] in 2006 to provide all election related information.)

"And so that was anxiety producing because of it just being a bigger production than we'd done before," Simpson said. "And so we were learning things as we went and so that made it more stressful as well as COVID making it stressful."

The national LWV's Secal said that last year, more people came to the VOTE411 platform than ever before.

Sarah Courtney, the national LWV's communications and digital strategy senior director, said that this year the organization translated the entire site into Spanish.

"This is the first time we had translated the entire resource, so that voters had access to the rules, the upcoming elections. What is the process for participating in absentee voting? Who does qualify and can use absentee voting in your state? Because these rules are different across states, and even within states, sometimes the rules are different," Courtney said. "And so, you know, having this information available in English and Spanish for the first time was really a critical component to our work this year, because...with COVID and the rules changing so much, we wanted to make sure that information was as accessible as possible. And so providing in language support was really a fundamental goal of ours in 2020."

In March, when LWV started realizing the complications of the 2020 election, state LWV organizations started focusing on ensuring that both early and absentee voting were as accessible as possible.

"That there was actually a noticing cure process because there wasn't in many states," Senecal said. "And so we were suing the state government to force to have a noticing care process so that voters rights were protected and so COVID, because people were using these systems, and we were expecting that they were using these systems at...significantly higher rates than in past years. And who had access to these systems was significantly expanded over past years because of COVID. You know the litigation was all the more important right now, and was all the more critical in this moment in time because of COVID."

Wake said that past litigation set Virginia on the right path for a pandemic election. "The session right before we got locked down...We got a raft of voting rights as passed. We have, we got 45 days of early voting. No excuse absentee voting."

In Wyoming, Secretary of State Ed Buchanan sent absentee voter application forms to all registered voters in the state.

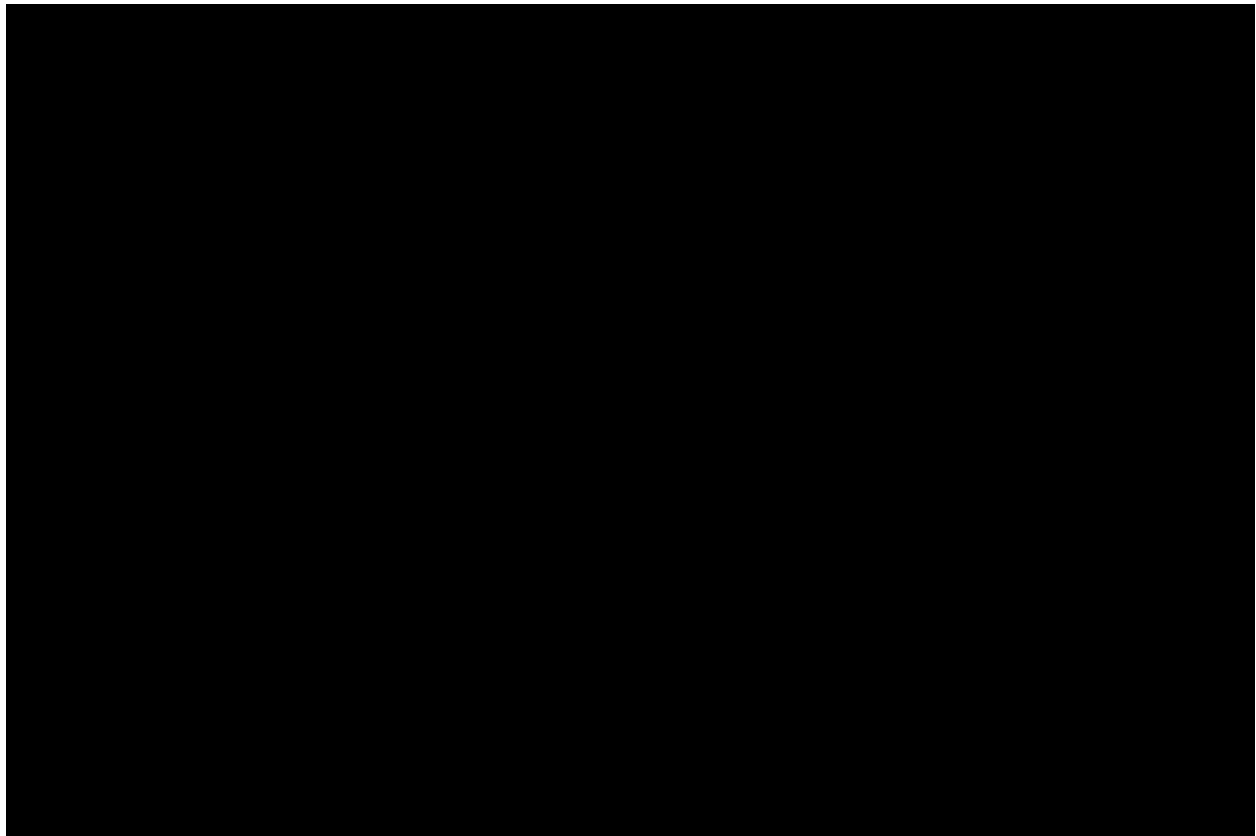
"And that was a wonderful thing," Simpson said. "And that's an example of a change because of COVID. And so we had a lot more people voting absentee this year, and we had good turnout this year. And I would hope that that will continue even when COVID is no longer an issue."

Senecal said that the organization had planned on putting a large effort into the 2020 election year, even before the pandemic was sweeping the globe.

“We had planned a campaign called Women Power the Vote, both as the voters who turn out to vote, and as the women behind the scenes that are making the election process work....And so we had already initiated this campaign, and had plans to have the largest efforts in many ways, but it ended up going beyond our original expectations,” Senecal explained. “In part because of COVID, and definitely the litigation portfolio was directly impacted by COVID. You know the litigation was all the more important right now, and was all the more critical in this moment in time because of COVID.”

Wake said that important legal action by the LWV of Virginia took place on the very last day of voter registration. “The cable was cut that allowed people to register online,” Virginia LWV president Wake said. “And so we were able to litigate and get that extended by two days, and that enabled 24,000 more people to register to vote...in the November election. So we were very proud of that.”

The 2020 election year proved to be a challenging one for LWV to continue its organizational mission. To educate voters how to vote by mail or absentee, the LWV approached each voter as if they were brand new.



The League of Women Voters get out the vote and census march at Pasadena City Hall on Friday,

February 14, 2020 in Pasadena, Calif. The march was held on the 100th Anniversary of their founding. Photo Courtesy of The League of Women Voters of the US

“For the first time this year, even experienced voters were like first time voters, because they were using a new method,” Senecal said. “So we really approached this year like every voter was a first-time voter because people needed to learn new processes, learn about how do they even find out if their ballot was getting counted and if there was the cure process.”

LWV is set up to focus on main goals but allow state and local leagues autonomy in order to advocate for additional issues in their areas.

“The membership actually votes every two years on what the organization-wide priorities are going to be,” Senecal said. “And at our 2020 convention, our membership voted to have the campaign for making democracy work as our foundational kind of organizing issues that we’d be working on. Which included election administration reform issues, redistricting, money in politics, voter access and participation, the national popular vote compact.”

Wake said that the Virginia league prioritized redistricting this past year and is now shifting focus to campaign finance.

Though 2020 forced the League of Women Voters to be more active than ever before, it also allowed the organization to understand better than ever what election processes need change.

Senecal said, “2020 has provided a really interesting opportunity for us to really look at some of these election administration reforms to dig in a little bit more because there’s a lot more data because more people used some of these mechanisms to see which of these actually help us create that more equitable and inclusive democracy that we can focus on major reforms.”

The Show Goes On for a Hawaii Nonprofit Theater



Actors Tsuyuno Amos and Kristen Misaki's screens layered through OBS

By Ronnie Allen Campman
Nonprofit Sector News
January 31, 2021

Although the pandemic has shut down the lights of Broadway, the show must go on for the Hawai'i playhouse of Kumu Kahua Theater for its 50th season.

Kumu Kahua is a nonprofit theater founded in 1971 dedicated to telling stories about life in the Hawaiian islands and its melting pot of different cultures. The Hawaiian words, "Kumu Kahua" translate to "original stage."

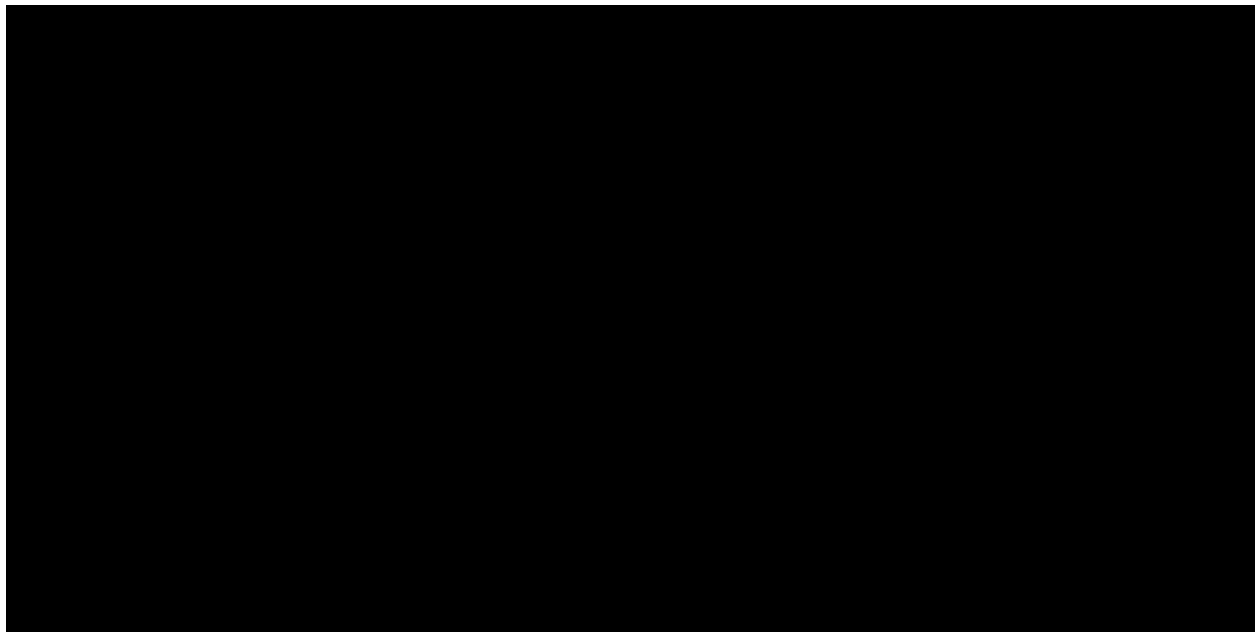
For its 2020-2021 season, the theater is promising five new plays written by and about the people of Hawai'i, each one devoted to a different era in history, starting with the '70s. The first two plays, "Lovey Lee" and "Aloha Attire," were set in the '80s, and streamed to an online audience via Youtube.

Kumu Kahua's most recent play, "Aloha Attire," was written by playwright Lee Cataluna specifically to be streamed online. The play tells the story and history of a Hawaiian family through their local clothing, like the mu'u mu'u (loose dress) and gold-dipped maile leaf pendants.

With this streaming platform comes the opportunity to share Hawai‘i stories nationally. Though local, Kumu Kahua plays have universal messages and are relatable to viewers no matter where they are. They often deal with family relationships, relevant issues and finding acceptance within oneself.

“We have a bunch of people from all over the world who have Hawai‘i connections who are so happy to be able to see a play about the world they came from even if they are not living here anymore,” said R. Kevin Doyle, the play’s director and former president of Kumu Kahua’s Board of Directors.

The actual playhouse can hold only 100 people, but because the show was streamed, more than 3,000 people watched “Aloha Attire” from the safety of their homes around the country during the show’s run, according to Doyle.



Actors Alston Albaradao and Brandon Hagio rehearsing in front of their green screens

Instead of directing the play to be an exact replica of a traditional staged production, Doyle looked at the strengths of using the Zoom videotelephone service, essentially guiding the nine actors from their very own miniature stages at home.

The biggest challenge was discovering everything he didn’t know about the technical side of production and theater even after his 27 years working with Kumu Kahua. His strong suit is directing actors on a stage, but through this experience, he learned to master camera operating, green screen operating and lighting so he could communicate what he wanted to his actors. He said it was a humbling experience learning with his production team and actors.

For this production, safety precautions were in full effect. No one was physically together throughout the entire process. Kumu Kahua’s Digital Engineer Veronica Vera utilized a studio-quality mixing program called OBS to put the actors on Zoom into the same frames.

“When you’re working in a zoom environment you’re essentially working in a two-dimensional space so the psychological leap between thinking in 3D and 2D was challenging,” Doyle said. “You’re designing your set the way you would in layers, like in page layout or photoshop layers.”

Actor Ryan Okinaka performing as Kaipo in Aloha Attire

Ryan Okinaka, an actor in “Aloha Attire,” auditioned for this play not realizing what he was signing up for. Not only was he acting, he had to set up his green screen, do his own hair/makeup and control lighting throughout his scenes—essentially doing the job of an entire production team by himself.

However, his biggest struggle was translating his character and scene partner’s connection to the audience and transporting himself into his character’s shoes, especially since there was so no set and he was alone.

Okinaka put tape around his home to establish his eye line to his scene partner. He said this enhanced his ability to listen to the other actors and make their reactions and connections more realistic because he used his imagination.

“Before my scenes I closed my eyes and pictured where I was, like what does my surroundings smell and feel like and how do I physically enter the space before I’m on screen,” Okinaka said. “I did as best as I can, psychology visualizing what this world looks like. I open my eyes and all I see are my laptop and green screen.”

When asked, Okinaka said that despite these challenges, he is going to continue doing “Zoom Theater” with the goal of spreading aloha and sharing the stories of Hawaii playwrights.

“I never would’ve wanted to live during a pandemic, but the silver lining is that it’s a really thrilling time to be creating live performances using new mediums, challenges and issues relevant to our daily lives,” Doyle said.

The rest of the 50th season will be streamed virtually if conditions in Hawaii remain the same, according to Doyle. Kumu Kahua’s upcoming plays streaming in 2021 are “Aloha Fry-day,” “Other: a Microstory” and “Untitled TMT Project,” all of which are world premieres by local Hawai’i playwrights.

Kumu Kahua Theater is supported by The Hawai‘i State Foundation on Culture and Arts, The Hawai‘i Tourism Authority, The Hawai‘i Community Foundation and other foundations and businesses.

GSAs With GLSEN Gaining Momentum Throughout the U.S.



Stillwater High School GSA members celebrating GLSEN's No Name Calling Week. Photo Courtesy of @stillwater_GSA

By Ronnie Allen Campman
Nonprofit Sector News
November 16, 2020

Cat Thomason remembers walking down the hall of Stillwater High School in Oklahoma as a ninth grader. She was pulled aside by the former vice president of the Gender-Sexuality Alliance, or GSA, because of her Rainbow heart and “love exists” pins on her backpack. Fast forward to Thomason’s senior year and she is now the president of GSA. She spends countless hours prepping for virtual advocacy meetings and setting up the club’s Google platform every week as a “virtual safe space” for LGBTQ+ students.

A GSA is a student-led club whose members discuss LGBTQ+ topics. These clubs recognize the diverse sexual and gender identities at their schools, and try to enhance the overall school climate through education and advocacy efforts. GSA meetings give

LGBTQ+ students a safe space to meet and affirm one another.

Thomason considers herself blessed to have a strong support system within her family and friends that support her identity and beliefs.

“By being part of GSA, I am able to create that environment. Especially for kids who aren’t able to have that love and support from family members and friends,”

Thomason said. “ It’s wonderful being able to help provide the education for students and teachers and even members in the community who are either under-educated or uneducated.”

Stillwater High School’s GSA is one of the thousands of school clubs registered with GLSEN, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the same mission as Thomason, to create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ students in schools across the United States, through advocacy efforts, inclusive education initiatives and research.

According to the CDC’s latest (2018) School Health Profiles Report, 40% of schools across the United State’s have GSAs. The number of clubs rose by 17% since 2008 and continues to rise. These findings coincided with GLSEN’s 2019 National Climate Survey. The survey found that about 60% of LGBTQ+ students attended a school that had a GSA or similar student club.

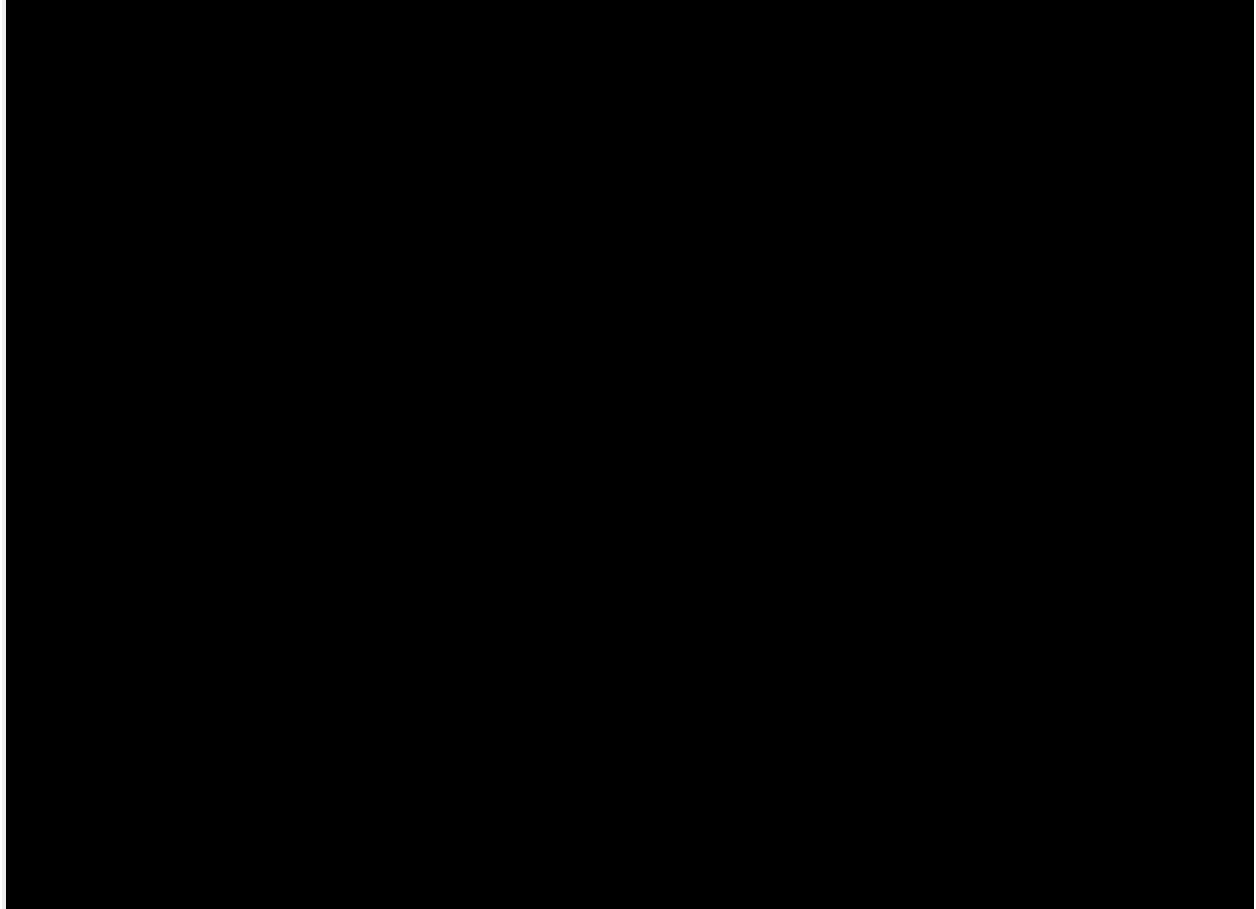
Once a GSA is registered, the club has access to resources on how to run an efficient club with webinars, movie watch parties, discussion guides for LGBTQ+ films like “Love, Simon” and discussion topics such as, “How can your GSA be a supportive and affirming area for students who have to stay closeted?”

Kristy Self, the Stillwater High School GSA sponsor, is proud that as a member of GLSEN’s National Educator Advisory Committee for the past three years she has the opportunity to look over and share her ideas before GLSEN releases new pamphlets or literature that schools can use to create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students.

“Sometimes you feel isolated. That’s why I think programs like GLSEN are so important because as GSA advisors and teachers from across the country we need those platforms and resources and support so we don’t feel like it’s just us in the fight,” Self said. “We’re doing this all together. ”

GSA members and sponsors also have access to the GLSEN calendar, which includes

GLSEN Day of Silence in April, Solidarity Week in October and No Name Calling Week taking place this upcoming January. Self said that the calendar was the most useful resource as a GSA advisor.



Stillwater High School GSA members celebrating GLSEN's No Name Calling Week. Photo Courtesy of @stillwater_GSA

Although thousands of GSAs are registered with GLSEN, GLSEN says so much work still needs to be done. Less than half of the students who said they are in their schools' GSA and responded to the GLSEN National Climate Survey actively participate.

GLSEN cites many reasons for this: Students may feel discouraged from attending because they are concerned with being outed when they are not ready, they're afraid of what their peers might think, or they have scheduling conflicts.

Jack McManus, a former member of Mid Pacific Institute's GSA in Hawaii, joined his club in 2012. He also experienced such issues in high school. Now 22-years-old, he looks back at his time and remembers not being the most active member, afraid of his

identity being labeled. But McManus said that in the back of his mind, he knew that when he did decide to come out he was in a safe space where he would be accepted.

“I do think that being in GSA was like a dipping of my toe into what it’s like if I did talk about this part of me,” McManus said. “Like what if I did let myself be vulnerable even though I didn’t take advantage of it in GSA, but I was there and thinking about it. It was a step in my journey that I don’t acknowledge with myself enough.”

Other key findings in last year’s National Climate Survey are: about 20% of LGBTQ students had access to information about LGBTQ+ related topics in their textbooks and 8.2% reported having received LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education at school. Finally, about one-tenth of LGBTQ students reported that their schools had official policies or guidelines to support transgender or nonbinary students.

“It was really important to create a community so students felt like they were part of something even bigger,” Self said. “It’s just a really cool opportunity that GLSEN provides for GSA sponsors and students to use their materials, to use their ideas in order to think about ways that we can create a more positive atmosphere through those activities in our schools.”

Meals on Wheels of America continues to face funding burden through pandemic



Photo courtesy of Meals on Wheels America

By Alejandro Figueroa
Nonprofit Sector News
November 9, 2020

The Meals on Wheels network continues to worry about the lack of sufficient federal funding and COVID-19 relief aid to sustain the increase in demand for services, according to the national Meals on Wheels America.

This nationwide network of roughly 5,000 senior nutrition programs addresses the challenges of aging seniors by providing nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks to eligible at-risk seniors.

According to the national organization, nearly 9.7 million senior citizens were threatened by hunger, 2 million of whom were considered “very low food secure,” before the COVID-19 pandemic and recession. Meals on Wheels has aimed to close that gap by supporting more than 5,000 local, community-based senior nutrition programs that work to deliver meals and safety checks to more than 2 million seniors nationwide.

Now, however, Meals on Wheels America has found that nearly all local Meals on Wheels programs are experiencing financial strain and uncertainty while providing services to hundreds of thousands more seniors than before the pandemic hit in March. So the situation, never good, is now much worse.

In fact, an August press release from Meals on Wheels America said that local programs were by then serving an average of 77% more meals and 47% more seniors than they were in March.

Ellie Hollander, Meals on Wheels America's president and CEO, said this is still the reality in November, months after that initial press release, but now many local programs worry after quickly going through CARES Act relief funds yet serving more seniors than before the pandemic.

Hollander said many programs already had existing waitlists to provide meals for seniors in need. Now, that need has more than doubled. "Those existing waiting lists were already mounting before the pandemic," he said. "So we had a senior hunger epidemic in our country, and a senior social isolation epidemic that's been hidden in our country for a long time. The pandemic really has accelerated these already existing issues."

However, Meals on Wheels' funding has never kept pace with the needs of its programs nationally, said Hollander. In fact, the network is serving 20 million fewer meals than in 2005 due to rising costs of food, supplies and transportation, while funding remained about the same year after year.

The network received \$626 million in 2018 from the Older Americans Act (OAA), which is about 39% of the total funding for the organization. The other 61% of funding is received through state or local sources, or private donations from foundations or corporations.

Hollander said Meals on Wheels America advocates on Capitol Hill to raise federal funding for the OAA nutrition program—which is authorized through the ACL's Administration on Aging grants based by states and local entities—by 10%. For now, however, the organization hopes the second round of COVID-19 relief aid (HEROES Act), introduced in the Senate, is passed in order to keep providing much needed funding to local programs.

Although 75% of programs have received federal aid funding of some sort, according to the August press release, most are still concerned about their ability to keep operating without continued relief funds which by now, have been nearly, if not completely depleted, according to Hollander.

Increased expenses including hiring more drivers (due to a decrease in volunteers), purchasing personal protection equipment, and increased costs of food and food preparation, Hollander said.

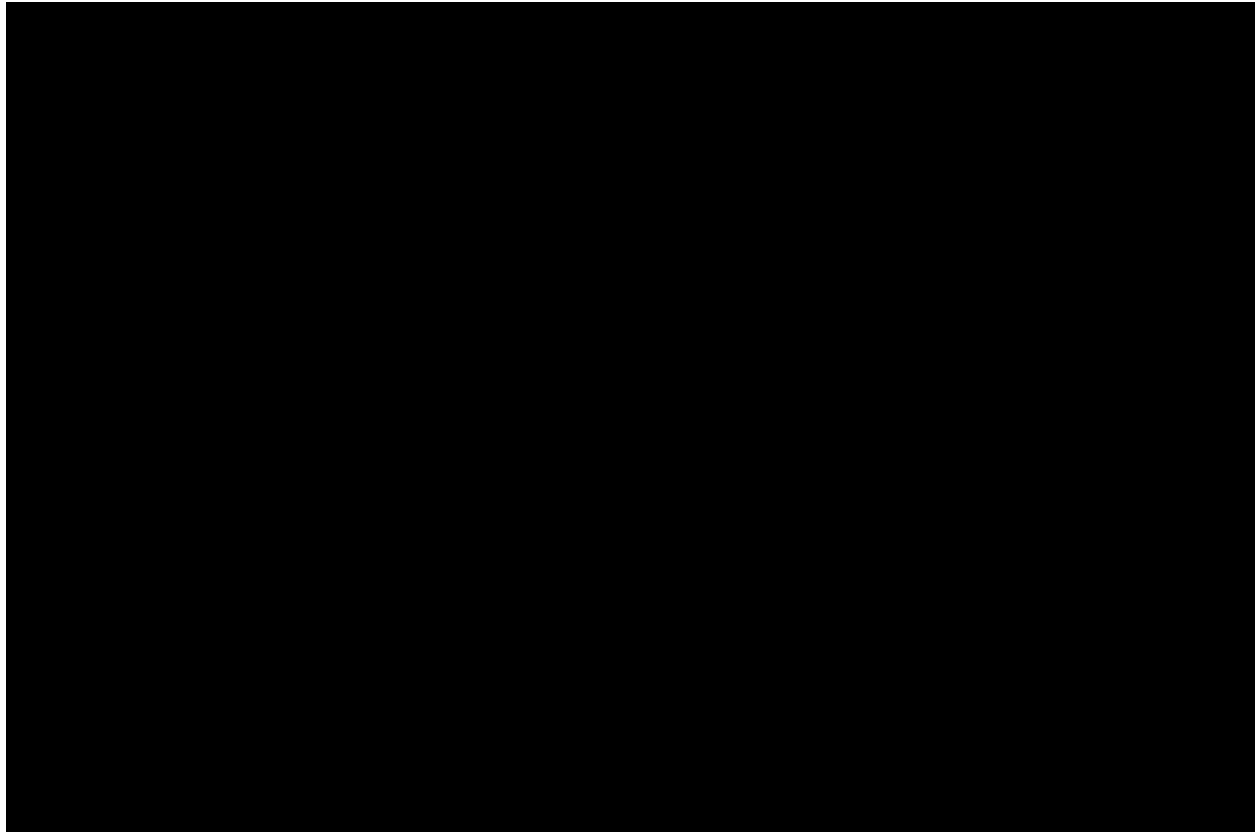


Photo courtesy of Meals on Wheels America

The national organization set up the Meals on Wheels COVID-19 response fund so corporations and foundations could provide national support and then Meals on Wheels America in turn could provide grants directly to front-line programs in many cities across the country.

“We provided over 1,000 grants to about 600 programs totally nearly \$29 million,” Hollander said. “But that’s not enough, you can go through that money pretty quickly if the need has more than doubled since all costs have exponentially increased.”

