



Community Reach

of Montgomery County

NEWSLETTER December 2021

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WHAT HAPPENED AT REACH IN 2021?

ROCKVILLE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (REAP)

REAP director, Odeth, helped many residents apply for COVID rent relief available through Montgomery County. In addition, we have seen a steady increase in families needing financial

assistance in both eviction and foreclosure prevention. The overall effect is REAP has given about \$20,000 more in assistance during our 2021 year than was disbursed in FY20. REAP still receives many calls from families who are new to asking for help; the sharp increase in the cost of groceries and gas has blown families' monthly budgets. Requests for referrals for food assistance remains high.

Good news – a Healthcare Initiative Foundation (HIF) grant provided funds for REAP to help families outside the Greater Rockville area. Odeth was also one of three panelists for “A New Way Forward – Finding the Silver Lining in Our Pandemic Response.” This conversation with HIF and the Greater Washington Community Foundation examined how the pandemic is getting us to re-think how we help families build financial stability.

SENIOR REACH PROGRAM



Senior Reach welcomed back many clients to regular weekly homecare services as they received vaccinations and became comfortable with helpers in their homes. Many volunteer groups stepped up this fall to rake clients' yards.

All residents in an old Rockville apartment house for seniors are moving to a brand new building a few blocks away so Senior Reach Program Manager, Will, is helping to connect volunteers with clients who want some individual assistance with sorting items to take with them, or to pack their most precious belongings. One of those client/volunteer teams has connected on a very personal level. Mrs. W. and volunteer Laura have become friends as well as work partners as they organize for the move. "(Laura) is not just a willing volunteer, she is a LIFECHANGER," Mrs. W. told us. Even Mrs. W's faithful cat companion looks forward to Laura's visits.

HOUSING PROGRAM

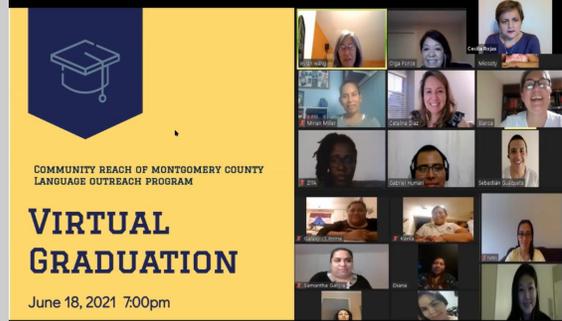
The residents of Rockland House and Jefferson House, began to feel more comfortable getting out after vaccines became available this spring. The two residents who moved in to Rockland House during the pandemic last year have settled in, and are much more comfortable having their own rooms and small number of roommates, especially while COVID concerns continue.

The most important news in Housing - Ann Hamlin joined Reach as our Housing Program Manager in July! She is developing relationships with the residents, reminding and helping them follow program rules, and taking an active part in encouraging each individual to work toward self-sufficiency with the goal of more financial security or eventually moving to a place of their own.

LANGUAGE OUTREACH PROGRAM (LOP)

All classes were held virtually in the winter, spring and summer. Although we offered one in-person class for the fall, all but one student chose the virtual options. The upcoming short winter term

that begins January 3rd, will remain virtual. Cecilia, LOP Director, hopes this spring we will be able to have a mix of in-person and virtual classes, especially to provide in-person homework help to the children, now that all children over 5 years old are eligible for vaccines. We have determined every plan for a return to something like normal requires a backup, distancing plan. All in-person plans are subject to change.



Adult students are still thriving online; children are receiving online one-on-one assistance as well. A benefit of virtual classes – many Intermediate and Advanced ESOL students assigned a presentation at the end of the semester used PowerPoint for their visuals. Learning/increasing computer skills along with more English fluency!

MANSFIELD KASEMAN HEALTH CLINIC (MKHC)



MKHC added vaccinations to our menu of services this year. Since April, anyone who qualifies for a vaccine (whether or not they are a Kaseman patient) can get one at MKHC. Most Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm, all three vaccine options, boosters, and vaccines for children 5-11 years old are available. COVID testing is also offered on Saturdays. Although many more patients have returned to in-person visits, telehealth appointments continue to be available. The Clinic will not offer testing or vaccines on Saturday, December 25th or Saturday, January 1st so staff and volunteers can spend holidays with their families and friends.

Our annual fall fundraiser was presented online at the end of October, as there were still too many questions about health and safety to hold an indoor, in-person affair. This year's event highlighted the trust we share with both our patients and our health partner organizations. Attendees participated and seemed to enjoy the evening, so much so we are considering keeping the Clinic fall event as a virtual evening.

COMMUNITY REACH OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

All of us have gone through the mental ups-and-downs of COVID. Some Reach staff work from the office almost every day, others are still working mostly from their homes. All staff are vaccinated. We continue to keep up-to-date on COVID safety protocols and the ever-changing situation, and sharing that information with all our constituents. Our gala was virtual for the second year, highlighting the increase in requests for our services since the pandemic ruptured job security, and took away breadwinners in families in our community.



In 2021, we welcomed some new board members who offer additional skills and connections to new people in our community. Although there are still fewer volunteer opportunities than before COVID, many came to serve our Holiday Giving clients for Thanksgiving and December holidays. We were able to increase substantially the number of families we served for Thanksgiving (our list

contained 100+ more families than previous years) and December (an increase of more than 40 families over 2020, when we had already increased our list by about 60 families. Families are truly thankful to receive help for these holiday celebrations. One recipient called right after getting home with toys for her children and a basket of holiday food to once again express her gratitude to Reach and those who donated.

We continue to see that more of our neighbors have become the most vulnerable. Even more look to Reach so they can remain in their homes, have quality healthcare, live safely as they age, learn English so they qualify for higher paying jobs, or have a safe place to live as they rebuild their independence. Thank you for helping us to provide these services, as well as hope to Montgomery County residents.

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

JOIN A REACH COMMITTEE - Development, Finance, Faith Advisory, and Governance currently all meet online as standing committees. Help determine the success of Reach through your service. Short term committees also need new members.

WRITER/EDITOR/INVESTIGATOR to help build out our procedures manual for a few departments and programs that are not yet completed. Interview staff to determine how tasks are accomplished and who is responsible for what. Help them explain their work in layman's terms and then put it in writing for them.

CLIENT INTAKE COORDINATORS for Rockville Emergency Assistance Program (REAP). Are you a compassionate, detail-oriented person with a desire to help those in need? Work a four-hour shift weekly during business hours (ideally from 9am-1pm or 1pm-5pm) to help us assist Rockville residents facing eviction; provide County residents with referrals for low-cost dental and other services; and much more. Training is provided.

INTERPRETERS at the Kaseman Health Clinic are needed for four-hour shifts once each week between the hours of 9am and 5pm. Openings currently on Monday afternoon, Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday. Help us ensure that our providers and patients can communicate clearly. Confidentiality is required.

DONATIONS REQUESTED:

For Kaseman Health Clinic & Housing Program:

C-Fold Paper Towels, Paper Towels, Hand Sanitizer, Antibacterial Hand Soap, Trash Bags, Disinfecting Wipes, Scouring Powder, Window Cleaner, Facial Tissue, Bleach, Disinfectant Spray, Dishwashing Liquid



For more information about these opportunities and others, please visit our [Volunteer Page](#) or contact [Andrea Kempner-Wink](#) at 301-637-0172.

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MKHC Board of Directors

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