Charles Gehring, president and CEO of LifeCare Alliance, which operates the Meals on Wheels program in Columbus, Ohio, said his program has gained more than 3,000 new senior customers since the pandemic began. The Columbus program has been one of the few to not have a waiting list for low income seniors in need of a meal, Gehring said.

Gehring said the Columbus program has been able to operate in part through CARES Act relief funds, but that funds from foundations and personal donations have been integral to the continuation of the program through the pandemic. Now, the concern has shifted to what the program will do if no second round of federal COVID-19 relief funds are approved by Congress by early 2021.

“We’re the lifeline for a lot of seniors here,” Gehring said. “Agencies like us just don’t have the money to get to everybody unless there is some help. Between the community support and the

CARES Act money, we've pieced it all together, but the CARES Act money is basically toast at this point, we've gone through all of it."

July Ely, who has volunteered with Meals on Wheels in Columbus for 25 years, said she's been delivering more meals on a weekly basis than before the pandemic, but hasn't noticed a significant shift from how it used to operate. Rather, she's concerned for seniors who might be experiencing loneliness due to staying indoors.

"Many of these people are extremely lonely, and they are lonely anyways because they live alone, most of the time Meals on Wheels is the highlight of their day," Ely said. "Now it's even worse because they're not getting to see their families or going out to shop. I think it's really sad because they're suffering from being lonely."

Ely emphasized that meal deliveries are more than just a meal, and that she feels she's doing something meaningful when she gets to check on a senior, or at least speak with them whenever possible.

Hollander said despite all the worry and concern about the future, she stays optimistic and hopes Congress comes to an agreement to release another relief package that provides the robust funding for nutritional programs that help fund local programs like Meals on Wheels.

"I think that there is still going to be an increased number of seniors that we were serving prior to the pandemic," Hollander said. "I'm not, however, easily deterred, I'm a little bold-headed, so if a certain approach doesn't work don't give up there's got to be another one, let's just keep trying and keep learning."

'Bigs' and 'Littles' of Big Brothers Big Sisters Staying Connected Through Times of Uncertainty



By Ronnie Allen Campman
Nonprofit Sector News
October 24, 2020

About three weeks into COVID-19 quarantine in Broward County, Florida, Nicole Larson and 10-year-old Desirae Hamilton were matched as Big and Little with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and met for the first time through Zoom.

“I think we were both a little nervous. Like, who is this person? Are we both gonna click?” Larson said. As their introduction call progressed, Larson learned some of young Hamilton’s favorite quarantine pastimes, her favorite subjects and how she wants to expand her abilities as an artist.

Now six months after their initial meeting, the matched pair meets virtually every weekend. They look up drawing tutorials, dance workouts and yoga videos, keeping active while being confined to their own homes. Larson is convinced that Hamilton will be the next Van Gogh.

Cutline for missing photo: Larson and Hamilton on Zoom during quarantine. Photo courtesy of BBBSA.

“For the cards that we’ve been drawn, I would say we click very well and it’s been easy to talk to each other,” Larson said.

The pair has yet to meet in person, but look forward to gardening together when it’s safe.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Broward County has made 94 matches, such as Larson and Hamilton, during the pandemic.

To maintain a sense of normalcy, Bigs and Littles across the country remain connected through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, or BBBSA, during these unprecedented times.

With 240 agencies across the country in all 50 states, BBBSA is creating new ways to ensure children stay virtually connected to their “bigs” during this time of physical distancing. The organization was recently awarded a \$1 million grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation that will go to the national office as well as local agencies in Cincinnati, Birmingham, Southeast Florida, East Tennessee, Southwest Michigan for this very purpose. Collectively, these agencies serve about 10,000 kids a year.

BBBSA has matched more than 100,000 “Littles” in 2019 alone. Logan Marin and Chris Montes are among the thousands of matches who made the transition into the virtual world after meeting two years ago.

Olga Marin, a single mother, signed 10-year-old Logan up as a Little in 2018, seeking a male

role model for her son. Logan never expected to find his hero through BBBS.

“It was a little confusing (meeting each other), but after the first outing I forgot that I just met him,” young Marin said. “That’s how much we liked each other.”

In a recent school project Marin described Montes as his hero because as a Marine, “he trains soldiers and asks if they’re doing good.”

Their first outings were outdoors surrounded by nature, going to the beach or fishing at the lake every other week.

During these times of uncertainty, Montes will text Marin, asking him the same question he does other marines, “if he’s doing good.”

“Logan recently got a phone so I text him and Facetime a lot asking about school and he’s doing at home, but that’s really how we stay connected and support one another during COVID times,” Montes said.

At the beginning of the pandemic their communication was scarce, but as their days started to settle down their virtual outings became a way to retain normalcy in both of their lives.

The pair goes on virtual museum tours, reads books together and participates in online scavenger hunts.

“Logan has taught me simple things like patience and, you know, I can’t really remember being Logan’s age, so being with him allows me to relive my childhood moments,” Montes said.

These activities were provided to them by their local BBBS in Broward County, one of the local agencies that implemented “e-mentoring.” To do this, a virtual toolkit is sent to each “Big” filled with activity ideas that can be done online.

Some of these activities include virtual concerts, tours of aquariums, like the famous Monterey Bay Aquarium, virtual Disney roller coaster rides and virtual field trips to the Great Wall of China and the Louvre.

Even though matches are stuck indoors and confined to a virtual setting they are being presented with the opportunity to explore famous sites and sights from around the world.

Marin’s most memorable virtual outing was watching SpaceX launch its satellite into orbit through Facetime.

“It can be done. Whether you’re in the office or at home, you’re still taking that time commitment. It still shows that dedication. That it’s unwavering. Your role (as a big) is still crucial,” Jennifer Corpus, the pair’s Match Support Specialist, said. “I’ve seen Logan grow and mature and just knowing that Chris is there even when plans change or fall through, that he’s a constant in his life, it’s life changing.”

During a time when social interaction is needed for a child's development, yet self-isolation is prevalent because of the pandemic, "bigs" are needed now more than ever to mentor youth.

After 18 months of spending time with their "Bigs," the "Littles" are 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27% less likely to begin using alcohol, and 52% less likely to skip school, according to the 2019 BBBS National Impact Report.

At the national level, BBBSA sends out a Youth Outcome Survey using Marketing Cloud. BBBS officials didn't want to disrupt their programs, so the survey checks if the "Littles" and their families get the most out of the experience by using their pre-existing technologies. With Marketing Cloud, 70% of the surveys get imported into the system within 24 hours. In the past, it could take up to 90 days to get all the data into their system.

"We realized we could take the relationship out of the real world and give Littles a virtual platform to engage on a one-on-one basis," said Jarrod Bell, BBBSA's chief technology officer, as originally reported by the Atlantic on Oct. 12. "The organization could still be there to offer support and to make sure they were safe and getting the most out of their matches."

Established in 1904, Big Brothers Big Sisters has matched about 2 million Littles with Bigs who guide them towards realizing their full potential within the past 10 years. According to the BBBSA website, 90% of Littles improved in the areas of social acceptance, scholastic competence, and attitudes toward risky behaviors after being matched for one year in a community based BBBS program.

"The connectivity is so important and crucial and how we've been able to do that on a virtual platform really speaks volumes," Corpus said. "We've been able to keep our Littles connected to their Bigs and provide them with resources. We haven't skipped a beat and have come through more powerful and stronger than ever to serve our community."

National Organization for Women focuses on the future and intersectionality



Christian Nunes at the 2020 Women's March. (Photo Courtesy of NOW)

By Ronnie Allen Campman
Nonprofit Sector News
October 17, 2020

The National Organization for Women, or NOW, is moving forward with a renewed focus on intersectionality with Christian Nunes as president after the resignation of Toni Van Pelt earlier this year.

Van Pelt stepped down as president after three years in June amid allegations of creating a racist and toxic work environment within the feminist organization. Intersectionality is the theory of how overlapping identities, including gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation impact the way people experience discrimination and oppression.

“I saw how she (Van Pelt) treated people on the board and it was her minimization of women of color that really made me understand there’s no way to change a person like that,” said Nina Ahmed, a woman of color on the NOW board and a previous member of the organization’s Racial Justice Committee. “I felt that’s how she valued people as less. So there was no sort of rehabilitation of this person.”

Ahmed was one of the nine board members who called for Van Pelt's removal.

Van Pelt released an email to the NOW organization saying that her doctor had "implored her for months to stop working" after struggling with a "very painful health issue" during her year as president, as originally reported Aug. 17 in the Daily Beast.

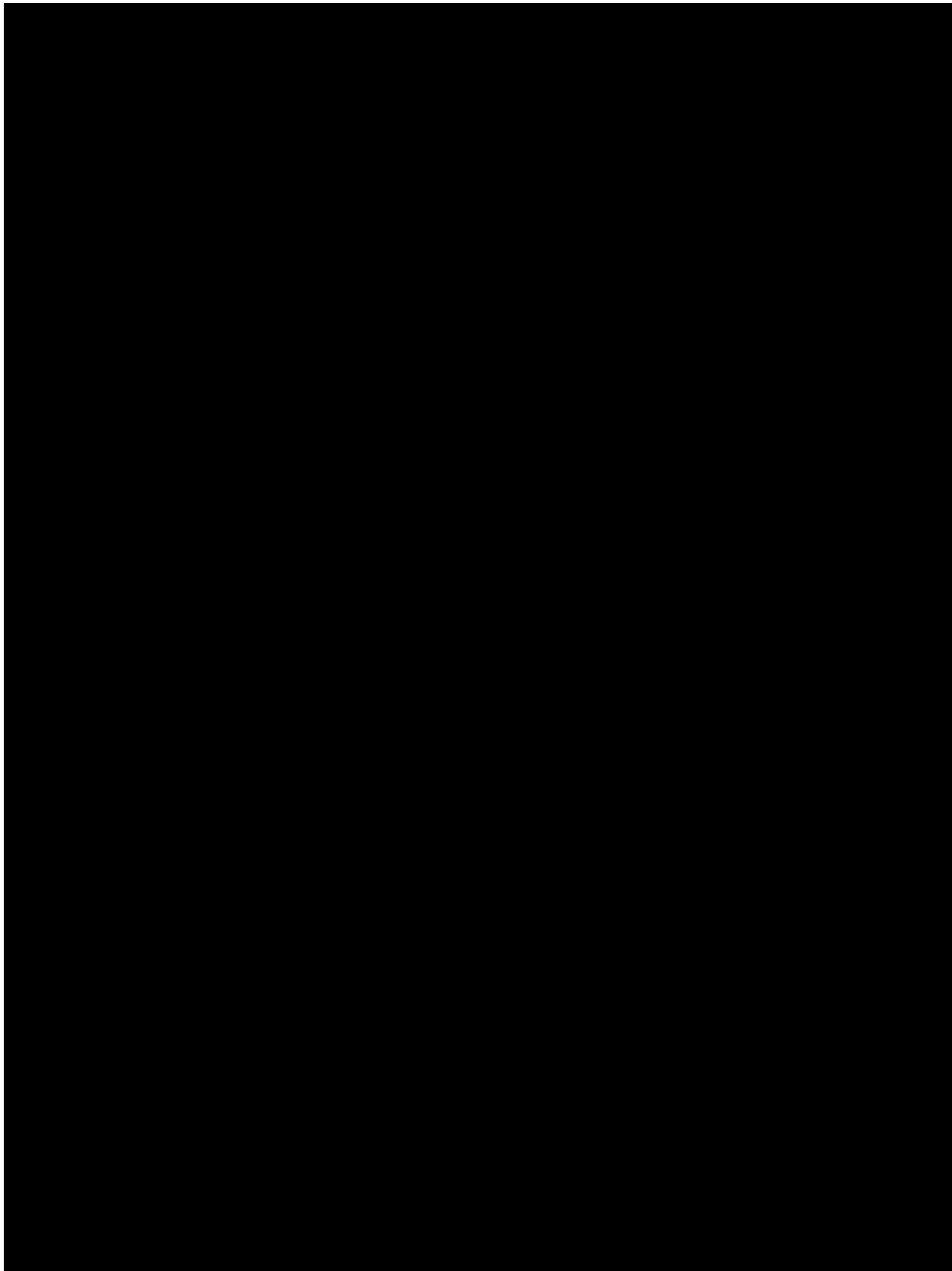
Ahmed couldn't answer Nonprofit Sector News' questions on Van Pelt's statement but Ahmed said that she was relieved Van Pelt was finally gone. (Other NOW officials also refused to comment on several other questions from Nonprofit Sector News.)

While Nunes, an African-American woman, was Vice President she experienced racism and tokenism, and was not advised on NOW's public statement about the death of George Floyd, she told the Daily Beast.

This isn't the first time NOW has been under fire for racism and mistreatment of its members. In 2017, Monica Weeks, who is of Cuban descent, ran for NOW vice president. She was a part of the first all-women-of-color ticket. In an organization that aims to "eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life," Weeks was heckled by members when speaking about the diversity among all women. In a video that was shown on the Daily Beast, crowd members yelled, "White women, too!"

"This organization has a problem of racism and ageism and [they] don't know how to deal with it," Weeks said in an interview with the Daily Beast originally published on June 6.

NOW has made no public comment on Van Pelt's resignation or the racist allegations made against it on its national website.



Christian Nunes. (Photo Courtesy of NOW)

As the second African-American President of NOW, after Aileen Hernandez, Nunes has set her sight on introducing an era of intersectionality and amplifying the voices of more than 500 local chapters and 500,000 members across the country.

“We have members that are transgender, gender nonconforming and LGBTQIA, Christian, Muslim and members that represent everyone in our organization and who all have a place in our organization,” Nunes said. “And my focus is really to emphasize their voices and uplift them.”

Nunes was appointed president on August 21, 2020, and will complete a four-year term. She can run for re-election for up to two terms.

Nunes is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who served as vice-president with Van Pelt. She manages her time as a business owner as well. In 2006, she founded a behavioral health practice that provides mental health services to people and assists other behavioral health companies.

Since becoming president, Nunes has seen an increase in the NOW’s membership. About 500 people from across the country participated in NOW’s virtual National Conference that took place on Sep. 26, 150 more participants than last year’s conference. NOW currently has more than 100,000 active members according to its Press Team.

Ahmed has said, “It’s a dramatic night and day difference” between the leadership styles of Van Pelt and Nunes.

Nunes said she has received tremendous support from past presidents who have reached out to her. Some have made donations. She said members have emailed her saying she’s inspired them to rejoin because they believe in her and her mission of inclusivity.

Nunes’s first project leading the feminist organization includes launching a series of conversations with Nunes. She describes it as intense, engaging conversations with feminists across the country who are leaders in action, discussing what is occurring in the world regarding feminism, activism and issues. The goal is to have discussions that will motivate and mobilize change throughout the nation.

She is also working on what the organization is calling “Intersectional Allies,” a webinar series, aimed toward training and educating NOW leaders and chapters on how to be an effective intersectional ally. They are utilizing town halls and webinars to provide resources to NOW chapters nationwide.

The organization’s goal is championing abortion rights, ending violence against women and securing economic equality for women. With an annual budget last year of more than \$3 million, they do this by organizing mass marches, rallies, non-violent civil disobedience and supporting more women in political office.

“We’re seeing so many movements about race, I think it’s important at an organization who supports issues that focus on racial justice, LGBTQIA issues and economic justice, all these things

are very marginalized issues that affect everyone, that we have to give voices to everyone in our organizations who are the ones leading this movement,” Nunes said.

Trevor Project’s Fight Against Conversion Therapy



Conversion Therapy ban bill announced at Pennsylvania Legislature

By Ronnie Allen Campman
Nonprofit Sector News
October 5, 2020

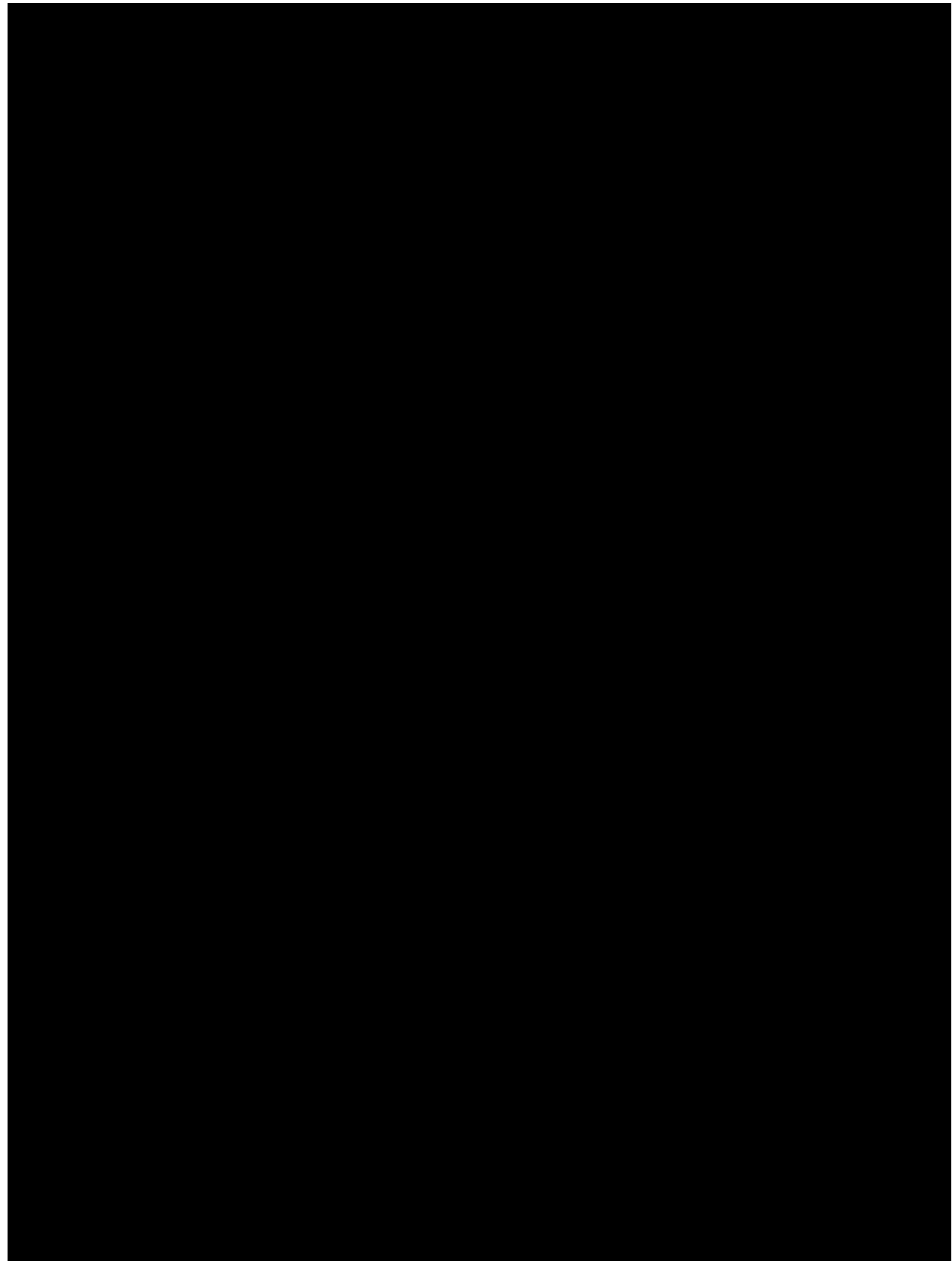
Merry, a 20-year-old music student from Georgia, remembers sitting in a therapist’s office gripping tightly onto his throw pillows, pulling the strings out as he told her, “You’re going to hell sweetie, unless we rip the gay out of you right now.”

For two years Merry, who declined to publish her full name, endured “conversion therapy.” The discredited practice aims at changing a person’s sexual orientation by means of cruel tactics.

The American Psychiatric Association determined that homosexuality was not a mental illness in 1973.

Merry, who was 17-years-old at the time, is one of the thousands of individuals who have been subjected to conversion therapy. Ten percent of LGBTQ youth reported undergoing conversion therapy this year. About 78% reported it occurred when they were under age 18, according to The Trevor Project’s 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health.

The Trevor Project is fighting to put an end to conversion therapy with its 50 Bills 50 States Campaign. The campaign focuses on the introduction and passage of protections at the statewide level.



Troy Stevenson ready to testify at Oklahoma Legislature

During the coronavirus pandemic, while much of the nation ultimately shifted to working from home, The Trevor Project continued its trek toward ending the practice. In response to the new normal, Protecting with Pride, its newest campaign, was launched in 2020.

The goal of Protecting with Pride is to end conversion therapy in every state on a municipal level by educating policymakers and local residents on the dangers and mental effects of conversion therapy.

The campaign in July donated \$165,000 to 22 state and local LGBTQ organizations. Ban Conversion Therapy Kentucky, Equality Federation Institute, Campaign for Southern Equality, Freedom Oklahoma Education Campaign and Transgender Education Network of Texas are among the recipients.

Pre-COVID, Campaign Manager Troy Stevenson and his colleagues were traveling across the country working on municipal bills. They were looking for innovative ways to continue working and not lose the progress that had been made with the 50 Bills 50 States campaign.

“The funding we had been spending on travel, we decided to give it directly to these grassroots organizations,” Stevenson said. “So we could still have people on the ground setting up virtual meetings with lawmakers and it’s more effective coming from these local voices.”

With that money local organizations have set up a billboard campaign in Iowa, a public education podcast in Arizona and other states have set up virtual meetings with one another to share their ideas.

Stevenson pointed out that even if bills are voted down by legislatures, young people can see organizations fighting for their protection and making sure that they know they are not alone. He also said parents may think twice about putting their children through this experience if legislation is being seriously considered to prohibit it.

Merry, a conversion therapy survivor, said that if this Campaign were around three years ago, maybe her parents would have done equal research into that as they did into conversion therapy. “I think a misconception about kids in conversion therapy is that they have these mean evil parents, but I think a lot of parents have just been indoctrinated into believing a certain way,” Merry said. “And if you thought your kid was gonna be punished and burn forever, then you’d want them to not suffer too and do whatever it takes to fix them.”

Stevenson is very passionate about the Protecting with Pride Campaign because of his personal connection to it. His first boyfriend was placed in conversion therapy in the late 1990s when they were teenagers. Stevenson can still recall his last phone call with his boyfriend where he pleaded to not be sent back to the process. The next morning he took his own life. More than thirty years later, youth who reported undergoing conversion therapy reported more than twice the rate of attempting suicide in the past year compared to those who did not, according to the Trevor Project’s 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health.

Other prominent effects include PTSD. Merry still lives with the effects of these tactics to this day. She can still feel how cold the bowl of ice water was that her church counselor forced her to put her hands into while talking about her “homosexual thoughts.” This aversion technique aims to associate a person’s attraction with pain.

Three years later, Merry has trouble holding hands with her girlfriend and occasionally shudders at the sound of running water. She has difficulty trusting people and telling others that she is in a relationship with a woman, so most times she will say “boyfriend” out of fear for retaliation.

A San Francisco State University study found that LGBTQ young people who were highly rejected by loved ones are nearly six times as likely to report high levels of depression and more than three times as likely to use illegal drugs than those who were not rejected.

The movement to legally end conversion therapy has been successful in 20 states, so 30 states still don’t have full protections against it. The Protecting with Pride Campaign and the 50 Bills 50 States Campaign are working to change that.

Stevenson said, “I don’t think there is a stronger level of hope that can be given to young people than the elected executive of a state saying that you matter, we will protect you and we are going to the politics aside to do that.”

(If you are a survivor of conversion therapy and need support please contact the TrevorLifeline at 1-866-488-7386.)

How one typical YMCA, in Peoria, keeps adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic



Participants in a Peoria YMCA potluck before the pandemic represent the organization's myriad activities and broad constituencies.

By Vernon Smith Jr.

Adapting is something we all had to experience this year. A lot of changes had to be made in order to live a safe and healthy life. That is exactly what the Greater Peoria, Ill., area YMCA, and hundreds like it around the country, had to do.

Alyssa Johnson, Peoria's director of member experience, said her YMCA never completely shut down when the pandemic hit.

Although many YMCAs nationwide did close, a few permanently and most of them temporarily, Johnson said Peoria's was "fortunate" not to. This was because, she said, "Our facility was named 'essential' due to the essential worker childcare we offered during the quarantine. Our facility is marked as a local food site for families. We have been open since June with modified hours and continually changing things month by month as we slowly re-open to a somewhat 'normal' gym."

In crises, individuals, corporations and organizations look for guidance on what to do and what actions should be taken in order to facilitate a safe environment. The Greater Peoria YMCA looked to the national YMCA headquarters for advice and also investigated what other local Y's were doing.

"All members are required to wear masks upon entry and exiting the facility," Johnson said. "Everyone entering the facility must have their temperature taken. Members are allowed to take masks off once they have reached their destination in the gym."

She detailed how the workout facility works, specifically what precautions are being taken in that area. "For example, if a member has signed up for a Zumba class, they will come in with their mask, have their temperature taken, head up to the correct studio, then take their mask off," Johnson said.

"We have a station in the entry way lobby to wash hands with germ-X, pick up a clean sanitizing spray bottle and towel," she added. "The spray bottles and towels are returned to a bin in the lobby once members have completed their workout. The spray bottles are cleaned with a disinfectant fogger before being placed back on the table with all the other clean spray bottles. The towels are cleaned in the washer and dryer every day and folded to be put back on the table for members. We 'fog' (special spray gun) the entire gym twice a day (once at noon and once when we close for the night)."

Something new that has come out of this pandemic for this YMCA is its EGym app and all the ways the Peoria YMCA has been using it. “We have also utilized our new app with EGym which allows us to require members to sign up for group fitness classes they wish to take,” Johnson said. “Each class has its own capacity and we have cut capacity in each room in half. For example, the capacity in Studio #2 is 20 so we will allow 10 participants to register for that class. She explained, “Each group exercise room is marked with an ‘X’ where the participant is to stay for the entire class session to safely practice social distancing. We plan to continue on with the registration process on the app to practice safe social distancing so we never have to worry about exceeding max capacity in the group classes.”

Johnson said local YMCAs all over the country have been communicating with one another to discuss how to handle situations like this and what they can learn from one another. “It is wonderful to be a part of the YMCA because even though we are our own branch here in Peoria—we have friends in all the YMCA’s all over the country. We have a webpage called ‘Y- Exchange’ for all CEO’s and directors to utilize and communicate with other YMCAs across the US. We share positive and negative feedback we receive for various things like membership and fundraising, etc.”

She said that an upside of such traumatic times is that everyone can better learn how to plan for the future. “This pandemic has really educated us on how we could better prepare for huge road-blocks like this global pandemic,” Johnson said.

“We are working our way through this pandemic every day and though it seems like the world is constantly changing day-by-day—we now feel like we can overcome just about anything with our great members and board members and partners who continued on with their membership dues during the time of our closure.”

Seattle nonprofit theatre gets creative with new digital content



Actors performing on stage at ACT Theatre, located in Seattle, Wash.. // Photo courtesy of ACT

Following the cancelation of their entire 2020 season, ACT Theatre develops interactive series featuring local talent.

By Makenna Marks
Nonprofit Sector News
August 16, 2020

Despite the empty seats, closed curtains and locked doors, ACT Theatre in Seattle, Wash., continues the art of storytelling through its new digital content, the ACTLocal Playwright Series.

ACT partnered with Trial and Error Productions to create ACTLocal – “A series of conversations and play readings shining a spotlight on local playwrights and the development of new, contemporary work.”

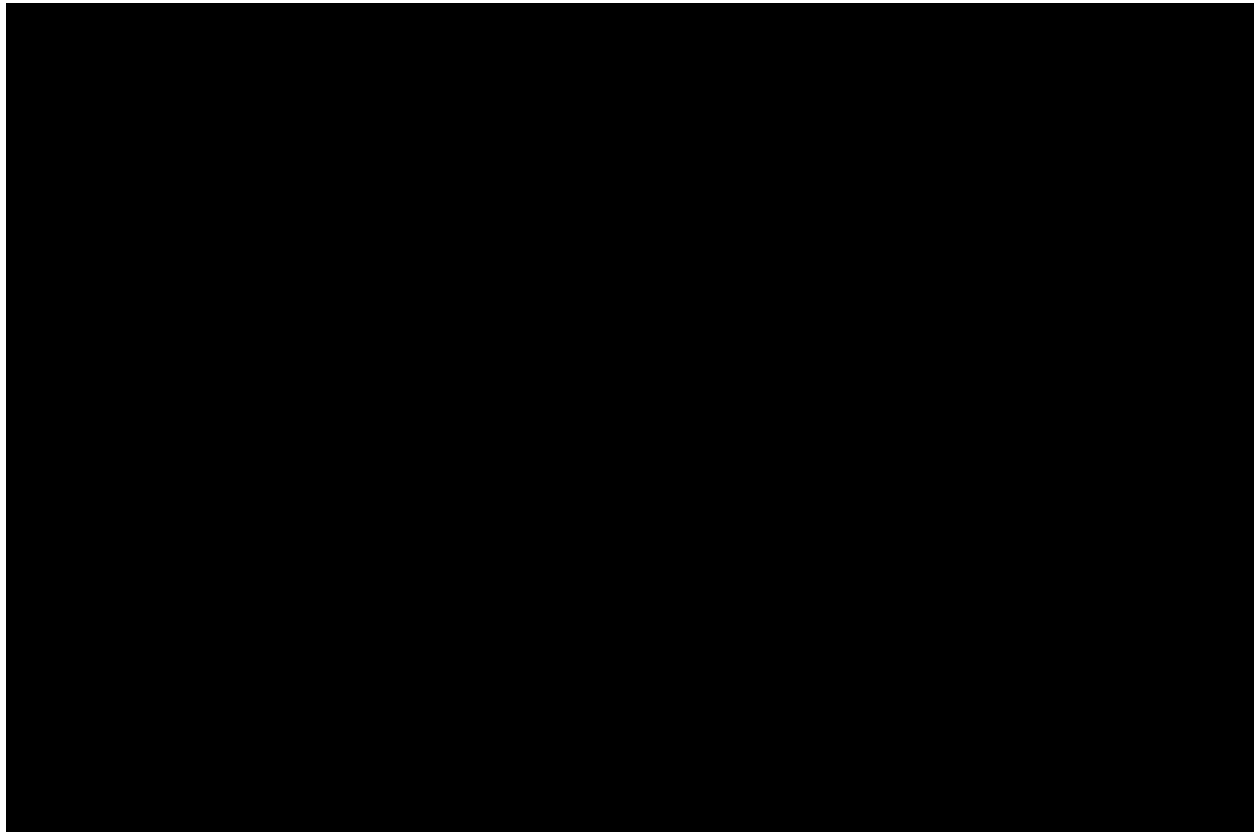
Seven events will each feature a different artist. The series, accessible through a Zoom link,

launches on Thursday, August 20, and will feature two local actresses and playwrights, Keiko Green and Kirsten Potter.

Green and Potter will be interviewing each other, sharing stories and life experiences, as well as talking about their plays. Audience members will be welcomed to join the conversation and have opportunities to ask their own questions.

Due to COVID-19 health precautions and crowd restrictions, theatre companies around the world made the decision to cancel their 2020 seasons. As a result, many theatres have developed their own digital content.

John Langs, artistic director of ACT, wanted to create something that gave artists the time, space and resources to share their stories and experiences. But he also wanted audience members to feel connected to the artists, almost like they would during a live performance.



Kirsten Potter, actress and playwright, performing on stage at ACT Theatre. Potter will be featured in the first event of ACT's new Playwright Series on Thursday, August 20. // Photo courtesy of ACT

“The idea of a playwright conversation [became a chance to] get to know the artists and what they’re thinking about, particularly in this really incredible time,” Langs said. “They can also use that space to tell you about the stories they’re writing so that when we can gather again, you’ll have heard about and met these particular artists.”

Virtual seats to the series can be reserved online at acttheatre.org. The cost of attendance is free, but donations are gladly accepted.

ACT, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, relies heavily on its revenues from ticket sales, rental fees and concessions. This year the theatre had to cancel its five-play mainstage season, as well as its 45th production of the beloved holiday classic, “A Christmas Carol.”

“60% of our budget in a normal year is through our earned revenue, which is our ticket sales and rental and concessions,” said Becky Witmer, managing director of ACT.

“There were additional programs scheduled during the season including our ACTLab program, which allows us to produce with community partners, and our Young Playwrights Program,” said Gail Benzler, marketing, sales and communication director of ACT.

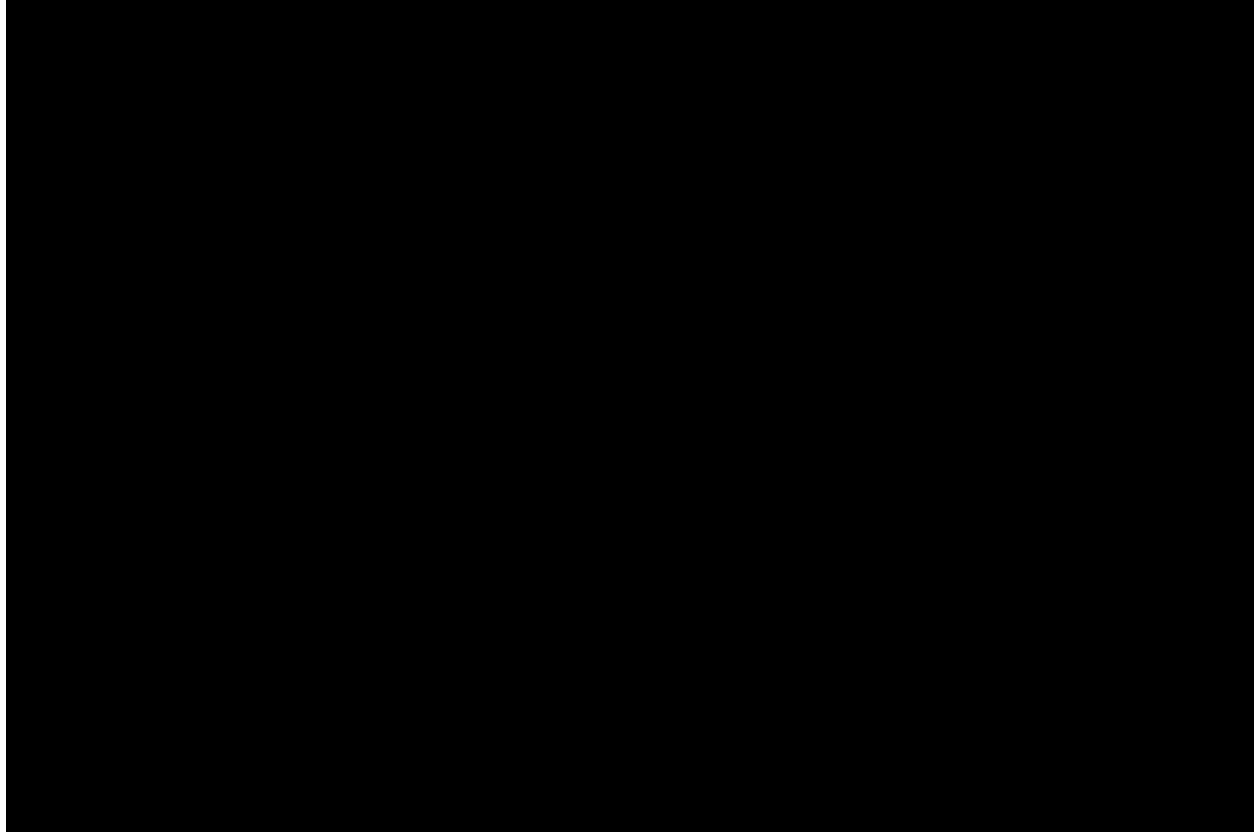
A typical mainstage season at ACT consists of up to six plays, in addition to the annual production of “A Christmas Carol.”

“Going forward, we anticipate a season of five plays as we move to a fall-spring schedule next year,” said Benzler.

Over the last six years, ACT has averaged an audience of 95 thousand people. In 2017 and 2018 the theatre had total revenues of more than \$7.3 million.

ACT along with other performing arts companies in the area received funding from the ArtsFund, Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, and 4Culture to help get through these tough times.

For Witmer, one of the hardest parts about canceling the season was the impact she knew it would have on jobs and livelihoods. ACT had to lay off 46 employees and is now working with a full-time and part-time staff of only 20 people.



Actress and playwright Keiko Green pictured on stage at ACT Theatre. Green will be featured in the first event of ACT's new Playwright Series on Thursday, August 20. // Photo courtesy of ACT

"The hardest part for me was to have to lay off the majority of our staff and have so many artists and craftspeople out of work," Witmer said. "Of course every theater across the country has been in the same position, but that has been really difficult and heartbreaking."

Looking into the near future, ACT plans to release more digital content, much different from the Playwright Series. Its 45th annual production of "A Christmas Carol" is still in the works, but will take on a unique digital form.

"It is a holiday tradition for so many people and it's been around for years," Langs said. "People who saw it as kids have now brought their children, and now are bringing their grandchildren."

Langs wants to invite community members to share their own stories about what "A Christmas Carol" means to them. "I think the play will be framed, if not interrupted by stories of people who have come to ACT and seen it before," he said.

Aside from just talking about art, Langs also wants to keep creating art at ACT. He plans to develop one of Keiko Green's plays into a "highly fantastical entertaining digital event," using green screen technology.

If there is a silver lining to the 2020 season cancelation, it's that you don't have to be in Seattle to access ACT's new content.

“What we're learning in this digital space is that it can go a long way beyond our quarantine, and really be about how to broaden and serve the larger community,” Langs said.

Nonprofits working together to build capacity in a city of need



Six neighborhood organizations raised \$22,500 for Baltimore's Community Law Center on Giving Tuesday 2015.

By Stephen Neukam
Nonprofit Sector News
August 8, 2020

As social justice movements burgeon around the country and awareness of the importance of community rises, a challenge of longevity and effectiveness threatens the optimism and potential of grassroots movements. Nationally and locally, people concerned with all facets of social justice — racial justice, fair housing, gun violence — end up confronting how to translate their energy into a resource for their communities.

An avenue that some choose is to form a nonprofit organization, looking to fortify and expand their operation mission. The road to creating such an organization can be difficult though and many people face that battle with little guidance and understanding of the process. Even if they were to get the direction they needed, it would come with a cost.

Community Law Center, a nonprofit in Baltimore, Maryland, is helping to bridge this gap in the city, strengthening communities by providing free legal services and representation for other nonprofits and community organizations.

It's a model that has helped support and promote grassroots causes toward many of the problems that hamper Baltimore and many cities like it. By working directly with community leaders and giving them the legal resources they need, the organization has been able to help hundreds of groups build capacity.

Kristine Dunkerton, the organization's executive director and president, said that nonprofits and those looking to start one are always dealing with a scarcity of resources. "A lot of groups, particularly small nonprofits, are just winging it, because where do you learn this stuff?" said Dunkerton. "The more access that they have to legal services, to accounting services, the stronger they are going to be and the more capacity they will have to achieve their missions."

Community Law Center has over 600 volunteer attorneys on deck. The organization focuses heavily on neighborhoods that have been historically oppressed and disinvested in. While community leaders attempt to aid in some of the most notable issues, such as gun violence and food security, there are problems just as important but less discussed that these groups are targeting, such as reliable transportation.

Fayette Street Outreach Organization, a community group in southeast Baltimore that is committed to reaching the economic needs of its area and build a better future for its youth, has partnered with Community Law Center and been a resource for its community for decades. The organization is currently organizing for US Census responses and celebrating new business openings.

The coordination between the organizations lends a hand to communities badly in need of the efforts. Dunkerton cited the city's food insecurity issue as another challenge that her organization is working toward. In a city mired by these issues, especially crime, with the highest murder rate in the country in 2019, the capacity building in communities offers an opportunity for improvement that seems to come all-too-slowly for many neighborhoods. Dunkerton understands the importance of that goal.

"We're here to be a meaningful partner," said Dunkerton. "We hope that our lasting effect is to help them build their capacity and be able to use us effectively as a legal tool. We want to share our knowledge with them so that they can make big decisions that are right for their organizations and missions."

Post-merger military nonprofit raises the voice of the LGBTQ military community



A military couple poses in front of an aircraft. // Photo courtesy of Stephen Peters, MMAA communications and marketing director.

Modern Military Association of America provides pro-bono legal assistance and a certification program to service members, families and veterans.

By Makenna Marks
Nonprofit Sector News
August 7, 2020

Fifteen months after the May 2019 merger of Outserve-SDLN and the American Military Partner Association to form the Modern Military Association of America (MMAA), the new organization has seized its role as the most comprehensive and largest nonprofit organization supporting the USA's LGBTQ service members, families and veterans.

The two organizations had similarities and differences: AMPA, founded in 2009 and formerly called the Campaign for Military Partners, was an all-volunteer organization. Outserve-SDLN, itself the product of a 2012 merger, had a paid staff.

“While OutServe-SDLN focused mainly on veterans and people in service, AMPA focused mainly on spouses and families,” said Peter Perkowski, legal and policy director of MMAA. “As a combined organization, we now serve veterans, people in service or wanting to serve, and families and spouses.” The merger brought the entire LGBTQ military community under one roof, he said, although there are a few other specialized national military LGBTQ organizations. Both organizations already were headquartered in Washington, D.C.

MMAA now has 19 staff and board members, who are helped by more than 200 volunteers and 85,000 members and supporters. Since their launches, MMAA and its predecessor organizations have helped more than 12,500 legal clients.

The LGBTQ military community has faced discrimination in the U.S. for decades due to policies like Clinton’s “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” blueprint instituted in 1994 and Trump’s reinstatement of the transgender military ban in 2019.

“Our mission really is to work for equal service, equal benefits and equal treatment,” Perkowski said. “That hasn’t been true and still isn’t true for service members, veterans and families.”

MMAA currently has four lawsuits challenging policies that discriminate against the LGBTQ military community, one of them specifically against President Trump’s executive order banning transgender military personnel.

“The ban is insidious discrimination against a qualified population based solely on gender identity,” Perkowski said. “That is squarely within our mission to address, and it’s important that this barrier be removed so qualified individuals can serve on the same footing as cisgender people.”

Perkowski said that MMAA is also assisting and advising transgender people who are currently serving in the military, as well as those who are planning to join. MMAA provides pro-bono legal help to LGBTQ service members, families and veterans in need. Perkowski emphasized that there are a lot of LGBTQ veterans who were dishonorably discharged under previous discriminatory policies – “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” and earlier policies that completely prohibit LGBTQ persons from serving in the U.S. military.

“We have a program to restore the dignity of their service by upgrading their discharge,” Perkowski said. “It allows them to access benefits that they might not normally be entitled to, so that’s very important.”

A discharge upgrade would allow someone with a previous “dishonorable discharge” to access veteran benefits such as disability compensation, free or low-cost medical care, or counseling.

JoAnna Michaels, a transgender Airforce veteran, received legal assistance from Perkowski and

Outserve-SLDN (now MMAA) in 2015. Michaels, who served during the war in Vietnam, was hoping to fix her DD 214 form years later so that it stated her correct name.

A DD 214 form is given by the U.S. Defense Department to veteran identifying their conditions of discharge. This form also contains the information needed to verify if a veteran qualifies for military service benefits and membership in veteran organizations.

In Michaels' case, her form stated she had received an honorable discharge, but her name was incorrect.

"I was interested in getting my DD 214 [to state that] I was Joanna Michaels and not somebody else," she said.

With help from Perkowski and Outserve-SLDN, Michaels' DD 214 form was approved with her correct name a year later.

"He (Perkowski) got my information and took care of it," Michaels said. "The next thing I heard was that my DD 214 was approved and it was sent out to me."

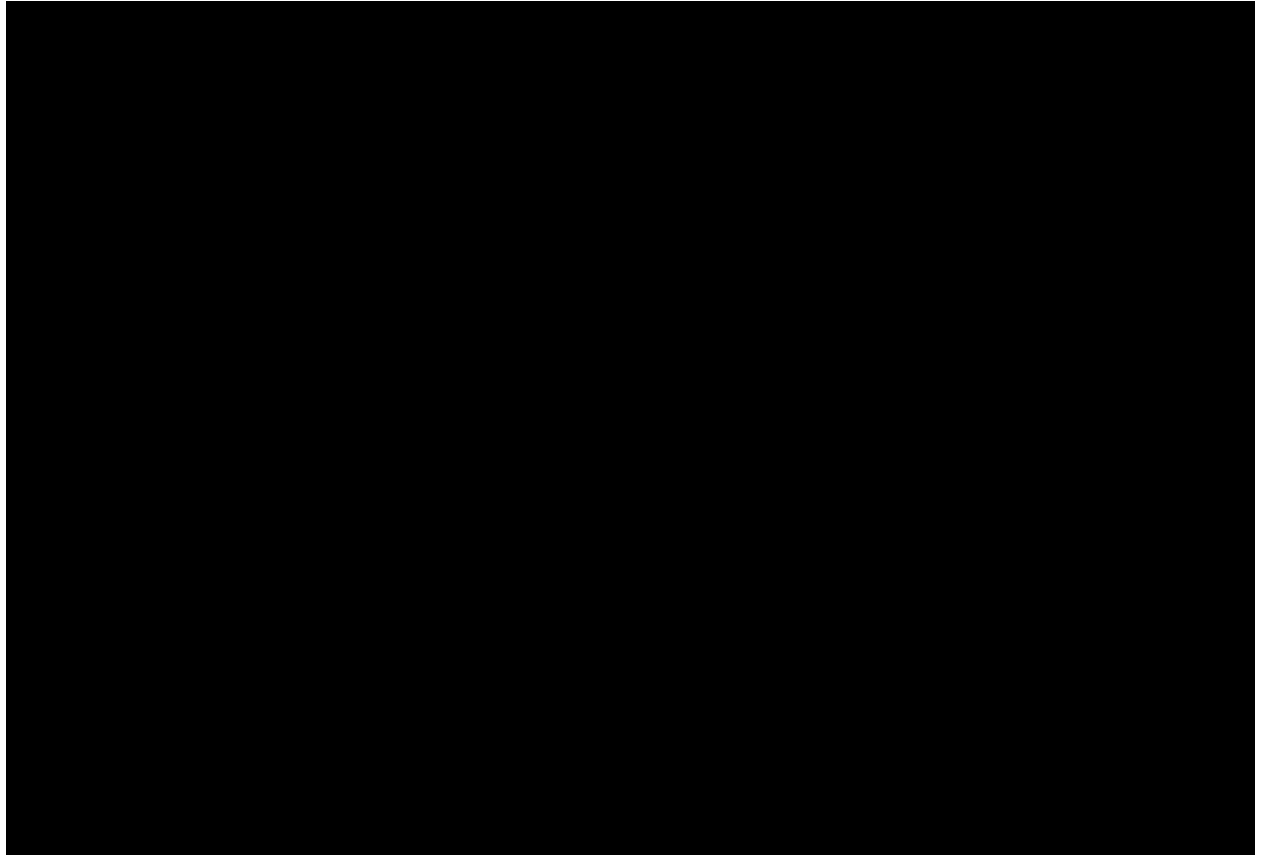
Aside from pro-bono legal services, the MMAA also provides educational and training programs.

The Rainbow Shield Certification is an online LGBTQ cultural certification training developed for military and veteran service providers.

"The program is offered to any organization that offers services to veterans," Perkowski said. "That would include the VA (United States Department of Veteran Affairs), hospitals and other veterans service organizations."

According to MMAA's website, "The goal of the Rainbow Shield program is to end negative experiences in service and advocacy settings based on sexual orientation, gender identity and serostatus for service members, veterans and their families."

MMAA can be found on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, but they also use their magazine to help promote their work. To learn more, visit modernmilitary.org.



MMAA staff and board members at the reception prior to the AMPA National Gala in 2019. // Photo courtesy of Stephen Peters, MMAA communications and marketing director.

VFW veterans stepping up to help their community amid COVID-19 crisis



Volunteers from VFW Texas Post distributing food to the local veterans.

By Payal Gangishetty
Nonprofit Sector News
August 6, 2020

The coronavirus crisis has brought a wave of community kindness, with armies of volunteers—especially veterans—putting up their hands to help those in need in the local communities.

One group of volunteers, members of the nonprofit service organization Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), have teamed up with local organizations to assist with food drives for those who need the help the most right now.

Marine Corps veteran Sharman (family name withheld for security) and his platoon of veteran volunteers have been spending a lot of time these days assisting projects in Compton, Watts and South Central neighborhoods in Los Angeles. As part of #StillServing campaign, the platoon has helped support distribution of nearly 1,200 food boxes a week over the last few months. They also started growing vegetables at home to contribute to a community sustainment garden. The platoon also currently is renovating the VFW Post 5394 in Compton, according to the VFW's website.

The #StillServing campaign was launched in January to bring more awareness to the many ways veterans continue to serve beyond the military. Randi K. Law, communications manager at VFW's national headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., said, "A week-long virtual celebration was

held between July 20 and 24 to highlight personal veteran stories that emerged as a result of the campaign. The main aim of the #StillServing campaign was to be bring awareness about the selflessness of our veterans and acknowledge the work they carry out in the local communities.”

VFW’s goal is to provide vital assistance and support for America’s service members, veterans and their families. So another major continuing project is the VFW Buddy Poppy program, through which the organization raised \$8 million last year by distributing about 8.7 million “Buddy”® Poppies. The Buddy Poppy program provides compensation to the veterans who assemble the poppies, provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans’ rehabilitation and service programs, and partially supports the VFW National Home For Children.

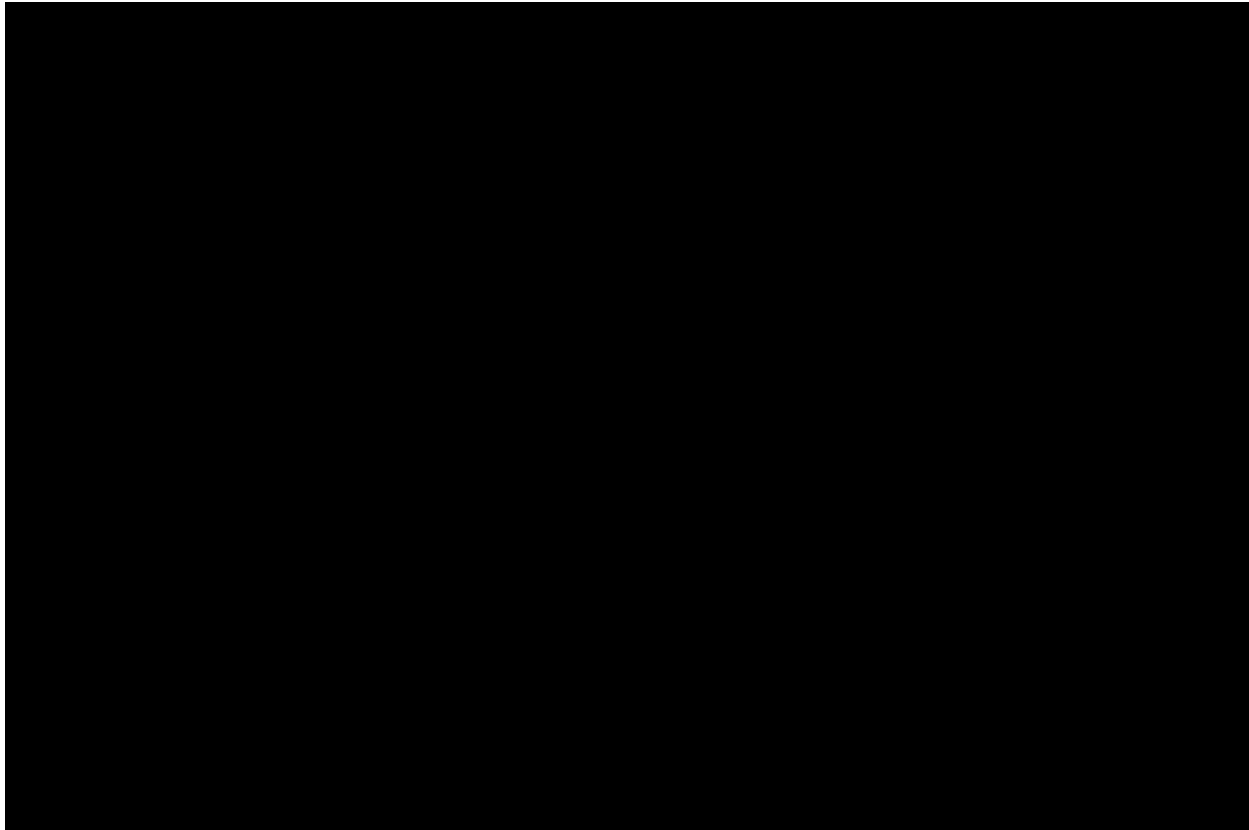
Effects of the Pandemic

Of course VFW Posts at the local level have been widely affected due to sudden lockdowns. “Some posts” were “adversely affected,” she said, adding “many Posts with halls, canteens, etc., closed these gathering locations due to local mandates enacted as a result of COVID-19.”

But Law said, “we haven’t had any of them close down due to the pandemic.” She said, “Besides our donors, we had corporations come forward and support us.”

“Meanwhile, in some places where there were two posts located in each other’s vicinity, they were either merged or one of them was asked to shut down due to rents going up,” she said. Overall, Law added, “We had to adapt to the changes like any other organization. We are optimistic that we will come out of this stronger than ever. We have found new ways of doing business and ensure that veterans continue to receive the support they need. Most of our programs are now being conducted virtually.”

Referring to the national organization’s priorities of maintaining and improving the quality of life and benefit programs for service members, veterans and their families, she said, “We are positive that we will meet our objectives this year. The pandemic has certainly changed the way we function, but our lawmakers our changing the way they conduct the business too. The conversation and dialogue will go on and we will continue to provide testimony.”



Declining Membership

The VFW once had 2.1 million members. However, its membership declined over the years. Law pointed out, “Today, less than 1% of the population is serving the country so fewer individuals are shouldering the burden of war.” In addition, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reports that an average of 1,147 World War II veterans, 500 Korean War veterans and 426 Vietnam War veterans are dying each day.

With membership now more than 1.5 million, but down from its 1992 peak of 2.1 million, the VFW’s average member age is between 60 and 65. VFW posts — where members can socialize with other veterans — are rapidly closing across the nation as aging members die and younger veterans choose not to join.

Law explained, “Posts closure is not something new. There has been a steady decline in number of Posts for over a decade now and it’s a direct reflection of having fewer veterans.”

But the VFW still has 6,000 posts, grouped into 52 departments covering the 50 states, the Asia-Pacific area, and Europe. Founded in 1899, the VFW is the nation’s largest and oldest war veterans’ organization, with a national headquarters staff of about 120 employees and a national budget of more than \$98 million.

Today, each post has anywhere from 25 to 1,000 members. Many VFW posts have contests for academic scholarships to high school students in need of financial support and engage in other similar humanitarian endeavors. Since 2004, the VFW also has provided \$11.9 million in assistance to military families to cover basic needs. It has awarded \$7.2 million in scholarships to

more than 1,606 veterans and service members since 2014, and recovered \$9 billion in disability compensation and pension benefits in fiscal year 2019.

Responding to declining membership

Law said the “VFW staff is coming up with new and innovative ways to target new members using social media. Also, integrated campaigns like #StillServing help us reach new audiences and encourage engagement with our brand. Our members also continue to reach out to the public through community service based initiatives to let them know what we are and what we do.” VFW members volunteer nearly 9 million hours to community service projects annually, she said.

Elks sees slight increase in national membership



Elks Lodge No. 1777 in Lakewood, Colorado hosted a spaghetti and sausage dinner for 30 veterans from Archway Housing in Denver, followed by a social evening of visiting and sharing stories. (Picture credit: Elks National Veterans Service Commission's Facebook page)

By: Payal Gangishetty
Nonprofit Sector News
July 29, 2020

At a time when many fraternal organizations are reporting dwindling memberships, officials at the Chicago-based Elks say their organization has had a slight membership increase in the last two years.

James Nicholson, the Elks' former national president, said the community projects that are carried out by the lodges throughout the country is helping them to reach out to people at local level and engage them in the organization's mission.

Nicholson said, "We encourage lodge members to keep the community informed about their lodge's charitable activities and youth programs. When people find out about various programs we carry out in local communities —feeding the hungry, veteran services, drug awareness and charity among others – they see them and join."

Meanwhile, the organization's website reports that Lodge No.1588 in Ferndale, Michigan, has ebbed and flowed with the community. Like the city, right now, the Lodge is flowing. Membership has more than doubled since 2015, from 253 to 616. With an average age of 50, the lodge is the youngest in Michigan and the sixth youngest in the nation. Importantly, the lodge's demographics reflect Ferndale's diverse population.

Moreover, Nicholson feels, the reputation of the organization being co-ed and service oriented, as supposed to being social or fraternal in nature is helping them increase the organization's membership. Today, the Elks' membership is 750,000 members, an increase of 1-2% compared to the previous two years, he said. However, Elks membership is down over the long run; in 1976, for example, the Elks had more than 1.6 million members.

The Elks—officially the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks (BPOE) or, if you ask an Elk who likes dad jokes, "the Best People on Earth"—was founded in New York City in 1868. It is a national organization with nearly 1,750 chapters and 1,800 lodges located across the United States.

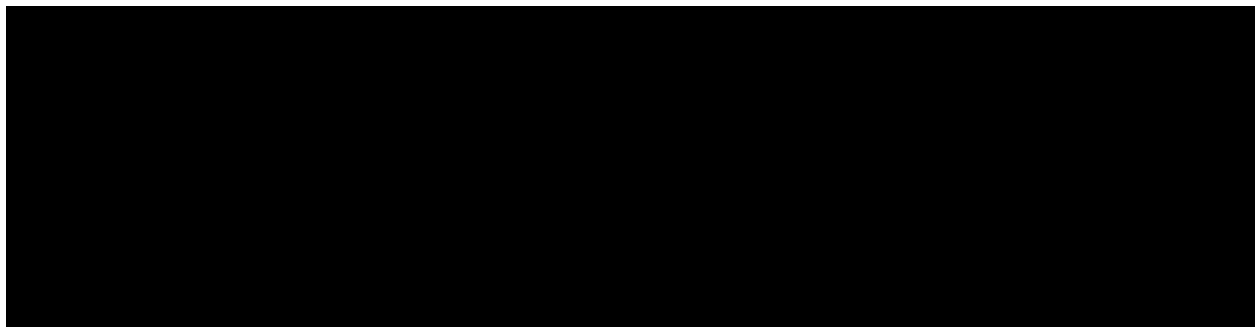
(While some other traditional service and fraternal organizations, such as the Lions Club, have had membership increases due to relatively quick expansion in countries worldwide, the Elks never wanted to do that. The Elks' website says that its members, in addition to being invited to join, "must be an American citizen, believe in God, be of good moral character and be at least 21 years old." The Elks did not admit women until 1995 and never even had official women's auxiliaries like many other traditional men's organizations. Dues are only \$40-100 per year.)

The foundation's budget for program services in the 2020-21 fiscal year totals \$38.6 million.

Nichelson said the Elks National Foundation, established in 1928, finances Elk members' projects. Elks' primary community functions are sponsoring a lot of youth activities, educational and patriotic community-minded programs, besides organizing programs for veterans and carrying out community projects and activities.

Meanwhile, as part of Veterans Service Week celebrations, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission organized online programs and activities for the veterans for July 13-17. The main aim of the commission is to help homeless veterans, with a special focus on service to those in need. Moreover, numerous scholarships of various kinds are given out each year to the National Elks organization. Some other projects the Elks organization is involved in are sports events such as "Hoop Shots" for youth, Nicholson said.

Some of the Elks' most important work has been in the area of trying to eliminate the use of illegal drugs by all members of society, especially children, by conducting drug awareness program across the United States. In 2019, the Elks Drug Awareness Program (DAP), the nation's largest all-volunteer drug education group, has partnered with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to launch a national anti-drug educational video "Teens React To Conversations With Survivors of Addiction," to shed light on the effects of drugs on teenagers.



Youngsters take part in one of the programs conducted by the Elks National Foundation (Picture credit: Elks organization website)

Lodges up for sale

Like many other similar private benevolent clubs that reached their peak decades ago, the passage of time is taking its toll on the Elks. Many Elks clubs across the United States are up for sale and are bought by various business establishments for millions of dollars. However, Nicholson said the Elks buildings are not necessarily salable. "There isn't a big market for old Elks buildings. Many of them are downtowns' big facilities," he pointed out.

On the question about reason behind lodges being sold, Nicholson said, "Aging membership is one of the main reasons. Each lodge has approximately 500 members. Finding new members is tough these days. When a lodge doesn't recruit new members, it tends to lose its effectiveness and we lose them. Though we send representatives and try to help these lodges, it doesn't help sometimes. However, we lose lodges, we gain lodges," he asserted.

Impact of COVID-19

Like any other non-profit organization, the Elks too report being negatively impacted by the global pandemic. Nicholson says every lodge has been affected differently. While most lodges across the country had to cancel their fundraising events and other planned projects, the New Jersey State Elks Association lost as many as 75 members due to the global pandemic.

“Each state has different quarantine and lockdown rules. Respective State governors must determine if the lodge members can carryout activities in local communities. It is difficult for lodges to hold any events during this time,” said Nicholson.

Federal legislation proposed by Disabled American Veterans starts at the grassroots



By [nsn2020](#)

Jul 23, 2020



Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) meets with Disabled American Veterans representatives on legislation.

By Sam Drysdale
Nonprofit Sector News
July 23, 2020

Standing atop Capitol Hill, testifying before the United States Congress, Joy Ilem speaks with the weight of a quarter of America's disabled veterans behind her. She serves as National Legislative Director of the Congressionally chartered nonprofit lobby group, Disabled American Veterans. She speaks, not for them, but with them, giving a voice to her members' words.

DAV maintains a uniquely ground-up advocacy mission. The organization's policy goals are based directly on those submitted by local members and departments across the country.

It has been supporting and advocating for injured and ill service-disabled veterans for 100 years. Founded in 1920 after World War I, the nonprofit now serves more than 1 million veterans each year, offering benefits, transportation, advocacy, employment and voluntarism.

Through its century of service, DAV has developed its grassroots advocacy model rooted in the idea that no one knows about the issues facing disabled veterans better than the veterans themselves. All legislation the nonprofit publicly approves, disapproves or champions comes from resolutions submitted at the local level.

Al Labelle, 15-year member of the organization and now legislative team member, said resolutions usually don't start as fully-formed legal documents. Rather, they take the first step when a veteran stands up and speaks up.

"I'll have members come up to me and say, 'Hey, how come we don't have a position on such-and-such.' And I'll say, 'Because nobody submitted a resolution!'" he said.

In order for a mere idea wondered aloud at a local DAV meeting to eventually be included in the organization's national legislative program, and eventually — maybe — become a bill or law, it must undergo a complex process.

Six-year-DAV-member, U.S. Navy veteran Robert Hilliard, and his story of submitting a resolution serves as an illustrative example of this process. To Hilliard, the grassroots advocacy system is integral to the organization.

At the 2017 summer state convention, he sat watching a fellow member of the Wisconsin department "hijack" the 2017 summer state convention without following the official process of moving legislation. His fellow DAV member was trying to pass a cannabis resolution to the nonprofit's legislative platform, but circumvented the established steps to move a resolution forward.

Hilliard said he couldn't help but think, "this isn't the proper way."

Most resolutions start off at the chapter level in one of DAV's 1300+ local chapters. Members can present an idea to a committee who reviews it and recommends how the chapter body votes.

Hilliard felt that any resolution made about cannabis should follow the predetermined procedure, starting at a local chapter. "When you do things the right way you're more apt to be listened to than when you hijack things and scream and don't do them in the

proper manner,” he said.

So, the Navy veteran got to work writing his own cannabis resolution. His focus was on presenting a clean image of DAV — making it palatable to Congress on both sides of the aisle — while also helping as much of the membership as possible. He presented the resulting document to his local DAV chapter, Chapter 27, which represents Wisconsin’s Monroe and Jackson counties.

Hilliard’s background with other nonprofits proved helpful in writing the resolution. However, for veterans without this experience, DAV provides a number of resources to make the process more accessible.

Members can find legislative webinars and documents on turning their ideas into action on the organization’s website. Additionally, Benefits Protection Team Leaders (BPTL) volunteer their time to grassroots advocacy.

There is a BPTL for every state, some in certain chapters. These individuals are volunteers who understand the lobbying process and serve as a bridge between members and lawmakers. In addition to helping veterans draft resolutions, BPTLs supplement the work the national legislative staff are doing on Capitol Hill. They testify for state bills and develop relationships with senators and representatives to ask for their support on congressional bills.

Labelle, BPTL for the Wisconsin department of DAV, remembers when Hilliard’s cannabis resolution passed through Chapter 27 and moved on to the state level in Wisconsin.

“There was one that, how should I say this, was an interesting debate,” he said. “There were people who wanted it but didn’t quite understand that we can’t advocate that marijuana be legal; that’s not who we are, it’s outside our scope. However, we can advocate that comprehensive studies be done to ensure that there will be studies on efficacy for veterans, specifically disabled veterans.”

Once resolutions are presented to their respective state-level DAV department, the department considers the ideas at a convention. Departments may write their own resolutions as well, but according to Labelle, most come from membership.

A state committee considers the chapter-approved and department-written documents

and votes on which to recommend to the body of the convention. After the committee makes its recommendations, the convention body votes to adopt or move a resolution forward in the process.

Hilliard attended the Wisconsin department convention in June 2018 to testify for his rewritten form of the medical marijuana resolution. “When I spoke about it on the floor, probably 99% of the floor — once they heard me speak about it and why I was doing it — were supportive of it,” he said.

Any local or state-level resolutions adopted by the convention stay within the department, such as advocacy for laws around hunting and fishing permits which fall under state legislation. Resolutions that address federal law, however, move forward in the process to be considered at the annual national convention.

National conventions occur once a year, usually during the summer. Any resolutions approved there are incorporated into that year’s official legislative agenda.

The 2020 national convention was originally scheduled for July 31 to August 4 in Dallas, Texas, but was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the second time in the organization’s history that the convention has been canceled, the first being in 1942 as the U.S. increased involvement in World War II.

DAV will be hosting a digital event this year to celebrate its volunteers and leaders, as well as to deliver important information. 2021’s DAV and Auxiliary National Convention is set to be in Reno, Nevada.

In previous years, active members have arrived to the convention as delegates to be placed on one of five committees to assess resolutions. In the usual convention process, each committee is advised by one or two staff members of the national legislative team. After committees have made their recommendations — similar to chapter and state conventions — the body votes on what to approve.

Resolutions don’t automatically renew from year to year, so to be included in the following years program, they have to be submitted again.

Last year, DAV received 346 resolutions from 33 states, with 191 being adopted.

Hilliard’s proposal to have federally funded research into medical marijuana as treatment for PTSD was slightly modified and adopted at the 2019 national

convention. It became Resolution No. 076 Support Department Of Veterans Affairs Research Into The Medical Efficacy Of Cannabis For Service-Connected Disabled Veterans.

“They took most of mine and adopted it but adapted it,” Hilliard said. “When a resolution gets brought to Congress it needs to be in a more broad form, because if it is brought too specifically and worded too specifically, it usually gets thrown out and if it gets adapted you’ve pigeon-holed yourself. So, they wrote it in more broad terms, but, for the most part, 100% of mine was used.”

Resolution No. 076 states, “THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Orlando, Florida, August 3-6, 2019, supports more comprehensive and scientifically rigorous research by the VA into the therapeutic benefits and risks of cannabis and cannabis-derived products as a possible treatment for service-connected disabled veterans.”

Labelle said there were many drafts of this controversial resolution before it got approved. He thinks more research should be done, given his background in respiratory therapy, but also believes it has the potential to help a lot of people.

The nuanced conversation around this issue wouldn’t have been possible without DAV’s controlled ground-up process. “That’s why you have conventions, that’s why you have round tables, that’s why you have hearings,” Labelle said.

Once adopted from convention, resolutions incorporated into the legislative program serve to direct the national team’s efforts in Congress all year. “[The legislative program] guides our policy decisions that we make and put forth for our recommendation within testimony. So, for us it’s a very important piece, the cornerstone of what our members are telling us they would like to focus on during the legislative year,” Ilem said.

Ilem and the rest of her office put together legislative priorities for the year. Some critical priority goals for 2019 were advocating for women veterans, introducing a compensation package for disabled veterans who are survivors when their loved one dies, and addressing toxic exposure issues. Bills are usually a combination of multiple resolutions.

“We keep track throughout the year of which resolutions are included into legislation

that has been introduced,” Ilem said. “That’s part of our job on the legislative team, to go up to Congress and say, ‘This is really important, it came from a resolution.’”

Disabled American Veterans intensively meet to discuss possible Congressional bills.

Resolution No. 076 was included in Senate Bill S.179 – VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2019, and House Bill H.R.712 – VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2019.

S.179 was referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, but hasn’t been to

hearing yet. H.R.712 was referred to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, then to the Subcommittee on Health where it was held in hearing. On March 20, it passed through the House VA Committee Mark-up hearing, and is now awaiting the scheduling of a vote. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and upcoming election, its passage has been slowed.

“There are a lot of veterans asking for this,” Hilliard said. “Even if it only helps one veteran, then it’s one veteran helped. So long as one brother or sister is not left behind and they find help from another avenue, and the efficacy is solid then it is worthwhile — the wait and everything was worthwhile.”

When a bill is introduced into the House of Representatives or the Senate, DAV’s ground-up approach isn’t over. It relies on its BPTL volunteers to push forward federal legislation.

Labelle recalled a moment when he, as the Wisconsin BPTL, was directly involved in passing national legislation that affected DAV.

During the 2008 presidential campaign, both Senator John McCain and Senator Barack Obama said they would support advanced appropriation of the Department of Veterans Affairs if they were elected. Advanced appropriation meant the budget would be done one year in advance, so the VA wouldn’t be affected by government shutdowns.

When Obama was elected he called a press conference on veteran’s issues to publicly support the issue. However, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Rep. Dave Obey, wasn’t in favor. Luckily for Labelle, who felt strongly about the importance of advanced appropriation, Obey attended the same recreation center.

Having found common ground, Labelle had many long conversations with Obey. One day, out of the blue, the BPTL got a call from his office, which told Labelle that the representative would be on Wisconsin Public Radio that night, and asked him to call in to the 6 o’clock show. The radio host was interviewing Obey, asking what to expect with the following year’s budget when they took the call from Labelle.

“I thanked Dave for being willing to listen and asked what to expect in the new budget, and he said, ‘Well, we’re going to try something new this year. We’re going to do advanced appropriation,’” Labelle said. “I dropped the phone; I immediately called [DAV National Headquarters] and low and behold, I would say within the matter of a

few months it passed.”

The Wisconsin BPTL said it was one of his proudest moments because he was directly involved in the process of approving legislation that helped veterans around the country. “We always tell our membership that at the local level that local connection you have with your member of Congress, and that meeting is what it takes to push it over the edge,” he said.

DAV also has a program called the Commander’s Action Network. Thousands of people across the U.S. are signed up for Commander Action Alerts, which notify them when a bill is introduced that DAV has a resolution on. The organization declares its position on the bill and asks members to act by sending either a pre-written letter, or their own personalized note, to their members of Congress saying why it is an important piece of legislation to disabled veterans.

Labelle claims the trademark he is now known for is, “Advocacy is not a spectator sport.”

This sentiment seems to pervade every level of DAV. Legislation and advocacy are rooted in the ideas and voices of local members. “We count on our members to do that grassroots advocacy,” Ilem said. “That’s how we get things done.”

Alliance of Hope helps people cope with suicides of those close to them



Vernon Smith Jr.
Nonprofit Sector News
July 22, 2020

Losing a family member, friend or love one to suicide is not easy. The healing process to this often takes years. Evanston, Ill.-based Alliance of Hope helps people recover from that loss.

Created by survivors for survivors, Alliance of Hope is a 24/7 online support group that knows exactly what those dealing with suicides are going through, providing support and information on the survivor experience. Its mission states that “Kindness matters – and to the more than five million people around the world who lose a loved one to suicide each year – it matters a lot. We provide healing and compassionate support during the lonely and tumultuous aftermath of suicide. We help people survive suicide loss, and go beyond ‘just surviving, to lead meaningful and productive lives.’”

This nonprofit was founded in 2008. Its founder, Ronnie Susan Walker, is a seasoned mental health counselor whose stepson died by suicide. Over the course of the 12 years since then, Alliance for Hope has helped tens of thousands of suicide loss survivors from many cultures and faith traditions across the world.

Heather Shadur, the Alliance's director of public relations and fundraising, said, "We welcome 10 suicide loss survivors every day on to our community forum which serves a 24/7 support group...we have more than 18,000 members of our online forum."

When signing up for the online forum, suicide loss survivors are given the option to remain anonymous. Shadur said, "We have a public forum and if you came into our forum wanting to receive support, but you weren't ready to create your profile, we have an anonymous forum where they can register with an anonymous username."

Visiting the website shows clients that they are not alone, and it provides a safe haven for survivors. Steve Shannon, whose son died by suicide, shares his thoughts about the program. "When I found The Alliance of Hope on-line community forum, I instantly realized that I was not alone. That there are other people in this world trying to cope and recover from the same traumatic experience that crippled me. I began to read the various postings and threads whose topics were about all the things I needed to come to terms with."

He added, "I think I spent a solid week on there before I introduced myself and began to share my experience and all that goes with it. Within minutes of hitting the 'send' button, I started to receive replies full of complete understanding, compassion, encouragement or simply a message stating 'We are here for you. You are not alone. There is hope and a future for you. There is HOPE!' For the first time since my son's death, I felt a little bit of the stress and confusion ease up."

Website visitors can find various supportive ways for survivors to heal and recover. For example, the website has Community Forums, a bookstore where the Alliance offers books for adults, teens and children, as well as books that address a specific loss, such as the loss of a child, spouse or sibling. Counseling by trained trauma and loss professionals is provided by both telephone and Skype consultations. Blogs allow visitors to read the words and tap into the wisdom of other loss survivors and experts who have navigated the grief journey.

Shannon said, "The Alliance of Hope website is full of information about what I can expect, why I am experiencing this and the human nature behind coping with my son's death. I was able to read blogs and essays from experts in the field of suicidology. I found plenty of literature and books to download. Most written by survivors of loss to suicide—people just like me."

Shadur emphasizes how the website accommodates a wide variety of experiences and emotions among suicide loss survivors. “It’s like going into a building, we have different types of rooms, with different conversations happening. We have an area where parents have lost children, we have an area where people have lost siblings, spouses, people who are having bad dreams, for people who are angry or who feel tremendous guilt.”

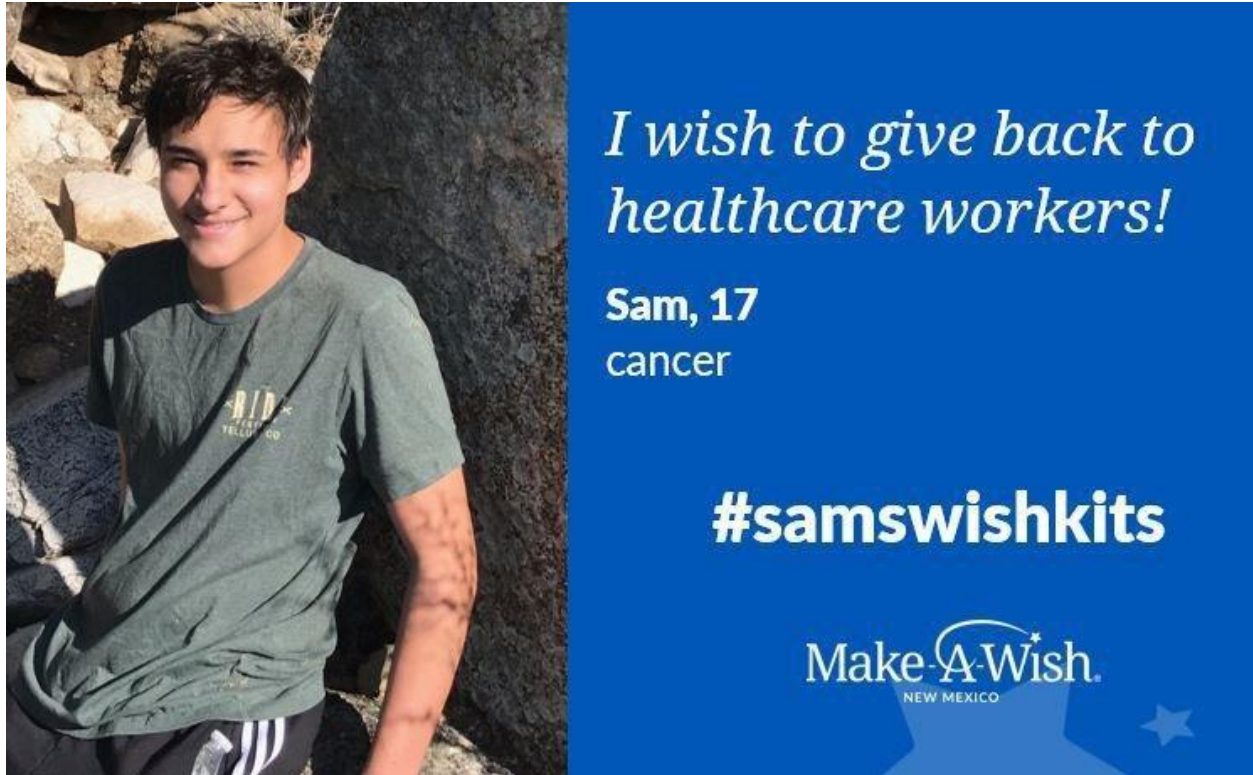
Shadur points out how well supported the Alliance is. “We are primarily volunteer led...there are two of us who are full-time employees and then we have about 50 volunteers who help us run the forum...so I would say around 65 to 70 people who are working with us currently.”

She also explained how donations primarily come from people who they have helped and from many others, including The Herbert Adelman Foundation, The Outlanders fan club.

The Alliance for Hope clearly has changed and saved lives, including Shannon’s. “I would recommend The Alliance of Hope because they save lives. Anyone who finds themselves dealing with loss to suicide needs help. I learned that...They don’t promise live will be perfectly fine ever again because that’s not reality. They promise that little by little, step by step, we loss survivors can and do heal enough to accept our loved one’s death, then keep moving forward to find purpose and joy again in our own lives.”

(More information about Alliance of Hope is at <https://allianceofhope.org>.)

Granting Wishes among Pandemic



By Sam Turner
Nonprofit Sector News
July 16, 2020

The Make-a-Wish Foundation is working hard to make dreams come true during the COVID-19 pandemic. While wishes being granted may not have been the original plans, Make-A-Wish Foundation has been finding ways to bring joy to families.

Hayley Sitz, the foundation's national public relations manager, says it pursued new and creative ways to grant a child's wish since the pandemic started. "Make-a-Wish is still granting wishes every day for children with critical illness," said Sitz, "We're also pursuing new and creative ways to bring experiences of hope to wish kids today, through surprises like car parades or by virtually granting wishes."

Normally, Make-a-Wish is able to grant wishes for children with critical illnesses no matter how big, small or complicated the wish may seem to the child or their family. The Make-a-Wish foundation has granted wishes for children around the world, including trips to meet Elsa and Anna from Frozen, swimming with dolphins, and giving back to childhood cancer patients.

Wish granting is more difficult with COVID-19 running rampant through the country, which is causing the Genies at Make-a-Wish to get a little more creative. According to the organization's national staff, the two most extreme wishes recently granted have been "Sam's wish to give back to health care workers" and "Mayte's wish for an accordion."

Make-a-Wish New Mexico says Sam Neal is a 17-year-old diagnosed with cancer who wanted to give back to the nurses and healthcare staff taking care of him during treatments. With the help of the community, Sam was able to put together over 100 “wish kits” for healthcare workers. Kits provided materials and supplies health care workers would need for returning to their homes after work, personal hygiene items that have been hard to find due to COVID-19, as well as gift cards to local restaurants and grocery stores. Sam was able to donate 120 kits to the healthcare workers at Presbyterian Hospital, Lovelace Medical Center, and UNMH on World Wish Day (April 29).

Make-a-Wish Los Angeles also was able to make Mayte’s wish come true. She was surprised on her front lawn surrounded by friends and family. A Mariachi band performed while keeping social distance, as Mayte and her father danced together on the front lawn. Mayte received a blue accordion and a year’s worth of virtual music lessons to keep her passion for music and learning a new instrument alive during quarantine.

Due to COVID-19, Make-a-Wish could not grant wishes appropriately and many became backlogged. A Make-a-Wish chapter in Nevada postponed 70 percent of wishes received. Caroline Ciocca, Make-a-Wish Southern Nevada President and CEO, said many postponed wishes included travel.

Make-a-Wish is still granting wishes, according to Sitz. The foundation is preparing to grant every eligible child’s wish when it is deemed safe to do so. She said, “We are preparing to grant every child’s wish who is considered eligible because children who have wishes granted can build up the physical and emotional strength, they need to fight a critical illness.”

Civitan to hold beach-themed event for persons with disabilities

PHOTO

Materials ready for Civitan’s beach-themed events

By: Payal Gangishetti
Nonprofit Sector News
July 13, 2020

In these tough times of global pandemic to contain the spread of coronavirus, Civitan International, a worldwide organization of volunteer service clubs, has been helping those in need, while continuing its focus on persons with disabilities.

In a first of its kind initiative, the international organization is hosting a customizable

beach-themed party on July 25. The event aims to provide beach experience to the medically fragile elderly, or persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who are unable to get out due to the current pandemic situation.

“We want to make this summer special for individuals supported by residential facilities, who won’t be able to go for a vacation this year, so we are bringing the beach to them with this Beach Bash project,” said Megan Mindel, club development specialist of Civitan International. The organization has asked its local clubs to partner with the agencies or other clubs that already serve vulnerable communities to hold the event.

The organization has also come up with safety guidelines that are to be taken into consideration while organizing the event. All volunteers are asked to follow the updated CDC guidelines during the event. No water-based activities like kiddie pools, water balloons and guns will be allowed at the event, read the project guidelines on the organization’s website.

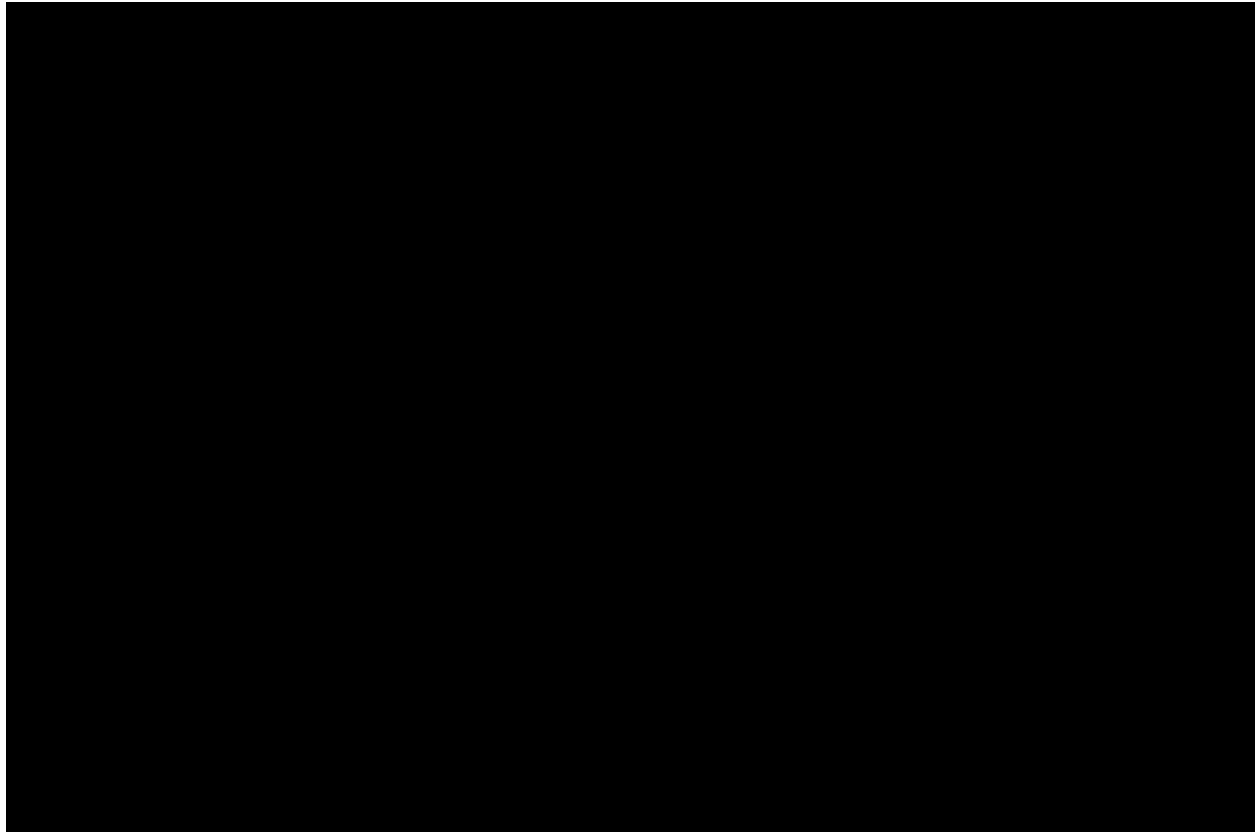
To make the event interesting and fun for the people, the local clubs, with the help of volunteers, are asked to plan a fun-filled afternoon in the sun with food, games, music, and more.

Amy Natsumi Roberts, Civitan’s marketing and communications director, stated that if throwing a party is not possible for some clubs, they can deliver beach-themed gift bags, snacks and decorations or collect supplies that they think would be needed for their community and distribute these items in the form of tool-kits.

Meanwhile, the organization delivered as many as 29 Beach Bash boxes to Glenwood Inc on July 10 — one for each residential home they support. According to Roberts, the Beach Bash boxes will benefit 124 residents. Each box contains items that residents can use in their home, including beach themed arts and crafts, coloring sheets, items to make beach pudding cups, besides items for each resident like sunglasses, bubbles, activity sheets, and crayons.

“We held a donation drive for the event in June that lasted for two week, where we collected items including pillows, blankets, totes, arts and crafts supplies, yard games, stickers, books, etc,” said Mindel.

On the question about the project expenses, Mindel said they are utilizing the funds that were set aside for other projects and events that were not held due to the sudden lockdown. Meanwhile, the organization’s website reports that this project may cost \$275 to \$500 for each local club. However, the budget will vary based on how many guests attend the event, she added.



Photos courtesy of Civitan International.

About Civitan

It's been more than 100 years since a group of business leaders came together to form the first Civitan club in 1917 in Birmingham, Alabama. Their vision for helping others has grown across the world. Today, Civitan clubs operate in more than 35 countries, and the United States has 490 clubs with 11,358 members.

The clubs provide a great deal of service to their communities, with emphasis on aid to people with developmental disabilities and special needs. Civitan clubs also fund Civitan International Research Center, a research and treatment facility for developmental disabilities at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Meanwhile, Civitan officially adopted Junior Civitan into the International organization in 1917. Junior Civitan remains a vital part of the Civitan experience, holding an annual convention and conducting two major fundraising event like All In Summit and Dance-a-thon for the Civitan International Research Center.

“Junior Civitan brings together thousands of middle and high school students across the globe. Those involved participate in various service projects like school clean-ups, awareness campaigns and volunteer activities,” said Mindel. This year, the All In Summit was held in February at Birmingham, where Junior Civitan leadership came together to take part in service projects.

Moreover, since the Junior Civitan couldn't meet in-person for the annual convention this summer, they held a virtual convention and organized various online activities and raised \$38,635.

Meanwhile, Campus Civitan, the collegiate branch, aims to provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills, make new friends, and to bring a positive change in the community. The US has 13 active campus clubs.

However, like many other service organizations, Civitan International has been facing decline in its membership. "We are not the only ones struggling," Mindel said. "We are working on it and coming up with new service events and projects to engage people in the local communities."

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation helps environmental nonprofit organizations

Photo courtesy of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance

By Stephen Neukam
Nonprofit Sector News
July 4, 2020

Fighting the effects of climate change, human activity and decades of environmental decay have become multi-faceted, multi-organizational projects. It requires coordination between different entities and sectors, the process can be a confusing one that hampers progress and delays results.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), a government-backed agency, attempts to pull together other non-profit organizations, private businesses and government agencies to undertake conservation and preservation projects across the country. Parts of the projects are publicly funded, with the foundation matching its government funding with private dollars. The money goes to projects all over the country, with the foundation listing 57 active programs on its website.

While NFWF supplies a plethora of other organizations with funding to improve environmental conditions for animals in different habitats, the progress on these projects is not always linear and constant. This dynamic is a frustrating one — wanting, sometimes needing, improvements as a return on investment and then suffering setbacks.

Jake Reilly, director of the foundation's Chesapeake Bay Programs, which aims to improve the bay's conditions by improving polluted rivers and streams, said that while the foundation and its partners set goals and milestones, the timeline for success will be affected by uncontrollable environmental factors.

“While we are making tremendous progress implementing restoration projects and practices, we also acknowledge that those environmental variables do influence collective progress, and that progress may not always be linear,” said Reilly.

The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, which between 1999 and 2019 issued nearly \$158 million in grants, has seen success since its inception, reducing annual nitrogen pollution by an estimated 22 million pounds and restoring more than 7,317 acres of wetlands. However, because of record precipitation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in 2018 and 2019, the health of the bay decreased. This caused the bay's grade to decrease in a number of “report cards” issued by environmental organizations, which are most of the public's only indication of the bay's progress — a better gauge of improvements would be a look at many different variables, which NFWF focuses on.

While the foundation monitors progress on the projects, most of the planning and production is done by the organizations that are granted funds. Reilly said that the unique process of leveraging public funds for private money to grant to local organizations and businesses is a successful one that gives the foundations a very small overhead, with every 96 cents of a dollar supporting the programs.

One such nonprofit that has partnered with and benefited from NFWF is the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, which is dedicated to protecting New Jersey's Pine Barrens and was

awarded funds as part of NFWF's Delaware River program. Since 2015, the organization has received \$950,000 from NFWF to support three different projects. Carleton Montgomery, the nonprofit's director, said that the partnership has been a success.

"We think these projects have been very effective," said Montgomery. "Through the Landscape Makeover program, we have installed more rain garden projects than originally expected and have gotten many local officials on board to promoting GSI projects at public facilities."

"The shoreline habitat project has worked well to enable beach vegetation to establish, resulting in the return of rare plant species and habitat use by target birds like piping plover," he explained. "The ORV project has enabled us to close off wetland and pond habitats that were being torn up by illegal use, and these sites are already returning to their natural state."

With this success coming partly because of the partnership between two nonprofits, Montgomery said that such organizations are ideally suited to deal with environmental issues because of their efficiency and effectiveness.

"Our view is that government agencies are too often bogged down in politics to change processes as quickly as needed and without a sustained push from the public," said Montgomery.

"Nonprofits are more nimble than government agencies, can achieve results at a far lower cost than government agencies on their own, are good at engaging the public as volunteers, are consistent in their commitments over time while partisan political agendas are always changing, and channel public pressure to move government agencies to address big long-term environmental problems that might otherwise be kicked down the road."

Future Farmers of America membership going up as youth interest in agriculture declines



National FFA Organization photo.

By Payal Gangishetty
Nonprofit Sector News
July 2, 2020

One major challenge that confronts agriculture around the world today is that the children of farmers, by and large, are not interested in their familial occupation. Simply put, the majority of the world's youth have negative perceptions of farming.

To address this challenge and make agriculture attractive to the youth, the Future Farmers of America, also known as the National FFA Organization, is devoted to attracting, educating and preparing students for the future with leadership opportunities through agriculture education.

“We encourage our members to involve themselves in career and leadership development events, usually called as LDEs and CDEs, as they challenge them to develop critical thinking and effective decision-making skills,” said Kristy Meyer, communications manager of the National FFA organization. CDE and LDE events

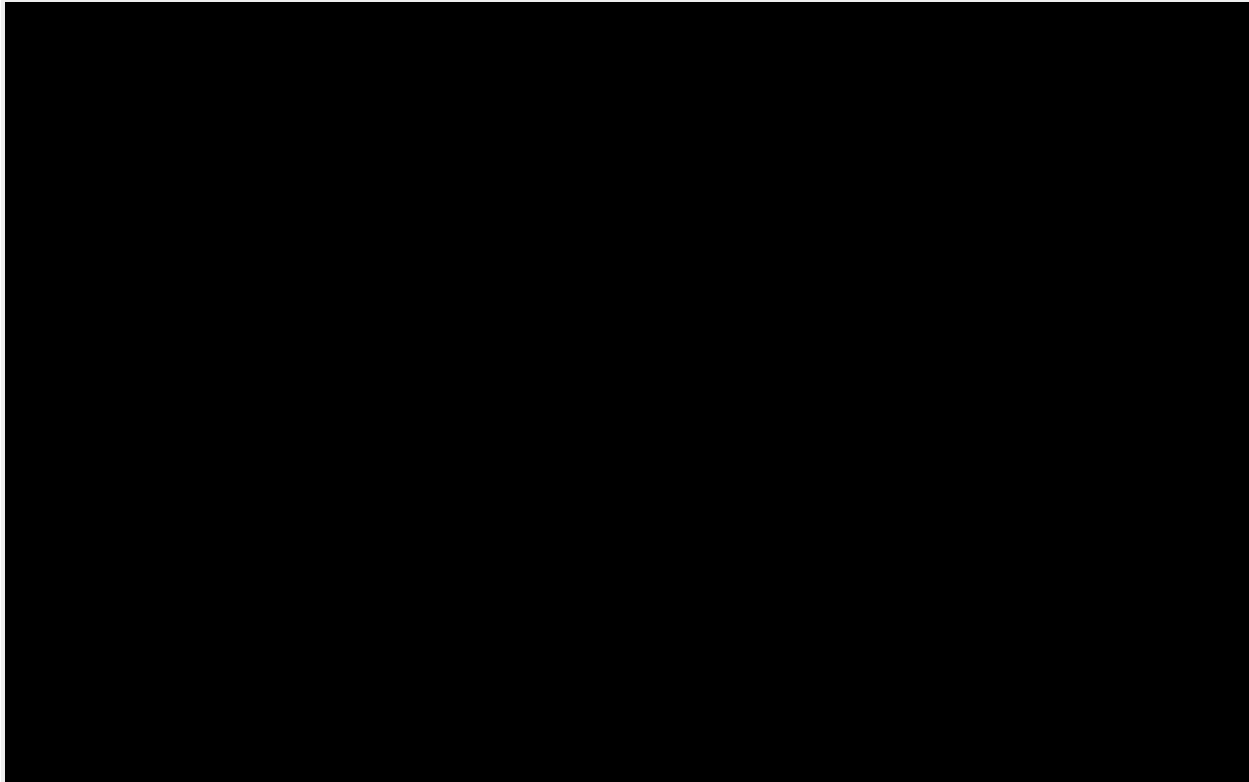
occur at the local, state and national level.

Today, the organization has a membership of 700,170, up from 669,989 in 2018. FFA chapters can be found in 24 of the 25 largest US cities — although the majority of them are located in rural areas and small towns.

Meyer said, “The membership of the organization has been on a steady increase for the last few years. FFA is providing future leaders, and our membership growth reflects continued enthusiasm for agriculture as well as agricultural education. Moreover, through hands-on experiences, agriculture educators are helping our students develop the technical knowledge and problem-solving capabilities to be the industry’s leaders of tomorrow.” New membership numbers of the organization will be out later this summer.

Meanwhile, FFA chapters are not only working hard to engage people from the rural backgrounds in agricultural activities, but also conducting programs across urban areas to promote healthy communities through urban and rural agriculture, community gardening, and other related environmental justice activities.

Meyer explained, “We are working on reaching out to as many people as possible and not restrict ourselves to specific regions. In the last few years, we have found that agriculture’s image among young people is changing — an increasing number of youngsters are now turning to farming and the food system as a viable career path.”



While the aging profile of farmers has become a matter of concern for developing countries, the average age of all US farm producers has been rising for four decades. It was 50.3 years for the principal operator in the 1978 census, 53.3 years in 1992, 57.1 years in 2007, 58.3 years in 2012, and now is 59.4 years. (However, this roughly tracks the rise in the median average age of Americans, which was 30 in 1980 and 38.2 in 2018.)

Interestingly, the average age of new/beginning farmers is 46.3 years, which means a quarter of them are newcomers, according to a 2017 agricultural census.

Meanwhile, as the global pandemic scare continues across the country, many schools and universities have turned to virtual learning, and after-school activities have come to a halt. What hasn't ended, however, is FFA members living out the FFA motto: Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve.

Meyer said, "Our members are constantly being innovative and looking for the positives. They are making the best use of the current situation by learning and sharing new things with the local communities while continuing to practice social distancing protocols."

The National FFA Organization website reports that in Indiana, the Western Boone County FFA kicked off “Milk & Meat for Boone County”— the FFA chapter purchased milk, beef, and pork from Indiana businesses at discount prices to help both farmers and the public during the coronavirus pandemic. The chapter supplied the products to the Caring Center and Western Boon’s food pantry and provided donations for more than three months in the hope of meeting increased needs. The students — who originally hoped to raise \$7,500, raised \$17,000 to address food insecurity in Boone County while helping local farmers.

Jaden Mazea, president of the Western Boon FFA chapter, says farmers are some of the most selfless people on the earth and it is the duty of FFA members to give back to them.

Meanwhile, the sudden lockdown has made it difficult for the FFA members to achieve the target set for the Living to Serve Chapter Challenge, a nationwide initiative to complete 930,000 collective service hours before the 93 rd National FFA Expo, which is scheduled to be held this October.

Michele Sullivan, senior manager of FFA Local Engagement, said, “Through the Living to Serve Chapter Challenge, we wanted to provide a platform for the FFA members and chapters to share their experience working with the local communities and inspire others to serve. However, considering the present situation, it looks like we won’t be able to complete 930,000 collective service hours this year, but our students and chapters are actively engaging themselves in services across the country.” Though the chapter challenge initiative was meant only for the FFA chapters, individual FFA members are also allowed to log their service hours now.

Moreover, for FFA members who are planning on staying on the farm as agricultural producers, the organization offers a program called New Century Farmer, which allows an elite group of FFA alumni between the ages 18 and 24 to attend the all-expenses-paid New Century Farmer conference. The conference provides an opportunity to FFA members to advance their leadership, personal and career skills. During the five-day conference, the FFA members learn from each other and industry experts on topics that are relevant to young producers.

Enough funds to carry out all programs

Donations and grants have been the backbone of the FFA programs, grants and scholarships. The National FFA Foundation offers more than \$740,000 in grants to local FFA chapters and \$2.7 million in scholarships each year. Earlier this year, the

national organization was able to raise \$200,000 in 24 hours during a virtual annual fundraising day in February.

Nicole Beckley, the marketing, communications and engagement manager at the national FFA Foundation, said, “The pandemic has definitely changed the way we approach fund raising activities and connect with our donors, but we haven’t faced any shortage of funds over the last few years nor do we anticipate it in the coming days.”

While many things in the agriculture industry are changing with the time, the national organization continues to shape many young people who are now working in fields, such as farming, research and technology.

**Community foundations nationwide step up,
in different ways, to pandemic response**



GRIOT Circle has been a grantee of the Brooklyn COVID-19 Response Fund.

By Samantha Drysdale
Nonprofit Sector News
June 30, 2020

In one of the country's hardest hit neighborhoods, the coronavirus pandemic left Elzie Wright and her small Brooklyn-based nonprofit feeling afraid and alone. They were under-resourced and serving a high risk population; they had to look for help in new places. In a time when so much money was being funneled into the nonprofit sector — yet none of it seemed to trickle down to the smaller \$100,000 organizations such as Wright's — the nonprofit found support in their own backyard.

Wright is the program coordinator for Christopher Rose Empowerment Campaign, which supports at-risk youth and their families in Brooklyn. The campaign received a \$10,000 grant from the Brooklyn Community Foundation at the first height of the pandemic.

Thickly woven into the fabric of the nonprofit sector's financial landscape, community

foundations around the country responded to the crisis, providing support to other charitable organizations in their local areas. These foundations maintain both their own funds and administer donor-advised funds (giving by corporations, individuals or other organizations). They act as a bridge between philanthropists and the communities they serve.

Foundations such as BCF have long-standing missions designed to offer aid tailored to the needs of specific neighborhoods, cities or areas. When COVID-19 hit, these objectives weren't abandoned and replaced with crisis-management. Rather, community foundations in areas most affected by the virus found that disaster simply reaffirmed the past, present and future of their organizations' goals.

Spiking in mid-April, Brooklyn has one of the highest active COVID-19 case and death counts in the United States. The New York City borough had 54,818 cases and 5,226 as of early June 24. Also highly impacted by the virus, Louisiana saw a surge in cases at the beginning of the April. Within the state, as of June 24, the Jefferson and Orleans parish saw 8,888 cases and 479 deaths, and 7,571 cases and 529 deaths, respectively.

Thousands of miles apart, but facing similar stressors, the Brooklyn Community Foundation and Greater New Orleans Foundation both launched rapid COVID-19 responses on March 12.

BCF established the Brooklyn COVID-19 Response Fund, while GNOF activated its pre-existing Disaster Response and Restoration Fund.

Cecilia Clarke, president and CEO of BCF, said the community foundation found strength in embracing its social-justice-oriented mission in responding to the virus.

"On that very crucial day on March 12, we said we were going to make it unique. In fact, we're going to really root ourselves in our values to help guide us in this crisis moment," she said.

In doing so, the Brooklyn organization decided to give relatively small grants to as many nonprofits addressing the coronavirus as possible, with a focus on communities of color. They responded quickly, launching the fund within 24 hours of closing their office March 12. As active cases and deaths in the neighborhood climbed, so did applications for grants. At the height of the pandemic in late April and early May, 60-70 requests were rolling in each week.

As of June 15, BCF had given \$1,807,500 in COVID Fund grants, all in amounts of \$10,000 or less to 187 different nonprofits.

This approach of a little money to a lot of organizations allowed BCF to distribute grants in a way that didn't just address the disaster, but also the pre-existing inequities in Brooklyn that were heightened by the pandemic.

Clarke said this model of giving was designed to confront the borough's unique vulnerabilities. With a high number of residents of color — who have been disproportionately affected by the virus — and a median low-income population, BCF focused its resources on funding food access, low-wage workers, youth and children, immigrant communities and older adults.

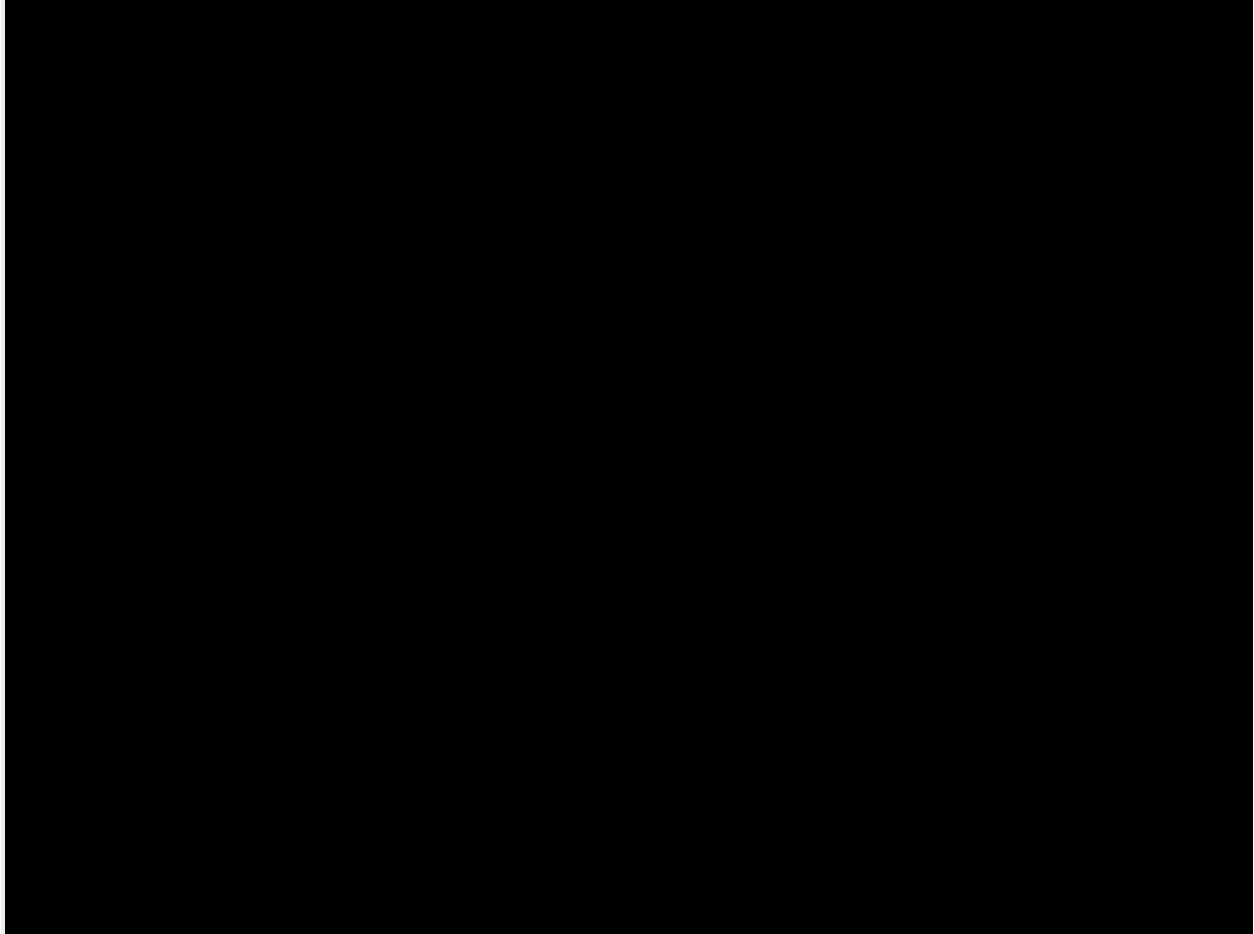
"They were the only ones who came out and helped support us, the forgotten people," Wright said.

GRIOT Circle is a grantee of the Brooklyn COVID-19 Response Fund included in the Older Adults classification of giving. The nonprofit serves LGBTQ elders of color, providing resources in mental health, nutrition, health and wellness and development. They were recipients of a \$10,000 grant from BCF.

According to the Executive Director of GRIOT Circle, Jose Albino, the money from the grant went to food security for the people they serve (who usually depend on services such as GRIOT Circle's daily lunches), Uber rides for members who had to go to a doctor and for resourcing staff to support members from home.

Albino said his organization serves an incredibly vulnerable population that was put at even greater risk by the virus. He praised BCF's model of giving, saying it considered Brooklyn's needs and helped marginalized community members. Albino also had a prior working relationship with the community foundation and stressed that its crisis response was in line with its pre-COVID values.

"What this foundation does, is it supports people who lead organizations that look like the people who they serve," he said.



Gladwaves, a small nonprofit that has focused its COVID relief efforts on providing meals to the metro New Orleans community.

More than one-third of grantees have budgets of under \$500,000 and 70 percent of the grantees are led by people of color.

Clarke said this was intentional. “Community-led, community-embedded organizations, those are really our most trusted partners on the ground.”

The foundation split its grantees into 16 categories by type of aid. Of the nearly \$2 million BCF gave in COVID relief as of June 15, \$349,000 was divided between 37 food-access-focused nonprofits. After food access, the next highest receiving categories were organizations that addressed the needs of low-wage workers and youth and children, receiving \$307,000 split among 31 nonprofits, and \$200,000 split among 20 nonprofits, respectively.

Healthcare was the 8th highest receiving classification, with \$87,000 divided between nine nonprofits.

In contrast, GNOF prioritized healthcare in its response to COVID-19, and instead of widely spreading its grants, the Louisiana community foundation decided to, “go deep with organizations that we had confidence in,” said Tyronne Walker, vice president of communications and public affairs.

Of the \$1,178,000 GNOF gave from its Disaster Fund as of June 15, the majority went to health equity. As opposed to BCF’s \$87,000 split among nine healthcare nonprofits, GNOF divided \$660,000 between nine healthcare nonprofits.

These contrasting models of giving are evidence of community foundations responding to the crisis in ways most aligned with their pre-COVID missions. Both organizations focused their grant-making on supporting people of color, but in different ways.

GNOF invested heavily in Federally Qualified Health Centers hoping to aid uninsured people in their area — a population whose health vulnerabilities likely contributed to the high death rate among African Americans in Southeast Louisiana.

Carmen James Randolph, vice president of programs, said she was surprised to hear a local doctor say that New Orleans has a generation of men who have never had a primary care doctor.

“In the times of this pandemic that is not only deadly and costly for them and their families, but it impacts our entire community, because these are sometimes our first responders, these are our frontline workers who are desperately needed in our community,” she said. “So this was a critical piece to look at how we could not only build in support and connections for people now, but look to the future, because how will we bring our city back if we don’t have adequate access to testing for those people.”

GNOF granted \$50,000 from the Disaster Fund to 504HealthNet, a community-based organization that serves as the community-clinical linkage in the greater New Orleans region. 504HealthNet also emphasizes culturally appropriate care.

Within the first few days of the crisis, the New Orleans’ city health department reached out to the organization to collect and disseminate data about neighborhood testing sites and available healthcare resources. Having worked with them previously,

GNOF contacted 504HealthNet. “GNOF was swift in reaching out and trying to understand what was happening and how they could help. They did not put extra work or requirements in getting us the needed resources,” wrote Tiffany Netters, executive director of 504HealthNet, in an email.

One pillar of a community foundation’s vision is sustainability. James Randolph said one goal when giving to Federally Qualified Health Centers was to connect people in need of healthcare with a medical home that they could continue to visit post-COVID.

In another effort to look beyond the current crisis moment, GNOF is providing a series of educational webinars to nonprofits in its service area. Sessions are focused on creating sustainable plans for the sector post-COVID, and getting nonprofits through the pandemic. GNOF has done series of webinars on community reopening, applying for PPP loans and training in continuance of operations plans. So far, more than 20 webinars have been attended by 2,000 people.

BCF has also launched its own webinar series. With a focus on community engagement and supporting smaller nonprofits, BCF also broke down government loans and how to apply for loan forgiveness.

Lorena Kourousias is the executive director of Mixteca, a charitable organization that provides services for Latin American immigrants in New York that received a \$10,000 grant from BCF. Confessing to initially being lost in the complex process of applying for government aid, she turned to BCF for support and found the webinars incredibly helpful.

“They were there when I needed them,” Kourousias said. “I was really struggling with the finances of Mixteca, and I got the training from them on PPP, Paycheck Protection Program, and it was so clear and so good that I applied, I did it and I got the money.”

The executive director said she felt very well supported by the community foundation and the social justice lens through which BCF gives, citing “intentionality” behind the \$10,000 grant.

In an effort to continue BCF’s mission of being accessible to different cultural experiences, the community foundation maintained and enhanced its practice of simplifying the grant application process. A less complex application allows more flexibility for under resourced and English Second Language nonprofit leaders. Mixteca had been a recipient of a BCF grant once before, and Kourousias said she

couldn't believe how simple the application was. Then, applying for aid in March, she was astonished that it was even easier — only two pages.

For regular grantees, nonprofits just had to submit a form with any relevant updated information and a brief description of what they were doing to address the COVID-19 crisis. Organizations that had never worked with BCF before had to answer the same question, then one more on how their work reflects social justice values.

Kourousias filled out the application in one day, and received the money within a week. From there, she was able to get \$250 gift cards out to 40 Brooklyn immigrant families who needed support.

“They [BCF] are impressive,” Kourousias said. “They are kind, and lovely, and respectful and mindful of the cultural differences which we have.”

In Louisiana, GNOF also embraced its role as a bridge between services and their community. Community Organized Relief Effort, a national nonprofit that provides disaster aid, came to New Orleans to help increase testing. Upon their arrival, program officers at GNOF began working with CORE to set up walk-up testing sites in the same locations where people are distributing food and matched them with local nonprofits in those areas.

“And it's only because we have that deep knowledge of who's doing what and where, that we're able to be that knitter of services and connecting these resources,” James Randolph said.

One food security organization that GNOF invested in was Gladwaves, a small nonprofit that has focused its COVID relief efforts on providing meals to the metro New Orleans community. At the start of the crisis, Gladwaves was providing 300 hot meals per week to seniors and their families; it applied for a GNOF Disaster Fund grant, as well as about 20 other grants according to executive director Janie Glade, in order to increase the number of hot meals to 500.

The Louisianian community foundation made a grant of \$2,500 to the small nonprofit.

Glade wrote in an email that because of its size, Gladwaves doesn't have access to large grants. She wrote that she believes it should be providing even more than 500 hot meals as food insecurity issues rise over the next few months.

“GNOF does its best to meet the needs of the people of the Greater New Orleans area,” Glade wrote. “Their response to the crisis was swift and they continue to provide funding at the level that they can.”

Unfortunately, responding to disaster isn’t a novel experience for GNOF. After Hurricane Katrina ravaged Southeast Louisiana, the community foundation was forced to think of how it — in a geographic location so prone to flooding, tornados and storms — could prepare for disaster before it occurs.

Over the last year and a half, the foundation has reimagined how an evergreen fund could be proactive rather than reactive and educated donors on preparing for the next disaster. Therefore, when the pandemic hit, the foundation already had the money tucked away in a fund and ready to go. GNOF got its first four grants out within 36 hours.

Afterwards, GNOF staff looked at their pre-applications. About 25 nonprofits pre-registered to be considered for a grant in the event of a disaster; they just had to send in a paragraph about how they were addressing COVID-19.

Is this proactive model the post-COVID future of community foundations?

Since activating the Disaster Fund in March, GNOF has raised more than \$5 million. BCF has increased drawdowns from its endowment and has raised about \$3.2 million, mostly from individuals and families.

However, for both foundations, huge fundraising increases now might inevitably have an impact on future grant-making.

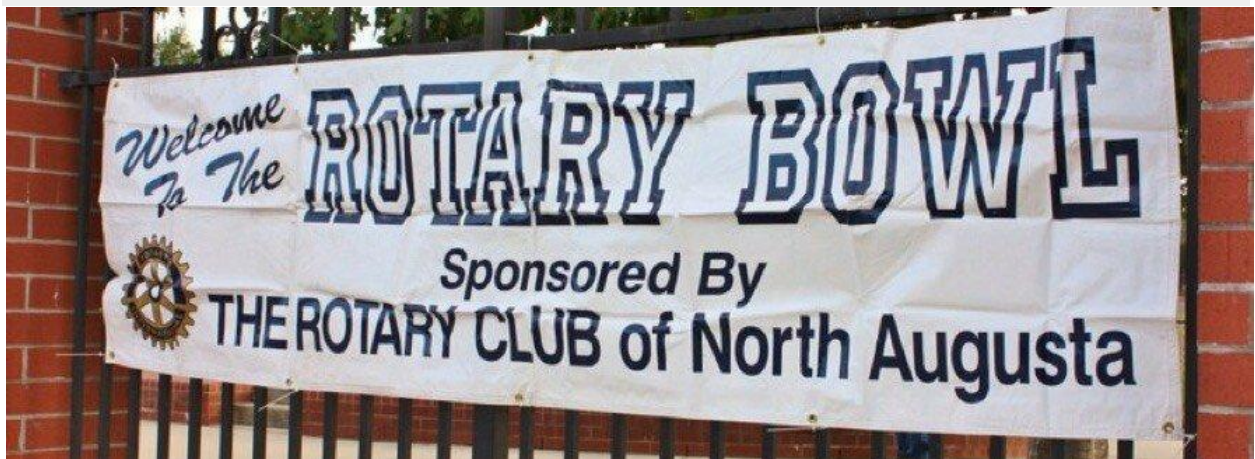
“Lots of our donors have really stepped up right now, and I don’t know if they’d step up twice,” Clarke said.

Andy Kopplin, CEO of GNOF, said he hopes the COVID crisis has helped draw attention to the work community foundations and other nonprofits are doing.

“As we move through this pandemic and move towards the other side of it, the community is absolutely committed, as we are, to ensure that nonprofit infrastructure, that again takes care of us when we’re sick, helps us with food and shelter, and

provides information, sometimes inspiration and joy, it is able to continue to be successful,” he said.

Nonprofits’ fundraising declines hit Rotary Club and other college scholarships



The Rotary Bowl is a Fall football game held as a fundraiser for college scholarships by the Rotary Club of North Augusta, South Carolina.

By Sam Turner
Nonprofit Sector News

June 29, 2020

While much media and public attention to nonprofit organizations during COVID-19 has been focused on humane societies, YMCAs, and Goodwill stores closed, staff furloughed and fundraisers cancelled, one result has been a double-whammy: shortfalls in scholarships funds just when many college students need them most.

Each year, millions of dollars in college scholarships are presented by local Rotary Clubs and Rotary Club districts (composed of dozens of clubs) around the United States. Amounts range from \$1,500 to “global grants” given by club districts to a study abroad student for \$40,000. But an untold number of local Rotary Club fundraising events have been cancelled or held in less effective formats, such as virtually. The parent organization, Rotary International, is not a funder for local scholarships, but provides other assistance.

Russell Kurian, a Rotary International support team member, said, “The Foundation supports Rotary clubs and districts that wish to offer scholarships as part of their service to their

communities.”

Each local Rotary Club sets its own goals for scholarships. They also have their own ways of raising money: golf tournaments, bake sales, and simple donations by members. Many Rotary chapters had to cancel fundraisers, float the scholarships to the next school year or reduce the number of students selected for the scholarships.

Brett McNeill, Rotary club president in North Augusta, South Carolina, made six scholarships available to guidance counselors at both Fox Creek High School and North Augusta High School despite COVID-19. Each student received \$1,500, for a total of \$9,000.

McNeill said that despite decreased fundraising, the club was able to award the scholarships on schedule, but not as many. “We wanted to have seven kids, but it is still great to know that these kids will be able to go to college despite having to cancel our annual fundraisers.” Seven scholarships per high school has been the club’s usual number.

Brett Turner, treasurer of the North Augusta Rotary club, said one guidance counselor at each school nominates students to the club. The guidance counselors did not see a decrease in students applying. “Unfortunately, the students are required to come to our meetings and give us a presentation on their plans and things they have done while in school,” explained Turner, “because we stopped having meetings due to Covid-19, we didn’t have as many applicants as normal. The guidance counselors at both schools told me they were receiving a lot less scholarships in general this year. They were surprised we were able to give the amount we did this year.”

According to the North Augusta Rotary Club, the annual fall Rotary Bowl was not affected. The annual golf tournament held in May was cancelled due to COVID-19. Local rotary clubs hope to be able to have their annual fundraisers such as Rotary Bowl in the upcoming fall season.

YWCA’s annual Stand Against Racism campaign takes different look in every city



By Rebecca Marcinko
Nonprofit Sector News
June 27, 2020

PITTSBURGH — As injustices faced by people of color in the United States have recently been elevated through the spread of the coronavirus and police brutality towards Black people, YWCA USA and YWCA Greater Pittsburgh have continued their efforts to elimination of racism through education, partnerships, and advocacy work.

Annually, YWCA USA runs its Stand Against Racism campaign in April as a way to carry out its mission of eliminating racism and empowering women.

The Stand Against Racism campaign started “many years ago” through YWCA USA and has been adopted by many YWCA branches, said Barbara Johnson, senior director of the Race and Gender Equity Center for YWCA Greater Pittsburgh. Angela Reynolds, CEO of YWCA Greater Pittsburgh, said the YWCA’s racial justice work primarily is based in the Center for Race and Gender Equity.

Johnson described Stand Against Racism as an “awareness campaign” that began as an attempt to raise awareness about racism in New Jersey. YWCA USA’s website says Stand Against Racism “is a signature campaign of YWCA USA to raise awareness about the negative impact of institutional and structural racism in our communities and to build community among those who work for racial justice.”

“The YWCA’s branches use that as a way to connect with each other nationally during the same week,” Johnson said. “Every single YWCA has a different way that that looks.” Johnson said YWCA Greater Pittsburgh has made an “intentional decision to focus our work more on

educational opportunities.”

She said Stand Against Racism began as people protesting outside. “As we move forward, and as we have moved forward as a YWCA in Pittsburgh, we are completely aware of the fact that racism exists. We don’t need to create any awareness,” Johnson said.

She said the 2019 national theme for Stand Against Racism was “immigrant justice is racial justice.” YWCA Greater Pittsburgh held events such as panels featuring “local professionals who were serving immigrant communities,” Johnson noted.

“It was a way for them to be able to share what’s really happening live in Pittsburgh, and also be able to help people understand the language better, so when they see these things listed in newspapers, or hear them on the radio, they’re more aware of how they can single out specifically what’s happening,” she explained.

Johnson also said YWCA Greater Pittsburgh worked to create a stronger relationship with Pittsburgh-area organizations such as Casa San José, a resource center for Latino communities and immigrants, the Latino Community Center and the Latin American Cultural Union.

The national and Pittsburgh theme for Stand Against Racism 2020 was focused on “Why Women Vote.” Johnson said YWCA USA curated “this amazing panel of women leaders from all sectors of life” to discuss racial issues in the United States and the importance of voting. (This year is the 100th anniversary of all U.S. women gaining the right to vote through ratification of the Constitution’s 19th Amendment; women already could vote in presidential elections, if not all elections, in 27 of the then 48 states by the 19th Amendment’s ratification.)

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, YWCA Greater Pittsburgh decided to promote the same theme as YWCA USA to give people in the greater Pittsburgh area the opportunity to view the event on Zoom, Johnson said. “It would definitely be a miss for us to not point out all of those amazing partners that our USA organization had,” she pointed out.

Johnson said that in her less than two years at YWCA Greater Pittsburgh, the Stand Against Racism events have been “transforming the Stand to be more not awareness anymore, but really another piece of the work that we do.”

“We do want to stay connected to [YWCA USA], but we also want to be very connected to focusing our educational efforts and impact on the community of the greater Pittsburgh area,” Johnson said.

She said YWCA Greater Pittsburgh relates its work to the region and partnering with YWCA branches in other regions. If YWCA USA has a callout to address voting, local YWCA branches nationwide also need to look at how their region is addressing elections and voting, Reynolds said.

“[Johnson] and her time were very instrumental in making sure that we were getting out the message in terms of mail-in ballots,” Reynolds said. “As we deal with the pandemic, we thought

it was very important that every voice was heard so that people had access to being able to cast their vote.”

Reynolds said YWCA Greater Pittsburgh is currently partnering with Pittsburgh broadcaster WQED, which operates both a PBS television station and a public radio station, to mark the 19th anniversary’s 100th anniversary. She said they are specifically looking at how not all women were initially given the right to vote in 1920 and how this “relates to race and being able to celebrate the successes that have happened in the African American community, celebrate what’s happening with women, while also recognizing that there is that disparity.”

Johnson said YWCA Greater Pittsburgh has recently been working with local partners to complete “any and all” work remotely relating to the theme of “Why Women Vote.” The 2020 Census is also a large element of the theme, she said.

YWCA Greater Pittsburgh has released media statements and advertisements to smaller newspapers “that target communities who might be least likely to be counted in census efforts or make their voice be heard,” Johnson said.

Moreover, Johnson said educational training has also recently been accompanied by work with Pittsburgh-based PNC Bank’s legal team to educate office workers about racial justice issues affecting their peers. She said it was an “ongoing, yearlong effort where there were sustained conversations and discussions about race.”

“My hope — in terms of where we move forward — is to think about how we can really make an impact in those corporate settings, or nonprofit settings, or agencies across the Greater Pittsburgh area, in ways that help them to address and eliminate racism even within the context of their institutions, but also with people who work there so they can take that out into their communities,” Johnson said.

Reynolds said this anti-racism work continues consistently through YWCA’s mission of “eliminating racism and empowering women.”

“What is key is to make sure that as we go through all of our programming is being done through this lens of reducing gender and racial disparities, but then also being more proactive as we relate to empowering women and making sure that we’re achieving racial justice,” she said.

Reynolds said she started as CEO right before the coronavirus’s spread began to affect the United States in February 2020. The YWCA’s strategic plan for the year was already in place before the pandemic and the initiative to “be more proactive as it related to eliminating racism.”

Reynolds, an African-American, said her selection as CEO was part of the strategic plan. An April Pittsburgh YWCA press release said, “[Reynolds] joins YWCA at a time when existing racial disparities are magnified by the crisis, and recovery planning is critical for the well-being of Pittsburgh’s underserved populations.”

As the spread of the coronavirus has disproportionately affected Black and brown communities

as well as recently increased media attention to police brutality toward Black people, Reynolds said YWCA Greater Pittsburgh has continued remote work to look at “this deeply rooted racist system that allows these disparities to exist.”

Johnson explained, “[The Center for Race and Gender Equity’s goal] moving forward is to really think about eliminating racism, not only how we face externally to the Greater Pittsburgh community, but also internally how all of our departments are collectively lifting up race and gender inequities in all of what we do so we are all speaking the same language.”

Ginny Giles, the YWCA Greater Pittsburgh’s interim vice-president of resource development, pointed out that the Center for Race and Gender Equity is one of the organization’s four departments, with the other three “providing direct services to meet community needs.” Those other three departments, among other tasks, gather information about the community needs and gives the Center “first-hand perspective” about the impact of various policies and needed changes.

“Our advocacy efforts are really rooted in direct connections and service to the community,” Giles said.

Johnson said, “It really is about committing yourself to learn long term. It’s not a one-hour workshop and everybody’s good. I think that this pandemic has lifted up all of the racial issues that existed way before the pandemic happened, but lifted them up in a way that makes people really, really see all the disparities that existed beforehand. Those are only going to be layered more strongly post-COVID-19.”

Additionally, Giles said the way advocacy and equity work looks may have changed throughout the history of YWCA, but YWCA Greater Pittsburgh is “really serious” about its mission statement.

“We are in this for the long haul,” Giles said. “We have been here for 150 years, and we’re going to keep being here.” And she said YWCA Greater Pittsburgh wants to continue to collaborate, rather than compete, with other partners.

Johnson added, “We as a YWCA are positioning ourselves to really be one of the main players in making sure that all of those voices of the people who have been voiceless are heard as we plan the Pittsburgh of the future.”

Once a booming organization, Jaycees struggling as membership continues to fade



By Payal Gangishetti
Nonprofit Sector News
June 26, 2020

Like many local and other national nonprofit organizations, aging membership is a <https://springridgeacademy.com/> problem for the United States Junior Chamber, or as it is more commonly known, the Jaycees.

The Jaycees is a leadership training and civic organization for people between the ages 18 and 40. Since its national founding in 1920, the Jaycees has helped more than 12 million young adults in the United States and about 20 million worldwide become leaders in their communities. But the group, which seeks to develop leadership skills through community service, individual training, management skills and business development, is still experiencing an annual membership decline of about 11 to 15 percent.

Justin Wutzke, national president of JCI(USA) said, “Our numbers clearly show that we have been on a steady decline. During the early 1990s, the members of the organization concentrated more on word-of-mouth and network marketing instead of recruiting and encouraging more young people to get involved with the organization’s mission.”

Today, the Jaycees—headquartered in Tulsa, Okla.—has 12,000 members and 400 clubs in the United States, down from the peak of 350,000 in 1976. Moreover, about 300 chapters now have only about 10 to 15 members and only five to 10 chapters have more than 100 members.

Speaking about the plight of how some chapters, such as those in Connecticut, went dormant for some years now, Wutzke said that some state Jaycee organizations want to have control over these local chapters and it is becoming difficult for them to operate. “The Jaycees Connecticut chapter has lost 50 members in the last two years. It doesn’t have a state representation for over three years now,” he said.

Wutzke said various civic organizations [judi bola idn sport](#) also have experienced a sudden decline in membership over the last three decades due to various reasons like generational and cultural differences. (In fact, many people refer to it as “bowling alone,” after Robert D. Putnam’s bestselling book by that name in 2000. But not all older civic organizations have had the same experience: for example, Lions Club International, founded 1917, has 1.4 million members in 48,000 clubs in almost every country in the world, and about 300 staff members.)

“Unlike any other organization, we are struggling for engagement,” Wutzke says. “Nowadays, college-goers tend to spend their extra time on after school programs and other fun activities. Everything is available on the internet, it has become difficult to attract young people towards community and leadership development activities as they find them to be boring or show no interest.”

Sharlene Duzick, president of the Santa Clarita, Calif., Jaycees chapter and a 20-year member, said, “Teamwork plays an important role in making any organization successful. It’s very important for the members to have face-to-face conversations to solve issues, but these days with the advancement in technology we are losing human connections. Working as a team and trying to reach out to the local communities is what our chapter is working on.”

However, to increase its overall membership rate, the Jaycees is coming up with innovative ideas to reach the public on social media platforms such as TikTok, Facebook and Instagram.

The organization is also concentrating on training its alumni network so that former members can act as mentors and provide career guidance, advice on leadership skills, and encourage younger people to achieve their goals.

On the question about changing the age limit of 40 would make any difference in attracting more members, Wutzke said, “Unless the older members of the organization are more open-minded about providing young people an opportunity to learn from their mistakes, nothing much will change.”

Lamenting the fact how media and the government have shaped public opinion on leadership roles, Wutzke said that these days people think leadership is something that is not attainable by everyone. “We as a society don’t do a good job in making people believe in themselves. We live in a world where we shame ourselves and others, and deal with several mental health issues. Having an opportunity to personally grow and develop is very important and this is what youngsters need to understand.”

Centenary year celebrations canceled

This year, the Jaycees is celebrating 100 years as a national organization. As part of the year-long celebrations, various community and leadership development events were scheduled to take place but, due to the global corona virus pandemic, most programs had to be canceled. However, the organization has not decided yet whether it should cancel the 2020 JCI World Congress, scheduled for November 3-7 in Yokohama, Japan.

Wutzke said, “Considering the present pandemic situation, the Congress is most likely to be a virtual event, but the organization will take a decision on it only next month” (July).

Experience the unmatched thrill of playing online slots! Join us and discover a variety of exciting games [judi slot idn](#) that are safe and fast. With abundant bonuses and attractive promotions, every spin can be a step towards a big win! Register now and be part of a passionate community!

Meanwhile, Jaycees is planning to soon raise awareness about mental health issues by collaborating with other organizations concerned about it. “Mental health is not getting due attention these days,” Wutzke said. “We want to work with research centers, educational institutions and similar other organizations, where we can come up with project plans that can be implemented at the community level and help people deal with mental health problems.”

Fundraising amidst global pandemic

While the coronavirus pandemic has put on hold many key project activities in the organization’s fundraising calendar, it hasn’t stopped the Jaycees from raising some amount through organizing virtual events. In the last two months, as many as 815 members have undergone leadership and communication development training virtually. “Some of our local chapter members have managed to bring guest speakers and organize virtual training to the youngsters,” said Wutzke.

However, Wutzke added, lack of funds have always been an issue. The organization receives \$25,000 per year from the Bill Gates Foundation to carry out advocacy work and meet various expenses. However, these funds are barely sufficient, adds Wutzke.

He said the organization mostly depends on local donors and fundraising activities such as pancake breakfasts and other leadership building programs to raise money for their projects, but the sudden lockdown has hampered all fundraising.

One message that Wutzke tries to give to the current generation of younger people is to find an environment that will give them a safe space to fail and learn from mistakes, an environment where they can be vulnerable and learn the skills that are needed to move closer to the goals they want to achieve.

Clearing initial obstacles, animal shelters brace for possible influx of animals

MISSING PHOTO

Photo credit: Humane Society of Carroll County.

By Stephen Neukam
Nonprofit Sector News
June 22, 2020

Karen Baker was ready for a challenge.

Baker, executive director of the Humane Society of Carroll County in Maryland, said that animal shelters “constantly prepare for disasters — its what we constantly do.” Animals shelters and humane societies like Bakers were not immune to the incredible disruptions of Covid-19. Like many other organizations, shelters adapted, in a rather short amount of time, to the day-to-day changes necessary to continue to operate. Most of them have weathered the initial storm, falling into their own new routines.

Now, turning an eye to the future, some are bracing for even greater challenges to come. Shelters across the country addressed the virus with different approaches. Some mirrored Baker’s tactic, which was to foster out as many animals as possible to limit the number of resources needed to sustain in-shelter care. Others, like the Humane Society of Greater Miami, tried to maintain regular operations as much as possible, according to Executive Director Laurie Hoffman.

The intricacies of shelter operations made it difficult to put together a plan for work. While shelters faced their own unique circumstances and obligations, generally all of them had to figure out a way to continue adoptions, animal care, emergency care, community outreach, and other facets of the daily operation.

A key to the shelter transformations was increased communication with their communities. Baker and Hoffman relied on social media to continue adoptions, fosters, fundraising and donations. Eric Rayvid, director of public relations and content marketing for Best Friends Animal Society, a national nonprofit dedicated to ending the killing in animal shelters, said he hopes that shelters maintain and increase their trust in the public in the future.

“The public response to animal shelters reaching out, from a fostering perspective early on — I hope is instilled in a lot of [shelters] that the public wants good things to happen to animals in their community.”

While the initial hurdles have been jumped, there may be a long stretch of obstacles ahead. Fundraising has been majorly disrupted. Many shelters rely on annual in-person events for donations. Even though some of these have been transitioned to a digital format, there has still been a significant dip in contributions.

This was a result of people tightening their pockets as the pandemic hit. Though, with a shaky national economic outlook, clouded in uncertainty, this problem may keep shelters on edge —

like many organizations gauging the volatility of the future.

Rayvid said that some shelters will fare better than others. Shelters that are independent nonprofits, like Hoffman's organization, may have an easier time securing grants and funding. Others that are a part of the local or municipal government, like Baker's shelter, might have to rely on slower funding from local officials.

Organizations like Best Friends Animal Society, which has distributed \$2 million in grant funding, are a crucial backstop for shelters. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has released over \$1 million in grants and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) has committed over \$7 million.

HSUS and ASPCA did not provide interviews for this reporting. While shelters fret over their financial footing, another possible conflict awaits in the wings — a large influx of animals back into the shelter system.

There are indicators that a storm may be brewing. There have been reported increases in animal adoptions nationally. There have been disruptions in the animal supply chain. There has been a rollback in spay and neuter services. There are people going back to work as the economy opens back up. There is the prospect of an extended economic lull.

All of these variables make an increase in shelter volume possible. As shelters return to more normal operations, they may start to accept strays and surrenders that they were turning away initially. Since spay and neutering services were out of order in many places, there may be a general increase in the stray population. As people go back to work, there is the possibility of them no longer having time for the animals they adopted. If there is a sustained economic downturn, families may find it no longer economically feasible to take care of their animals.

Briana T. Mirchel, assistant professor of shelter medicines at Western University of Health Sciences, said that people are "holding their breath" to see how this issue plays out, and that the "ballooning" of shelter populations can be "overwhelming."

"While services are slowly starting to open back up we are nowhere near the capacity we were prior to the pandemic," said Mirchel. "Because of this, there is definitely a concern of the population ballooning especially as we roll into kitten season."

It isn't an issue that will catch shelters flat-footed. Baker and Hoffman said they both were anticipating a second wave or inflow of animals. Mirchel said that the best way to combat it is to increase volunteer efforts since staffing will be financially difficult.

"Volunteers, including fostering, will need to be ramped up until funding returns to bring on more paid staff," said Mirchel. "The return to high volume spay/neuter will also be important especially for community cats."

History may show hope. During the 2008 recession, there was a minimal impact on animal shelter populations. The bond between pet owners and their companions could help this dam

from breaking, said Rayvid.

“That attachment can be a really strong bond,” said Rayvid. “People are going to do everything they can to not break it.”

Diveheart teaches SCUBA diving to the disabled



(Picture taken from Diveheart Foundation website)

By Vernon Smith Jr.
Nonprofit Sector News
June 19, 2020

No matter what circumstances or fears you may face in life, there is always a way to persevere. Whether that be a disability, having post-traumatic stress, or something else, Diveheart

Foundation is dedicated to helping people reach their goals.

Downers Grove, Ill.-based Diveheart is all about working with individuals who have a disability and still want to try to learn how to scuba dive. It was started in 2001 by former Chicago area broadcast journalist Jim Elliott “to instill the ‘can do’ spirit in participants, inspiring them to take on challenges that they may not have considered before. Using zero gravity and the adventure paradigm, we help participants believe that if they can scuba dive they can do anything.”

Elliott says it is easier to teach someone who has a disability how to scuba dive because they are accustomed to daily routines that are more complicated than those who are not disabled. He describes it as: “Their head is already in the game. By the time they are ready to get in the water with us, they’re kind of into it...breathing is a big part of what we do and once we teach them how to breath we work with the adaptive diver to get them neutrally buoyant.”

Elliott explains how being a part of this organization could help participants do other activities, “They go on and take on other challenges. We have people who have only done one pool session with us, and gone on and done rock climbing, hose therapy...it gave them that leg up and confidence.”

Elliott is still the organization’s president, but over the years, the organization has grown to include programs not just in “Chicagoland” (including Milwaukee’s Marquette University), but also in Atlanta, the Washington, D.C., area, Florida (Miami, West Palm Beach, and Eckerd College), and Malaysia. The organization’s total revenues were almost \$600,000 in 2017 (the latest official number available).

Due to Covid-19, this nonprofit had to make some adjustments. Executive Director Tinamarie Hernandez said, “We have halted all of our pool programs but, what we have been doing are projects that don’t require the water.” For example, the organization has revised its website to make it more accessible for people with disabilities.

Hernandez also emphasizes the organization’s new “playbooks”: “We are going to take a specific area within adaptive diving and focus on it...we are going to create a smaller playbook that would address the things we learned as an organization on what works, so that our instructors who are out there, who are working with disabilities can benefit.” Founder Jim Elliott explains that Diveheart also will start an “empathy program.” “We are going to be sharing with schools on our website...three PowerPoints that would include a lot of videos which are very inspiring and appealing.” Students will be able to use curriculum materials that inform them about various disabilities and what classroom exercises can be done so that all students can learn a little about what it is like to have a disability, such as blindness, he said.

Even though they aren’t supposed to be working, Hernandez, Elliott and other staff members have been keeping up with their members, and they have updated Diveheart’s database to make it easier. “We continue our educational outreach programs,” Hernandez said. “We reach out to some service organization, Rotary, or support group with different types of disabilities or condition. We also have been checking in on our participants and continuing a lot of what we do on our social media, so we can stay in touch with everybody.”

Diveheart also offers supplements written materials with online training. As Hernandez explained, “You have to read a book, then do your online training, and then there is no getting around doing the physical part of it because you have to do your skills in the pool and then as well as the open water.” All training materials also are being translated into Spanish.

For more information, visit Diveheart’s website.

Sons of Union Veterans hurry to document Civil War graves with almost no funds



By Payal Gangishetty
Nonprofit Sector News
June 18, 2020

More than two decades ago, members of the nonprofit Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), as part of its National Grave Registration Project, started the process of identifying hundreds of final resting places of all Union Civil War veterans. Since then, the organization has documented 800,000 graves across the United States.

Grave registration officers of 30 departments (SUVCW units of one or more states) work with community-level units, called camps, at the state and local levels with the help of volunteers. Bruce D. Frail, the National Graves Registration Officer for the SUVCW, says the goal of the project is to help create and maintain a national database of the burial sites of veterans of the Civil War. “It’s important to us that the graves of these forgotten heroes are taken care of so that future generations can learn from them,” says Frail.

Stressing the need for more volunteers to work on the project, Frail says the organization

currently has 4,200 volunteers, of which only about 2,600 are active and participate in the fieldwork to obtain information later uploaded into the SUVCW's national database.

Frail said that, for the last four years, as many as 81 graves are registered every day.

“The success of the project is largely dependent on the volunteer participation and devotion of people to serve the memory of the Civil War veterans in their communities,” Frail adds.

“Sometimes we receive incomplete forms, where crucial information will be missing. We need more volunteers and organizations to come forward and assist us. Without them it is very difficult to achieve the mission of the project.”

Moreover, he says the fieldwork has slowed down considerably in the last few months due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. “The volunteers are scared to come out and work. Only in the last couple of days a few of them have resumed working,” he said. (Nonprofit Sector News repeated attempts to even contact project volunteers.)

Meanwhile, a Rhode Island department camp has restored 900 headstones in eastern Connecticut, Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts since 2015, using its own funds. “We don't get paid for carrying out restoration works, Frail said. Whatever money the SUVCW gets from donations and fund-raising activities is used for repair and restoration works, he added.



Lack of funds

Many nonprofit organizations find it difficult to garner sufficient and continuous funding for their projects, and the situation is no different for the SUVCW, as its struggle to find funds for their work is increasing along with their responsibility.

Every year, the National Grave Registration Project receives a meager sum of \$1,000 from the national organization, which is barely sufficient to meet their database expenses.

Frail says, “It’s a big project. We spend more than what we receive. Last year we spent \$7,000 on redesigning the national database. Whatever money we received from the donations and other fund raising activities were used for it. All the additional expenses were paid out of our own pockets.”

Only a few months ago, the nonprofit organization was approved as a tax-exempt charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

“We are still in the process to cover all our departments under IRS,” Frail says. “We don’t have

an operational budget to publicize our projects. We are scared that we will disappear. Of late, we have been using social media to reach out to the public and speak about the project, but we don't know to what extent will that be helpful.”

Online grave registration forms, brochure and information booklet are available on the SUVCW website. Individuals who wish to register a large number of grave sites, can log into National Graves Registration Project



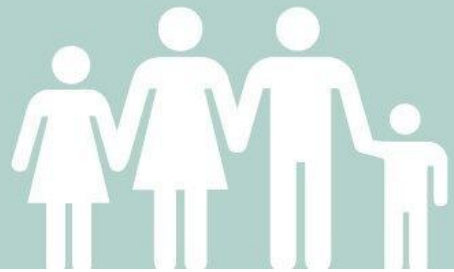
Red Cross offering national virtual family assistance plus enhanced services in eight states

Jun 15, 2020

Talking to Kids About COVID-19



Don't tell them they
shouldn't be worried.
Encourage them to talk
about how they are feeling.



By Sam Turner
Nonprofit Sector News
June 15, 2020

The American Red Cross created a virtual family assistance center to provide national services to those needing help and care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After a national disaster such as a hurricane, the American Red Cross provides online and in-person services and care to those affected. The American Red Cross provides hot meals, water and shelter as well as emergency response vehicles to communities affected by disasters. The

American Red Cross named COVID-19 a national disaster and provided virtual options for those seeking help.

During this time of COVID-19, many counseling offices, religious buildings and other resources are closed to because to maintain social distancing, so the Red Cross created a virtual family assistance center to allow those in need access to different national resources.

The services the virtual family assistance center offers are national, allowing anyone to have access at any time. Two services that are provided in the virtual center are mental health and spiritual care. Stephanie Rendon, with American Red Cross's media

team, said Nigel Holderby is the director of disaster public affairs and oversees the virtual family assistance center. Holderby emphasized Red Cross services to help those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19.

“What we saw here with the Coronavirus, COVID-19, was that we have a role to play in helping connect people who have lost loved ones...working in this virtual environment, we know that people have been isolated and so even the death of a loved one in this environment is unique...” Holderby said.

He said a national call center has been set up on the American Red Cross website where people can reach out to a disaster mental health professional. “People can call and talk to a disaster mental health professional who is answering the phone calls and providing support through sometimes just a listening ear, sometimes providing guidance to these resources for tangible things that people need that they may not have been aware of or that they didn’t know how to reach in this environment,” Holderby explained. Some resources that are available, he said, are legal advice, financial resources, and other assistance.

While the call center is available nationally, he said, eight states have linked to additional local resources in addition to the national virtual family assistance center. Holderby explained that the localized state resources are based on availability in the various states and can focus more on what each state needs. The eight states are California, Illinois, Missouri, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island.

Holderby pointed out that “these eight states are listed here [Red Cross website] as a separate location because they have additional localized state resources that are only available for those states in addition to national resources.”

In New York state, the Red Cross announced its virtual family assistance center on April 29, getting the word out through the state’s local news media about the availability of crisis counselors. The Greater New York City branch of the Red Cross said it had a team of “30 specially trained Red Cross Mental Health, Disaster Spiritual Care, and Health Services volunteers” to support families with their “emotional and spiritual needs, as well as provide information and referrals to state and local agencies as well as other community organizations to help families meet their immediate needs,” according to a Greater New York press release.

As of June 5, 2020, the Red Cross had recorded 66,000 views on the virtual family assistance center page and more than 61,000 clicks on the website links that connect a user to the different national and state resources have been recorded, he said. The resources available online are to assist those in states where counseling centers are still closed due to COVID-19. The virtual family assistance center is to also help reduce the risk of exposure and infection during this time. The Greater New York Red Cross said that the virtual family assistance center will continue to operate as long as it's necessary.

An online form for families to complete to start obtaining assistance is at:

<https://forms.microsoft.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Ql1b3dPA0kq18WDts68ncff8HfhQNF9NrTcgMW6f2qpUMFpCQkNBMjU0Q0c2N0pMOVZKUTNKNFYzRy4u>

After reshaping operations for COVID-19, Meals on Wheels waits for trickles of federal funding

By Stephen Neukam
Nonprofit Sector News
June 12, 2020

As COVID-19 began to grip nearly every facet of daily life, many nonprofits saw a sharp decline in the functionality of their organizations and missions. While resources shrunk, some organizations retreated to extremely limited action, with experts predicting a grim future for nonprofits after the effects of the virus are fully set in.

For some, though, the reality was different. For Meals on Wheels, a national meal home-delivery service dedicated to reaching the needs of seniors, the challenge was to meet a significant increase in demand while navigating many of the same restrictions other organizations had faced.

At the same time that the virus was causing a complete upheaval to the daily operations of the program, Meals on Wheels had to deliver to communities that sometimes had as much as three times the increase in need.

Meals on Wheels is comprised of more than 5,000 independently run local programs, and many of these turned to the national organization for guidance. Since the member programs have a significant amount of autonomy over how they operate, the most effective action was to connect the local organizations to share ideas on how to respond to the crisis, according to Jenny Young, vice president of communications at Meals on Wheels America.

Young said that four out of five local programs had reported at least a doubling in demand for meals — a logistical battle for programs transforming their daily practices. The dilemma for Meals on Wheels was twofold — not only were the seniors it served particularly vulnerable to the ills of the virus but a majority of its volunteers were also 65 years or older.

This pushed Sasa Olessi Montaña, the CEO of Meals on Wheels of Mercer County, New Jersey, to social media to recruit younger volunteers. “I very early on put out the call to get volunteers ... immediately, and it was all social media,” said Montaña. Part of the plan was to attract college students who were home early from school. The daily delivery methods have also changed, with many local programs switching to no-contact delivery and more infrequent deliveries with frozen meals.

The value of Meals on Wheels, though, according to Montaña, is not only in the food it provides. An important aspect of the program is the socialization the seniors get with volunteers. In an effort to make sure that this continued, Montaña and other programs have encouraged older volunteers who were unable to deliver food to call seniors at their homes — this led to what she said was a “life-saving” experience for one senior.

“One of our volunteers called their person ... the woman is a diabetic and she told him, ‘I’m a diabetic, I’ve run out of my medication, it won’t come until [two more days] and my sugar is high,’” said Montaña. “Between the two of them, they figured out how to [get the prescription] and he went and got her the insulin. He saved her life.”

While the immediate challenges were difficult to work around, most local programs got through the initial shock, with no large national trend of programs shutting their doors, according to Young. For those that continue to operate, there are long-term issues on the horizon. One problem emerged out of the increased need for food delivery or donation services after the virus hit. As more people became reliant on community programs to get their food, organizations that usually did not participate in food distribution or had limited food programs began to jump into that role or expand.

In some ways, this dynamic has been useful. Stephanie Archer-Smith, executive director of Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland, whose program serves a large urban area in Baltimore, said that other organizations moving in to help communities have aided in serving people that do not fall under the purview of Meals on Wheels.

However, this influx of organizations may be saturating the market with food services with little coordination. In New York City alone, about 800 food pantries are available for those in need. Montaña, whose program covers residents in Trenton, New Jersey, has felt the frustration of this issue. In that city, a local YMCA that usually operates summer and after-school food programs has opened 13 grab-and-go meal sites in response to the virus, showcasing the expansion of such services.

The worry, Montaña explained, is the long-term consequences of a loosely coordinated network

of programs. If organizations begin to pull back from providing food once they can return to “normal” operations, it will leave outfits solely dedicated to food delivery to pick up the slack. “As things start to resume for operation or opening up, they’re going to go back to their reason for being and who’s going to be left holding the bag?” asked Montaña.

The dynamic is also inefficient, said Montaña, leaving some with a surplus of resources, like milk, that could be needed elsewhere. In Trenton, a non-profit dedicated to driving down health care costs through community partnerships, Trenton Health Team, has aggregated information about food pantries and meal services in the county. By the organization’s count, there are 85 such programs in and around the city.

Archer-Smith also questioned the sustainability of such a system, with some organizations paying large amounts for caterers to provide food. The biggest issue, though, is financial. While Meals on Wheels America, the national organization, had been able to provide over \$10 million in emergency funding to local programs by the end of May, there remains a need for immediate and continued stability.

The organization saw hope in the \$750 million that the federal government signed into law for congregate, where seniors eat in one location, and home delivery nutrition services for older Americans. The reality has been less promising.

The federal government releases the funding to the states and counties, which have full authority on how to distribute the funding, leaving the organization’s emergency grants to the discretion of local officials.

Some states and counties run congregate feeding programs for seniors, presenting the dilemma of keeping funds for themselves or helping organizations like Meals on Wheels, which usually have a large presence in their communities and focus on home delivery.

In Montaña’s case, her program is the largest subsidized meal service in the county. From the Families First Coronavirus Response Act in mid-March, in which \$250 million was released to states, Mercer County received just over \$255,000 to support home-delivered and other nutrition supports for seniors. Of that money, Meals on Wheels of Mercer County was allocated \$32,000, according to Montaña.

“[The government] runs a congregate program and any resources that could have been lent to us, they were using themselves,” said Montaña.

Montaña is still awaiting the state’s allocation for the \$500 million signed into law in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland would not specify the amount of money it received from the state. Archer-Smith said that while the funds have been helpful, they do not cover the costs for the program.

The concern over finances goes beyond the release of federal funding. Meals on Wheels relies heavily on private donations and philanthropy. The reality of a ravaged economy now and the prospects of a long-running decline may complicate the organization’s situation further.

“Is philanthropy going to change in the long term?” asked Young. “Because people don’t have as much to give. The economy itself is in a bad place. The major corporations that we have been relying on for all of this funding, that might change. The uncertainty puts everyone at risk.”

Pandemic: Recession Just Beginning, but Nonprofits Start to Think About the Next Ones

By Dane S. Claussen
Nonprofit Sector News
June 8, 2020

Accountant’s best financial practices say that U.S. nonprofit organizations should always have cash reserves equal to three months to two years’ worth of operating expenses. Such guidelines typically don’t try to imagine exactly what might happen, but one can think of extreme events: a new executive director wrecks relationships with all major donors, or doesn’t raise any money, or the nonprofit loses its largest contract or grant.

On the basis of the three to 24 month guideline, some might think that many nonprofit organizations, which are expected to close by the thousands in coming months, were badly managed, or not viable to begin with, when the corona virus caused a high percentage of US nonprofit organizations to cease most or all operations in mid-March because of the novel corona virus. After all, surveys have shown that half of US nonprofits had only enough financial reserves, with little or no income, to last a few weeks or, at most, a few months.

But Rick Cohen, chief communications officer/chief operating officer of the National Council of Nonprofits, told Nonprofit Sector News that even in normal times, more than half of US nonprofit organizations do not have enough money to meet even the usual demands they face. He said that nonprofits know that they should “set aside a little bit of funding at a time” for reserves, but more urgent is for nonprofits to spend the money they have on needed services they provide.

Cohen said three months’ worth of expense money in reserve is the “closest realistic target” for most nonprofit organizations, that six months’ worth is “terrific,” and that few nonprofit organizations have two years’ worth of expense money in the bank. He added that nonprofits used to be evaluated largely on metrics such as percentage of overhead in their budgets and how much money they had in reserve, but in recent years there’s been a positive shift toward evaluating nonprofit organizations based on their effectiveness. Nonprofits that have large reserves are under pressure to spend more of that money, Cohen said.

He said that after the Great Recession (technically, December 2007 to June 2009), US nonprofits made more crisis planning, but that nonprofit organizations planned for a “rainy day, not a

monsoon,” his analogy for the current situation. Cohen emphasized that the present crisis for nonprofits is unprecedented and hopefully unique.

In addition to many expected shutdowns of nonprofits this year, he said that nonprofits may look to merge with other, similar nonprofit organizations in the same geographical area, but that it is “not easy” to find the “right partner” for a merger. More likely will be the continuation of a recent trend toward nonprofits co-locating—sharing office space, equipment and even staff.

According to one online resource for nonprofits, Inside Philanthropy, nonprofit leaders also already are, or should be, planning for the next disaster.

The first thing that experts say is that nonprofits need to have emergency funds, whatever they are called: reserves or emergency or contingency funds. The second thing they recommend is planning, although as Cohen noted, an organization cannot plan for everything. Still, a little planning can go a long way when an emergency plan needs to be implemented. Planning should account for nonprofits’ most vulnerable constituencies, Alan Kwok, director of disaster resilience at Northern California Grantmakers, recently told Inside Philanthropy. Mark Lindberg, program director of disaster relief and recovery at the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, told Inside Philanthropy that building relationships is important, both between local governments and nonprofits, and also between first-responder national or international organizations (such as Red Cross) and the local nonprofits that know individual communities inside and out.

Nonprofits can sometimes work to help prevent future disasters. For example, not only did Bill Gates publicize the threat of global pandemics for years, but the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s already are preparing for the next one. The Gates Foundation is a partner in the new Pandemic Action Network, which is working with governments worldwide to improve their responses next time and also is running the #MaskingForAFriend campaign. In California, large nonprofits are working on efforts to both prevent and limit future wildfires, including strategizing about how to limit building in high fire risk areas, Inside Philanthropy reported.

Katherina M. Rosqueta, founding executive director of the Center for High Impact Philanthropy, told Inside Philanthropy that the current crisis has shown the need to have better, and quick, coordination between grantmakers such as foundations and corporations and grant recipients, the nonprofits that carry out the work. She said this better coordination should continue always, not just in emergencies. Nonprofits also need to work with each other in crises, whether it’s a dozen in greater Philadelphia or more than 100 in California.

Kwok, at Southern California Grantmakers, also told Inside Philanthropy that funders also can assist by permanently reducing red tape for nonprofits to obtain and use grants, meaning more “trust-based” grantmaking. He also said that funders may be able to help with assistance with budgeting, technology, or other matters.

Lindberg, at the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, told Inside Philanthropy that nonprofits also can help grantmakers get involved, or more involved, in policy work, since many funders are not active or interested in it. He said societal changes need to occur at all levels.

Regine Webster, vice president of the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, and Rosqueta, at the Center for High Impact Philanthropy, both told Inside Philanthropy that nonprofit organizations generally need to focus on their core missions, both short-term and long-term because nonprofits serve needs that don't go away. (But Erin Dearborn Coryell, program officer for disaster relief and recovery at the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, said that crises may be the moment when a nonprofit makes major long-term changes.)

Civil rights organizations declare Thursday, June 4, a National Day of Mourning

By Dane S. Claussen
Nonprofit Sector News
June 2, 2020

The leaders of the National Urban League, NAACP, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, National Action Network, and other civil rights organizations on Monday declared Thursday, June 4, as a national day of mourning. The statement announcing the national mourning day said, “The tragic and senseless loss of Black lives to police-involved violence over the last several years — and the callous indifference to justice in response – should have been enough to persuade the nation of the need for dramatic change. The last several days have made it impossible to ignore.

“We call on the nation to join the civil rights community in observing a National Day of Mourning on Thursday, as George Floyd’s family prepares for the painful task of laying their loved one to rest. We will spend the day in reflection and prayer for racial reconciliation and an end to the violence that is ravaging the nation.”

The statement said that minority communities “have been pushed to the brink by relentless police brutality and vigilante injustice” and blamed “white nationalists” for their efforts in “stoking divisions and discrediting the racial justice movement.” “There is only one way out of this crisis,” the statement said, calling for a “comprehensive and realistic plan for reform and accountability” and “comprehensive review and revision of police training procedures, hiring standards and use of force policies.” They committed to “working closely with members of Congress on a bipartisan basis to advance these policies and other desperately-needed reform measures.”

However, Monday’s announcement received virtually no news coverage by U.S. mainstream news media in at least the first 24 hours after it was announced, and the announcement also was not quickly posted on websites of African-American news media such as the Chicago Defender, Atlanta Daily World, or New York’s Amsterdam News—three of the most historically prominent

black newspapers. Monday, June 1, already had been declared a national day of mourning and lament by the 1,400-member United States Conference of Mayors, and religious figures, with city governments observing moments of silence and various ministers and priests publicly observing it with prayer vigils, speeches, and other activities.

An earlier national day of mourning had been held on Wednesday, May 20, organized by by MoveOn, Indivisible, the Center for Popular Democracy, and other progressive groups. Its intent was to publicize what its organizers believe was an insufficient response by Republican government officials to the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Events included “funeral processions” of cars from the Washington home of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to the White House via the Trump International Hotel, and from a Columbia, S.C., chapel to Sen. Lindsey Graham’s main South Carolina office. Since 1970, some Native Americans have observed the same November day as Thanksgiving also as a National Day of Mourning to protest unjust treatment of Native Americans by American colonists and governments since the Mayflower’s landing in Massachusetts in 1620.

Blog: Young journalists should gear ourselves to cover nonprofits



By Stephen Neukam

My introduction to journalism, generally and certainly as a student, taught me that the primary purpose of the institution was to hold government power to account. Undoubtedly this is true — our experiment in democracy would not be as far along without the third estate. Beyond government oversight, we become aware of other functions that journalism serves — business

news, sports, popular culture, etc.

I would argue that an area not commonly thought about is one of the most important areas of oversight that journalists should focus on. The nonprofit sector, expansive as it is, with organizations, focused on issues from A to Z, requires better journalism.

My awareness of nonprofit oversight did not begin with this internship. My interest first piqued when I read Jane Mayer's *Dark Money*, an investigative book into how right-wing billionaires, namely the infamous Koch brothers, used nonprofits and philanthropies to influence politics. I thought then, as I often think now, how in the world would we have known anything about this without a journalist's inquiry?

Since then, through my studies and my journalism, I have become aware of the importance and people's increasing stake in the nonprofit sector. If I can briefly, I would argue that this is a byproduct of the changing nature of American government. It shifted, in the last few decades, away from the activism of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and moved toward the free market principles of Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and the mainstream of both major parties.

This is not to make an assessment of the merits of this shift. Instead, I am trying to explain why I think people have become more dependent on the nonprofit sector. As social programs contracted from the level of Roosevelt in throes of the Great Depression and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, the number of nonprofit organizations ballooned. Many of these organizations were and are committed to social causes, such as food security, affordable housing, gun violence, racial justice and health care.

At some time or another, the government was more committed to tackling at least most of these issues than it is today. As the government slipped out of that role, something was going to fill the void. In many cases, what picked up the slack was nonprofit organizations. This is why I think people hold a large stake in the operation of not for profit organizations — they provide a lot of the services that are in the public interest. Of course, we allow these organizations tax-exempt status and many of them rely on our donations and support to operate. At the least, we should expect that they are run responsibly, and if they are not, we will rely on responsible journalism to hold them accountable.

As a journalist, I can say that the task of covering nonprofits as your beat is not easy. The learning curve is difficult. Understanding the inner workings of nonprofits, sifting through IRS forms and getting down the functions of the sector takes time and commitment. Really, it requires education. The same way that universities offer concentrations in sport and broadcast journalism, young journalists need the opportunity to hone their skills around the nonprofit sector.

Such a shift in priorities and focus would gear the next generation of reporters with the tools we need to do the job effectively. As people become more reliant on nonprofit organizations for public services, journalism must adapt to the changes and cover them comprehensively. The initiative and diligence of journalists have provided the backbone by which American democracy stands. We must continue to expand our institution to cover what matters today.

WHO IS AT NONPROFIT SECTOR NEWS?

Staff & Volunteers:

Dr. Dane S. Claussen, **Editor-in-Chief & Executive Director (CEO)**

Dr. Scott C. Spangler, Middle Georgia State University, **Website Consultant**

Dr. Mohammad Yousuf, University of New Mexico, **Newsletter Consultant**

Board of Directors

Dr. Dane S. Claussen, NSN Editor-in-Chief & Executive Director, Silver Spring, MD

Dr. Cynthia Liefeld, Sewickley, PA & Grand Cayman Island

Dr. Scott C. Spangler, Middle Georgia State University, Macon, GA

Dr. Robin Blom, Ball State University, Muncie, IN

Advisory Board on Nonprofit Organizations

Diane G. Claussen, DePaul University, Chicago, IL

Camille Downing, emeritus, Point Park University, Pittsburgh, PA

Kyra Randall, US Vets-Houston, Houston, TX

Advisory Board on Journalism Education & Training

Dr. Deb Aikat, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Former Journalism Interns

Amanda Britt, University of New Mexico, **Summer 2020 Journalism Intern**

Ronnie Allen Campman, University of Hawaii, **Spring 2021 & Fall 2020 Journalism Intern**

Samantha Drysdale, Boston University, **Summer 2020 Journalism Intern**

Alejandro Figueroa, Ohio University, **Fall 2020 Journalism Intern**

Megan Elaine Finke, Bowling Green State University (OH), **Spring & Summer 2021**

Sri Payal Gangishetti, University of Bridgeport (CT), **Summer 2020 Journalism Intern**

Rebecca Marcinko, Pennsylvania State University, **Summer 2020 Journalism Intern**

Makenna Marks, Western Washington University, **Summer 2020 Journalism Intern**

Mackenzie Mayer, Ohio University, **Spring & Summer 2021**

Stephen Neukam, Rider University (NJ), **Summer 2020 Journalism Intern**

Naga Prudhvi Panguluri, University of Idaho, **Summer 2021 & Fall 2021**

Lindsey Potter, California Lutheran University, **Spring 2021, Journalism Intern**

Emely Salguero, California Lutheran University, **Fall 2021**

Jolie Shave, The College of New Jersey, **Spring & Summer 2021**

Vernon Smith Jr., Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, **Summer 2020**

Journalism Intern

Samantha Turner, Augusta University (GA), **Summer 2020 Journalism Intern**

Former IT/computer science Interns

Timothy Hatcher, Middle Georgia State University, **Summer 2021**

Scott Mathews, Middle Georgia State University, **Summer & Fall 2020, Spring 2021**

Patty Lowery, Middle Georgia State University, **Website Intern**

Jacob Smith, Middle Georgia State University, **Website Intern**

Ethan Taube, Middle Georgia State University, **Summer and Fall 2020 Website Intern**

John Taylor, Middle Georgia State University, **Website Intern**

Joseph Walker, Middle Georgia State University, **Website Intern**

Marques Wright, Middle Georgia State University, **Website Intern**

ABOUT NONPROFIT SECTOR NEWS

Mission Statement: “Building Communities by Reporting on U.S. Nonprofits and Supporting Local News Media”

Nonprofit Sector News covers all U.S. nonprofits—charities to foundations, labor unions to trade groups—nationwide, with news, feature, and investigative journalism. Its audience is the general public, and other journalists. (Nonprofit Sector News is NOT a trade publication for employees, board members, and major donors to nonprofit organizations, unlike *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *Nonprofit Times*, *Nonprofit Quarterly*, *NonprofitPRO*, and others, although employees, board members and donors should find NSN content to be informative and interesting.)

Nonprofit Sector News distributes its original journalistic content only by email to everyone, including other journalists, other nonprofit news organizations, other nonprofit organizations, and the general public. By distributing high-quality, locally relevant articles about local, statewide, regional and national nonprofit organizations to other news media, it supports those local media, which have been hit hard by economic and technological forces, as well as informing those media’s readers, viewers, and listeners.

Nonprofit Sector News also curates postings of news, feature, and investigative stories by other news organizations on its social media accounts, which announce or link to NSN’s own journalism as stories are completed and made public.

Nonprofit Sector News, a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation, has been granted tax-exempt status, under Section 501[c][3]), by the US Internal Revenue Service as of July 13, 2020.

Meeting the Founder

Dr. Dane S. Claussen is the Editor-in-Chief & Executive Director (CEO) of Nonprofit Sector News. He most recently was Director of Research, Publications, and Professional Advancement at the National Communication Association, a national nonprofit organization. Claussen is a former Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada, and has been extensively involved with other nonprofit organizations for journalism, higher education, civil rights/liberties, historic preservation, and philately.

He is a former Editor of *Newspaper Research Journal* and *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, both international scholarly journals published quarterly by

the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication and SAGE Publications. Claussen is now working to launch, during 2026, the *South Asia Media and Communication Research Journal* with the South Asia Communication Association.

Claussen was publisher and/or editor of daily, weekly, biweekly, and monthly newspapers and magazines in Washington state, Oregon and Wisconsin. He taught media management, communication law, communication ethics, journalism, social scientific research methods, and public opinion courses, among others, as a professor at the University of Idaho, Missouri State University, Point Park University, Thiel College, and Shanghai International Studies University. Claussen holds a B.S. (journalism [newspaper management & news-editorial writing]) from the University of Oregon; an M.S. (mass communications) from Kansas State University; a Ph.D. (mass communication) from the University of Georgia; and an M.B.A. (corporate finance & labor relations/human resources) from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

KEY POLICIES OF NONPROFIT SECTOR NEWS

(adapted from the privacy policy of the Institute for Nonprofit News)

Nonprofit Sector News (NSN) has prepared this Privacy Policy to explain how NSN collects, uses, protects, and shares information when you use nonprofitsectornews.org website (the “Site”) or when you use any NSN services (the “Services”). By using the Site or Services you consent to this Privacy Policy.

Information Nonprofit Sector News Collects

Personally Identifiable Information. NSN may collect or have access to information that personally identifies you, such as your name and e-mail address, from time to time only if you choose to share such information with NSN.

Site Usage Data

NSN automatically collects anonymous usage data regarding the actions you take on the Site. For example, each time you use the Site, NSN may automatically collect the type of Web browser you use, your operating system, your Internet Service Provider, your IP address, the pages you view, and the time and duration of your visits to the Site. These data do not identify, contact, or precisely locate any individual. NSN uses these data to help us understand how people use the Site and Services, and to enhance the services NSN offer.

Cookies and Web Beacons

NSN may use cookies (a small text file placed on your computer to identify your computer and browser) and other tracking technologies to improve the quality of the Site or Services. Most Web browsers are initially set up to accept cookies. You can reset your Web browser to refuse all cookies or to indicate when a cookie is being sent. However, certain features of the Site or Services may not work if you delete or disable cookies. Some of our “Service Providers” (as defined below) may use their own cookies and other tracking technologies in connection with the services they perform on our behalf, as explained in more detail below.

How NSN Uses and Shares Information

NSN uses information that NSN collects for internal purposes only, such as providing the Services. NSN will not sell, share, or rent your personally identifiable information to third parties, and NSN will not otherwise disclose your personally identifiable

information to third parties, without your permission, except as expressly disclosed in this Privacy Policy.

From time to time, NSN might establish a business relationship with third parties whom NSN believes trustworthy and whom NSN has asked to confirm that their privacy practices are consistent with NSN's ("Service Providers"). For example, NSN may contract with Service Providers to provide certain services, such as Web analytics tools, newsletter and list management services, Web hosting, and Web and application development. NSN provides our Service Providers with the information needed for them to perform these services. Each Service Provider must agree to implement and maintain reasonable security procedures and practices appropriate to the nature of the information involved in order to protect your information from unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification, or disclosure.

NSN may use, and disclose to third parties, anonymous data regarding the Site and Services (*e.g.*, number of visits, page views, frequency, number, time, and other data related to ads delivered, and other usage metrics) without your permission. However, such data does not identify you or any other individual.

NSN may share information with other corporations controlling, controlled by, or under common control with NSN. If Nonprofit Sector News is merged, acquired, or sold, or in the event of a transfer of some or all of our assets, NSN may disclose or transfer information in connection with such transaction. You will have the opportunity to opt out of any such transfer if, in our discretion, the new entity plans to handle your information in a way that differs materially from this Privacy Policy.

Nonprofit Sector News cooperates with government and law enforcement officials and private parties to enforce and comply with the law. NSN may disclose information to government or law enforcement officials or private parties if, in our discretion, NSN believes it is necessary or appropriate in order to respond to legal requests (including court orders and subpoenas), to protect the safety, property, or rights of Nonprofit Sector News or of any third party, to prevent or stop any illegal, unethical, or legally actionable activity, or to comply with the law or legal process.

Third Party Websites

The Site or Services may contain links to websites or content operated and maintained by third parties, over which NSN has no control. You access such third-party websites or content at your own risk. You should always read the privacy policy of a third-party website before disclosing any information to the website.

Security

NSN maintains physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards to protect the confidentiality and security of personally identifiable information and other information transmitted to us. However, no data transmission over the Internet or other network can be guaranteed to be 100% secure. As a result, while NSN strives to protect information transmitted on or through the Site or Services, NSN cannot and does not guarantee the security of any information you transmit on or through the Site or Services, and you do so at your own risk.

Children's Privacy Statement

NSN does not knowingly collect information from children under the age of 13. If NSN becomes aware that NSN has inadvertently received information from a child under the age of 13, NSN will delete such information from our records. Because NSN does not knowingly collect any information from children under the age of 13, NSN also does not knowingly distribute such information to third parties.

Privacy Policy Changes

From time to time, NSN may change this Privacy Policy. If NSN decides to change this Privacy Policy, NSN will inform you by posting the revised Privacy Policy on the Site. Those changes will go into effect on the Revision Date shown at the top of the revised Privacy Policy. Your continued use of the Site or Services constitutes your consent to the revised Privacy Policy.

Terms of Use *(adapted from the Center for Public Integrity)*

Welcome to Nonprofit Sector News. You may be visiting us from a computer, mobile phone, tablet, or other mobile device. Regardless of the platform, these Terms of Use constitute a binding legal agreement between you and Nonprofit Sector News. Please read them carefully. By accessing any of our services (including by automated means) you accept its terms.

General Provisions

Nonprofit Sector News respects your privacy. Please take a moment to review our Privacy Policy, so you understand what information we collect through this service, how we use it, how we secure it, and when we may share it.

The web is an evolving medium. If we need to change these Terms of Use in the future, we will post the revised Terms of Use and update the “Last Updated” date, above, to reflect the date of the changes. By continuing to use this service after we post such changes, you agree to these Terms of Use, as modified.

We reserve the right to deny access to this service, or any other service we provide, to anyone who violates this agreement or who, in our judgment, interferes with the ability of others to enjoy this service, or infringes the rights of others. We may change, restrict access to, suspend, or discontinue your access to this service, or any portion of this service, at any time and for any reason, with or without prior notice. We may terminate this agreement for any reason and at any time. Otherwise applicable sections of the agreement shall remain in force after termination. Please bring to our attention any material on our site that you believe to be inaccurate. Please forward a copy of the material to along with an explanation of your objection.

If you have other comments or questions about our site, please also email

Notice of Copyright Infringement

If you are a copyright owner who believes your copyrighted material has been reproduced, posted or distributed on this website in a manner that constitutes copyright infringement, please inform our designated copyright agent by sending written notice via the U.S. Postal Service to:

Nonprofit Sector News
Attn: Dane S. Claussen
11706 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Or email nonprofitsectornews@gmail.com. Please include the following information in your written notice: (1) a detailed description of the copyrighted work that is allegedly infringed; (2) a description of the location of the allegedly infringing material on this site; (3) your contact information, including your address, telephone number, and, if available, email address; (4) a statement by you indicating that you have a good-faith belief that the allegedly infringing use is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law; (5) a statement by you, made under penalty of perjury, affirming that the information in your notice is accurate and that you are authorized to act on the copyright owner’s behalf; and (6) an electronic or physical signature of the copyright owner or someone authorized on the owner’s behalf to assert infringement of copyright and to submit the statement. Please note that the

contact information provided in this paragraph is for suspected copyright infringement only. Contact information for other matters is provided elsewhere in these Terms of Use or elsewhere on the site.

How You May Use Our Content

Nonprofit Sector News content is made available for both the use of other journalists at nonprofit and for-profit news organizations and the general public (including persons affiliated with other nonprofit organizations). All content and other material on this website is the property of the Nonprofit Sector News except when it is distributed by other news media as part of their publicly available content. Nonprofit Sector News content is protected by U.S. copyright laws, other copyright laws, and international conventions. Nonprofit Sector News' original journalism content may be distributed, displayed, reproduced, performed, serve as the basis of derivative works, or otherwise used, by news media or anyone else, provided that you keep intact all credits and copyright and other proprietary notices. If you have questions about the use of Nonprofit Sector News content, please contact nonprofitsectornews@gmail.com or call 724-813-9665.

You are free to establish a hypertext link to our site so long as the link does not state or imply that we sponsor, endorse, or are affiliated with you or your website. However, you may not, without our prior written permission, frame or inline link any of the content of our site, or incorporate into another website or other service any of the content or other material you find on our site, unless you are a news medium and you keep intact all credits and copyright and other proprietary notices.

Registration

To receive either of our two email newsletters (one for other journalists and the other for everyone, including journalists), you will be required to provide your email address. Our use of any information you provide to us or that we gather while you're visiting our site is governed by our Privacy Policy.

Your Conduct When Using Our Site

Our Community Group for Nonprofit Sector News on Facebook includes features that allow users to interact with each other. These features are intended to create a community where you can share your thoughts on what you've read from Nonprofit Sector News. While we reserve the right to monitor user postings, it is up to our users

to ensure that the discourse flowing from Nonprofit Sector News, especially our Facebook community group, remains polite and informative.

First and foremost, we ask that you treat other site users with respect. Language and content should be appropriate for a civil, adult conversation. Please respect the rights of others to their opinions; understand that there may be many other sides to every story. If you see something on the site that you believe is inaccurate, or about which you hold a different opinion, feel free to post a comment in response.

By participating in discussions or posting to Facebook's Community Group for Nonprofit Sector News, or otherwise engage in public discussions or postings directly related to Nonprofit Sector News, you agree that you will not:

- Use the site to impersonate any person or entity, or misrepresent your affiliation with a person or entity;
- Use the site to engage in or to instigate or encourage others to engage in illegal activities or to cause injury or damage to any person or entity;
- Use the site to post or transmit any unlawful, threatening, harassing, abusive, libelous, obscene, or pornographic content;
- Use the site to post or transmit any information or content that violates or infringes the rights of others, including information or content that invades the privacy or violates the right of publicity of any person or that is protected by copyright, trademark or other proprietary right, without permission;
- Submit content that contains personally identifiable information about other people, including their physical address, electronic mail address, telephone number or other sensitive information that could invade their privacy or result in their harassment.
- Use the site to advertise or solicit to anyone to buy or sell products or services, or to make donations of any kind;
- Gather for marketing purposes any email address or other personal information that has been posted by other users of the site;
- Engage in personal attacks, harass or threaten another user, or deliberately disrupt the conversation;

- Use any automated mechanism to collect information from our site in any manner that fails to respect the Robots Exclusion Protocol;
- Access parts of the site to which you are not authorized, or attempt to circumvent restrictions placed on your access to the site;
- Take any action that causes our network to be subject to an unreasonably large load or that in any other manner jeopardizes or interferes with the operation of our network;
- Engage in any conduct that interferes with the ability of any other person to access or enjoy our site; or
- Engage in any action that violates or threatens the security of our system or network.

Your Responsibility for Information and Content You Submit

You acknowledge that you are solely responsible for the text, comments, and other information and content that you post on this website or share with others using this site. By posting information or content to Nonprofit Sector News' own website or its social media accounts, you represent and warrant: (1) that you are 13 years of age or older; (2) that you are the owner of all content you post or are making your posting or submission with the express consent of the owner; (3) that the content you post will not violate or infringe the rights of others; (4) that the information and content you post will not violate the rights of, or cause injury to, any person or entity; and (5) that you will indemnify and hold harmless us and our directors, officers, employees, agents, representatives and licensors, from and against any liability of any nature arising out of any information or content that is displayed on or submitted via the site by you or by others.

You alone are responsible for the information and content you post on to the website and social media accounts of Nonprofit Sector News. We do not control the information or content that you or others may post on or otherwise transmit through the site. You are responsible for creating backup copies of any information or content you post to our site. We will not be responsible for the deletion of, or the failure to store, display or transmit, any information or content submitted by you.

You understand that we have no obligation to monitor any areas of the site through which users can supply information or content. However, we reserve the right, in our discretion, to screen user submissions and to edit, move, delete, and/or refuse to

accept any submissions that in our judgment violate these Terms of Use or otherwise are unacceptable or inappropriate, whether for legal or other reasons.

Our Rights to Use Content You Submit

When you submit any material to our site, you are not giving up any ownership rights you otherwise have in such content. However, you grant us, and anyone authorized by us, a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, unrestricted, worldwide right and license to use, copy, modify, transmit, sell, exploit, create derivative works from, distribute, and/or publicly perform or display such material, in whole or in part, in any manner or medium (whether now known or hereafter developed), for any purpose that we choose. The foregoing grant includes the right to exploit any proprietary rights in such submission, including, but not limited to, rights under copyright, trademark or patent laws that exist in any relevant jurisdiction. Also, in connection with the exercise of these rights, you grant us, and anyone authorized by us, the right to identify you as the author of any of your submissions. You understand that technical processing of the site, including content you submit, may involve transmission over various networks, and may involve changes to the content to conform and adapt it to technical requirements of connecting networks or devices. You will not receive any compensation of any kind for our use of any materials you submit.

We may preserve content you submit, and may disclose such content if required to do so by law or if, in our judgment, such preservation or disclosure is reasonably necessary: (a) to comply with legal process; (b) to enforce these Terms of Use; (c) to respond to claims that any content you submit violates the rights of third parties; or (d) to protect the rights, property, or personal safety of our site, us, our affiliates, our officers, directors, employees, agents, or representatives, our licensors, other users, and/or the public.

Trademarks and Service Marks

Nonprofit Sector News, its logo, and its domain name nonprofitsectornews.org are service marks of the Center for Public Integrity. The names of other products and services referred to on the site may be the trademarks or service marks of their respective owners. You may not use any trademark or service mark appearing on this site without the prior written consent of the owner of the mark.

Disclaimers

Throughout our site, we have provided links and pointers to websites maintained by third parties. Our linking to such third-party sites does not imply that we endorse or sponsor such sites, or the information, products or services offered on or through the sites. Neither we nor any of our affiliates operate or control any information, products or services that third parties may provide on or through our site or on websites to which we link.

The information, products and services offered on or through this site are provided “as is” and without warranties of any kind, either express or implied. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, we disclaim all warranties, express or implied, including, but not limited to, implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. We do not warrant that the site or any of its functions will be uninterrupted or error-free, that defects will be corrected, or that any part of this site, or the servers that make the site available, are free of viruses or other harmful components.

If you are dissatisfied with the site, or any materials, products, or services on the site, or with any of the site’s terms and conditions, your sole and exclusive remedy is to discontinue using the site.

Limitations of Liability

Under no circumstances, including, but not limited to, negligence, will we be liable for any damages arising out of your use of this website or any information, content, products, or services made available on or through this site, including indirect, incidental, special, punitive, exemplary or consequential damages, even if we are advised beforehand of the possibility of such damages. Because some states do not allow the exclusion or limitation of certain categories of damages, the above limitation may not apply to you. In such states, our liability is limited to the fullest extent permitted by state law.

Indemnification

You agree to indemnify and hold harmless us, our affiliates, and each of our and their respective directors, officers, employees, agents, representatives, licensors, successors and assigns from and against any and all losses, expenses, damages and costs, including reasonable attorneys’ fees, that arise out of your use of the site, violation of these Terms of Use by you or any other person using your account, or your violation of any rights of another. We reserve the right to control the defense of any claim for which we are entitled to indemnification under this section. In such event, you agree to provide us with such cooperation as is reasonably requested by us. We will make

reasonable efforts to provide you with notice of any such claim, but our failure to provide such notice will not relieve you of these obligations.

Miscellaneous

This agreement constitutes the entire agreement between us and you with respect to the subject matter of this agreement and supersedes all previous and contemporaneous agreements, proposals and communications on this subject, whether written or oral. This agreement is personal to you, is not intended to benefit any third party, and does not create any third-party beneficiaries. You may not assign this agreement to anyone. Our failure to enforce any provisions of this agreement shall not waive our right to enforce the remainder of the agreement.

This agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, without giving effect to any principles of conflicts of law. By using this site, you consent to the exclusive jurisdiction and venue of the state and federal courts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in all disputes arising out of or relating to this agreement or use of this website. You agree that regardless of any statute or law to the contrary, any claim or cause of action that you may have arising out of or related to use of the site or these Terms of Use must be filed by you within one year after such claim or cause of action arose or be forever barred.

Editorial Independence Policy

NSN, though not (yet) an Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) member, subscribes to INN's standards of editorial independence as follows:

Our organization retains full authority over editorial content to protect the best journalistic and business interests of our organization. We will maintain a firewall between news coverage decisions and sources of all revenue. Acceptance of financial support does not constitute implied or actual endorsement of donors or their products, services or opinions.

We accept gifts, grants and sponsorships from individuals and organizations for the general support of our activities, but our news judgments are made independently and not on the basis of donor support.

Our organization also may consider donations to support the coverage of particular topics, but our organization maintains editorial control of the coverage. We will cede no right of review or influence of editorial content, nor of unauthorized distribution of editorial content.

Our organization will make public all donors who give a total of \$1,000 or more. We will accept anonymous donations for general support only if it is clear that sufficient safeguards have been put into place that the expenditure of that donation is made independently by our organization and in compliance with INN's Membership Standards.

Code of Ethics

Nonprofit Sector News subscribes to the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics, as amended.

Work with Us

Nonprofit Sector News is eager to work with others who share our vision for and commitment to improving the quality and increasing the quantity of journalism about all types of U.S. nonprofit organizations distributed to the general public by any and all news platforms, nonprofit or for-profit. Please inquire about opportunities for paid employment, free-lancing, internships, or volunteering, including but not limited to contributing content, doing research, assisting with fundraising or administration, serving on the board of directors or an advisory board, or otherwise. Contact: Dane S. Claussen at nonprofitsectornews@gmail.com

NONPROFIT SECTOR NEWS FINANCES

Major Donors

To be announced

Donor & Financial Transparency

We are committed to transparency in every aspect of funding our organization.

Accepting financial support does not mean we endorse donors or their products, services or opinions.

We accept gifts, grants and sponsorships from individuals, organizations and foundations to help with our general operations, coverage of specific topics and special projects. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that operates as a public trust, we do not pay certain taxes. We may receive funds from standard government programs offered to nonprofits or similar businesses.

Our news judgments are made independently – not based on or influenced by donors or any revenue source. We do not give supporters the rights to assign, review or edit content.

We make public all revenue sources and donors who give \$5,000 or more per year. As a news nonprofit, we avoid accepting charitable donations from anonymous sources, government entities, political parties, elected officials or candidates seeking public office. We will not accept donations from sources who, deemed by our board of directors, present a conflict of interest with our work or compromise our independence.

JOURNALISTIC COVERAGE OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Pablo Eisenberg is currently a Senior Fellow at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. Prior to his coming to Georgetown in January, 1999, he served for 23 years as Executive Director of the Center for Community Change, a national technical assistance and advocacy organization working with low income and minority organizations and constituencies throughout the country. In addition, he has published many articles and chapters of books and has been a regular columnist for The Chronicle of Philanthropy for the past seventeen years. His book, Challenges for Nonprofits and Philanthropy: The Courage to Change, was published by the New England Press and Tufts University in December of 2004.

Editor's Note: *Pablo Eisenberg is a long-time observer and critic of the nonprofit sector. Carnegie Corporation offered him this space to explore his major concern about how the continuing decline in the number of newspapers being published—and hence, the dearth of investigative journalism focused on all areas of society, including nonprofits—has impacted accountability in the independent sector. And as they say, these are Mr. Eisenberg's views, not necessarily those of the Corporation.*

The potential demise of daily newspapers and investigative journalism is arguably the biggest threat to the future of our nonprofit sector.

For the past twenty years, the media, notably print journalism, has assumed responsibility for keeping our nonprofit organizations publicly accountable and somewhat in balance, tempering their problems and excesses through the power and threat of information and exposure.

No other institution has had a similar impact. The Internal Revenue Service, which is supposed to oversee and police the nonprofit sector, has had neither the resources nor the will to do the job effectively. State attorneys general charged with a similar responsibility at the state level do not have the money or staff to provide adequate oversight. And self-reform, the cure-all championed by a self-indulgent nonprofit community, has been a miserable failure, if only because its advocates have never been willing to implement any serious self-reform measures.

What has been particularly impressive about the newspapers' coverage of the nonprofit field has been their influence on policymakers. Past scrutiny has led to investigative hearings and action by the Senate Finance Committee; changes in state regulatory measures; a more critical examination of nonprofit hospitals, big art donors' tax benefits and the practices of public university and college foundations; increased scrutiny by state regulators; and pressure on the IRS to improve its audit and enforcement procedures.

Nor should one downplay the deterrence factor of media attention. Nonprofits have been increasingly sensitive to the watchful eyes of newspapers analyzing their budgets, compensation policies, potential conflicts of interest and governance practices. While difficult to measure, these watch-dog efforts have made a real difference in preventing undesirable practices and causing institutional changes in behavior.

We should not forget that only a few years ago both the foundation and nonprofit worlds were racked with scandals. The investigative stories of major newspapers such as the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, the *San Jose Mercury News* and the *Los Angeles Times* uncovered malpractices at hundreds of foundations and nonprofit groups, ranging from inappropriate expenditures, self-dealing, conflicts of interest, excessive compensation, board ineptitude and the lack of public accountability. Faced with these facts, the Council on Foundations, Independent Sector and other trade associations could no longer offer the lame rationale that there were “only a few rotten apples in the barrel.”

While the nonprofit and foundation worlds appear to have improved since then, as evidenced by fewer headline-making corruption cases, it is difficult to attribute this development to any substantial changes in the way in which the sector conducts its operations. Today, unfortunately, nonprofit organizations and foundations are still beset by the same wide range of serious problems and challenges they faced several years ago. Local newspapers continue to report inappropriate and dishonest activities by nonprofits in communities throughout the country. Every month, the *Nonprofit Imperative*, a newsletter devoted to such abuses, lists dozens of nonprofits whose malpractices have been identified by the media. The improprieties and scandals have not changed, and the nonprofits involved continue to undermine public confidence in our charitable organizations.

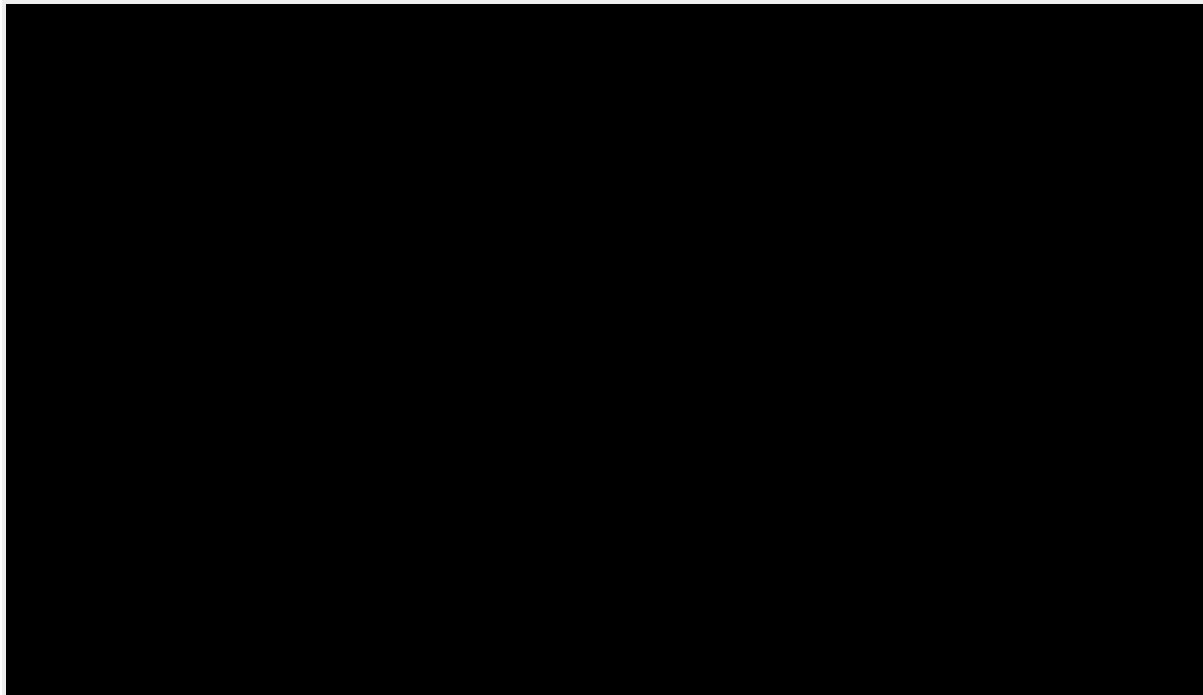
What has changed is that many daily newspapers have abandoned their investigative teams, cut their reportorial staff and narrowed their focus. They are no longer paying as much attention to the nonprofit world that they covered so conscientiously a few years ago. For the nonprofit community, the pressure for accountability is being relaxed. The heat, in short, has been turned off.

To understand the seriousness of the crisis, one only has to look at the numbers. Daily newspapers declined from 1,600 in 1990 to 1,422 in 2007. Recently, both the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* closed their doors, while the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Detroit News* and the *East Valley Tribune* in suburban Phoenix stopped

printing several days of the week. The *New Haven Register*, the *Hartford Courant* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*

are in deep financial trouble. Both the Chicago Tribune Company, publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* went into bankruptcy early in 2009. Publicly traded newspaper stocks lost 83 percent of their value in 2008.

According to the *State of the News Media, 2009*, published by the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, approximately 8,300 professional newsroom staff lost their jobs during 2007 and 2008. Daily newspapers have lost 17 percent of their newsroom staff since 2001. Many newspapers have either eliminated or drastically reduced their overseas bureaus. To make matters worse, the layoffs and buyouts of newsroom staff have stripped the dailies of many of their most capable reporters and editors. These reductions are serving as a disincentive to investigative journalism. Under pressure to cover a lot of news with fewer people, newspapers are not giving their reporters the time and resources for sustained investigative work.



By

Pablo Eisenberg

The decline in daily newspapers and the reduction in newsroom staff, especially investigative reporters, is a worrisome development. As Charles Lewis, founder of the Center for Public Integrity, a Washington-based center for investigative journalism, notes, “Never in our lifetime has there arguably been a greater public need for independent, high-quality journalism in the United States.” Not only will this turn of

events have potentially disastrous consequences for the accountability of the nonprofit sector, but it will reduce the quality of public information so essential to an informed citizenry...the heart of a vibrant democracy. The Project for Excellence in Journalism recently stated the problem succinctly: "The press is no longer gatekeeper over what the public knows."

It is not likely that we will see a resurgence of the old quality journalism. Declining circulation, reduced advertising revenue, an increase in online journalism and the demands of Wall Street have put growing pressure on news-papers to cut costs and retrench rather than invest for the future. Though still earning pre-tax profits between 12 and 15 percent* newspapers are finding that this is not adequate to satisfy investors or owners who view journalism simply as a business to make money, not as a means to inform the public and fulfill broad social purposes. The days of the old media visionaries and risk-takers like Adolph Ochs, Joseph Pulitzer and George Barry Bingham are gone.

One might have hoped that the growing number of blogs and centers for investigative journalism could have begun to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of newspapers from covering the nonprofit world. But that has not happened. The profusion of blogs is too diverse and unfocused, lacking any quality control, to provide a reasonable overview of nonprofit activity. And the major centers for e Center for Public Integrity and Pro Publica pay little attention to the nonprofit world.

The crisis in accountability in recent years has become all the more acute as the number of operating nonprofits has grown enormously and the sector has assumed even greater responsibility for society's well being. Public expectations are greater than ever. Public confidence in their performance and integrity is, of course, the key to nonprofits' ability to raise money. While most nonprofits are honest and transparent, the small number that are not can stain the reputation of the entire field. That is why there must be oversight mechanisms to ensure that both nonprofit organizations and philanthropic foundations operate ethically and effectively. The loss of daily newspapers and the investigative journalism they have traditionally provided will make this task much more difficult.

What can be done to address this dilemma? One answer would be to save daily newspapers by converting them into nonprofit entities. Nonprofit ownership of key papers could infuse journalism with the energy, integrity, quality and stability that it so desperately needs. And it could insure the continuing oversight of nonprofits and foundations.

The *New Hampshire Union Leader*, the Associated Press and the *Delaware State News* have operated as nonprofit enterprises, while the *St. Petersburg Times*, a successful for-profit newspaper, is owned by the nonprofit Poynter Institute which provides the paper with insurance against the harsh pressures of the market. With an infusion of new money, backed by endowment funds, a number of failing daily newspapers could be restored and their former capacity for investigative reporting rebuilt.

Such a task is a great opportunity for very wealthy Americans and our large foundations to have a really huge impact on our society and democracy.

It is surprising that, as yet, neither big individual donors nor major foundations have shown any interest in reviving American newspapers and quality journalism, even as billions of dollars are being poured into arts institutions, universities and health facilities. It's hard to believe that philanthropy could have neglected such an important priority, and one can hope that steps will soon be taken to preserve an independent and vibrant press—the backbone of American democracy.

There is still time to take action before more ailing news- papers fail. A strong *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Hartford Courant*, or *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, with ample endowments to withstand the shock of hard financial times, would not only be a boon to our society but might also motivate some newspaper owners to revert to old times when running a news- paper had a social purpose and was more than a business.

Just as our nonprofit community is endangered by the diminishing strength of an outside force like journalism, it is also imperiled by an invidious internal disorder—the crumbling of its intellectual foundation.

Few nonprofit practitioners have devoted much, if any, time to thinking and writing about what they do, what problems the sector faces and what must be done to meet the challenges of the next 25 to 50 years. Introspection and critical analysis are at a premium. Unfortunately, academic scholarship, while sometimes useful, often lacks the practical understanding of the ways in which nonprofits really operate. In short, the nonprofit field is intellectually moribund.

Though many practitioners in both operating nonprofits and foundations lack the confidence to write and publish, the major obstacle they face is simply the lack of access afforded them by the news media, trade associations and the few publications that cover non-profit organizations. Only a very few outlets are open to them. This needs to change if the sector is to achieve the vision and sense of purpose it so desperately requires.

One small step in this direction would be the creation of an independent magazine that could publish articles by practitioners eager to air their ideas and suggestions. Such a development might encourage nonprofit associations and organizations to establish other vehicles for public discussion and debate. It and other outlets could galvanize the type of thinking and analysis the sector lacks. They could unleash the brainpower lurking in the collective nonprofit mind.

To resuscitate the nation's daily newspapers and to kindle an intellectual bonfire in the nonprofit community would take a great deal of energy and effort. It also would take a lot of money. But there is plenty of money available, if only our very wealthy donors and foundations are willing to put it to good and vital purposes.

For those who owe their wealth to the opportunities afforded them by our open society and democracy, could there be a more important priority than preserving the vibrant press that is an essential element of a democratic society? And for foundations committed to serve the public interest, what better purpose could there be than strengthening our most cherished civic institutions? Unless major donors wake up to the desperate needs of these endangered institutions, we may well see the end of quality journalism and the decline of the nonprofit sector due to lack of accountability. This would be a grim future indeed; a collective failure that no one would want as a legacy for our nation.

** According to “The Newspaper Industry Today,” a paper by Mort Goldstrom presented at a March 2009 meeting of newspaper executives and available on the web site of the Newspaper Association of America (<http://www.naa.org/Resources/Articles/Advertising-Presentation-Newspaper-Industry-Today/Advertising-Presentation-Newspaper-Industry-Today.aspx>), “Many newspapers have dropped from a 30 percent margin to maybe a 10 to 15 percent margin.” However, other industry observers such as Brian Tierney, publisher of the Philadelphia Inquirer, note that local markets may be faring worse in terms of earnings. In September 2009 he told The Biz Blog of PoynterOnline that “...Philadelphia newspapers stand to make about \$10 million or \$11 million this year, a meager profit margin of roughly 3 percent.”*

INVITATION TO REPUBLISH OUR ARTICLES

Nonprofit Sector News is devoted to covering all U.S. nonprofits. From charities to foundations, labor unions or trade groups nationwide. With news, features, and investigative journalism NSN provides news, updates, and articles to the general public, and other journalists.

We encourage you to republish our articles/stories as long as you follow the guidelines provided below.

- Attribute the article to our site and credit us in a clear and visible way.
 - Do not make any extensive edits to the original article/story.
 - Check to ensure the article isn't copyrighted or already republished from somewhere else.
-

Credit Us:

Please attribute the story to Nonprofit Sector News in a clear and visible way. Consider the text below a good model.

- This story was originally published on NSN. For more articles and stories regarding nonprofits nationwide visit nonprofitsectornews.org.

Be sure to also credit the author in the byline, and consider adding “**Nonprofit Sector News**,” as in the example below.

- John Doe / Nonprofit Sector News

Link back to the original article. For print and digital publications, a link to our homepage is appropriate.

No Major Edits:

Minor changes regarding references to time and place are acceptable, so are small edits to better suit the editorial style of your own publication. Beyond that, the article/story should **run in it as it appears on Nonprofit Sector News**.

Double Check the Details:

While our original content is free to share, sometimes we share outside articles, stories, and content from others. Some of these items may have limited copyright. Below is a guide on a few situations and limitations.

If a story is already republished from somewhere else, **you'll need to get permission from the original author (and credit them as well)**. We will mark these stories at the very top with the message, "This story was originally published by..." We will also note this in the author byline (e.g., John Doe / Midwest Center for NonProfits).

Many of our republished stories come from organizations that have similar rules to those used by Nonprofit Sector News.

Confirm that the photos and images in a article/story are available before republishing.

You are free to use images created exclusively for Nonprofit Sector News. These will often be labeled "Nonprofit Sector News." You may also use any images clearly marked as falling under a Creative Commons license.

Photos and images from the Associated Press (AP) or noted as provided to Nonprofit Sector News **"courtesy of" another source are not available to be used for republication.**

When in doubt, ask us through our "Contact Us" page at the top or bottom of the page.