



Community Reach  
of Montgomery County

**NEWSLETTER June 2021**

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**LANGUAGE OUTREACH PROGRAM GRADUATION**



Concerns about COVID meant the Language Outreach Program's graduation celebration on June 18th was once again virtual. The one hour event was a heartwarming celebration with inspiring speakers and touching photos of students with their certificates.

Halima Ahmed of MCAEL provided a humorous and appropriate start to the celebration. A favorite piece was Halima's second memory of learning an English phrase. She asked her older sister, "How should I respond to people who ask me what are you doing? in English. Her response was say nothing. So whenever someone asked me 'What are you doing,' it didn't matter what I was doing. My response was 'Nothing.'" Although her sister likely meant she should not respond at all, Halima's interpretation fit perfectly with what American children and teenagers usually say to adults who ask that question - "Nothing."

Following Halima, an LOP student, Yisely Liebowitz, spoke about why she studied English. One of the reasons: "It is to keep learning and improving our second language because if we can have a better communication with others, we can conquer our other goals. One goal moves us to the next one. In addition, it is our responsibility and contribution as part of the community in which we live. Improving ourselves, it is a way to help to improve our family, jobs, relationships, & our entire community."

Additional highlights of the evening were remarks and the presentation of a Maryland Legislative Citation by District 17 Senator Cheryl C. Kagan; a video message from Montgomery County Council Vice President Gabe Alborno; remarks from two teachers - Ben Shuman and David Strauss, volunteer Kathy Sklar, and childcare provider Sandra Granados. Jonathan Aguilar, who completed the LOP Citizenship course, offered a video of

what his successful application for U.S. Citizenship means to him.

An annual occurrence is the nomination of a student from each class who has shown the most improvement. One of these students is chosen to receive the Moore-Solorzano Family Award. This year's winner was Manuel Zalaya. For the second year, a donation was given in honor of Kathy Sklar to help Citizenship students cover the costs of application to become a U.S. Naturalized Citizen.

The most important part of the evening was the recognition and congratulatory remarks for the 125 students from Beginning A through Advanced ESOL who received certificates of completion.

LOP's summer classes begin Monday, July 5th. To find out more about classes being offered, LOP in general, or to support these classes through a financial donation, please see the [LOP webpage](#).

*Thank you for your continued support!*

Consider supporting LOP through a monetary donation, volunteer services or in-kind donation. [www.cmrocks.org/lop](http://www.cmrocks.org/lop)

Or Scan Here



City of Rockville  
Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy  
Millian Memorial United Methodist Church  
Rockville United Church

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## CONVERSATION WITH HEALTHCARE INITIATIVE FOUNDATION - SILVER LININGS

On June 22nd, Rockville Emergency Assistance Program Director Odeth Berlin was invited to join an important conversation about what future Financial Emergency Assistance should look like. The conversation, open to the public, was organized by the Healthcare Initiative Foundation (HIF). Panelists included HIF Executive Director Crystal Carr Townsend, Greater Washington Community Foundation (Montgomery County) Executive Director Anna Hargrave, and Dr. Steven Woolf of Virginia Commonwealth



University.

Dr. Woolf began the flow of ideas with a presentation of redlining in Montgomery County and how those policies from decades ago still has bearing on the wealth disparities between many White neighbors versus our Black and Brown community. Anna Hargrave and Crystal Townsend discussed how foundations and philanthropists are rethinking how to best support those in need to break the cycle of financial insecurity in families. Crystal asked panelists "How can we move this from Emergency Assistance...to building self sufficiency?" Odeth provided the perspective of an organization that is working directly with those in need, and witnesses both their actual needs and the roadblocks that make it hard to move to self sufficiency. She explained "A lot of compound issues get you to emergency assistance, so if we flip that to say, hey, instead of helping you while you are going down into these uncharted waters and help to lift you back, how about we stabilize you so you know at this point you are able to budget because you know these are your resources. We will be able to give direct assistance so you know those monies are coming in...because only you really know what your family needs."

HIF and the Community Foundation have seen programs across the country that offer funds to low income families so those families have the resources to make their own choices about the best route to their economic stability. Families decide whether funds are used to purchase more reliable transportation, pay for education, purchase a home, or simply help them look like people who are capable of working a job that pays more than minimum wage. Both organizations would like to provide funds so families make the choices about what works best for them.

Many funders feel giving money without requirements attached will encourage recipients to do something frivolous at the expense of keeping a roof over their heads. Odeth's response to these concerns is there are few people whose top concern is not about having a safe place to live. The amount of dollars provided through direct cash assistance programs is not enough for a family to choose between a fancy vacation and a place to live. "Folks want to be able to wake up, take a shower, go to their jobs, and take care of their family...If we are a community that uplifts folks...then we should have some of these direct services."

Direct cash assistance has been shown to work for the vast majority of enrolled families. Making it difficult for neighbors to get help until their situation becomes critical (i.e. an eviction notice is given), and telling families what expenses can be covered with assistance, makes those in need feel judged and found wanting, and does not give them the opportunity to help their families the way that works best for them individually. HIF asks us all to imagine what direct cash assistance programs could look like in the future and how this way of tackling issues of economic security could have a better outcome for both the current generation and the ones that follow.

See the full conversation [here](#). See Odeth's conversation with Jessica Fuchs of HIF that led up to the conversation [here](#). More about [Healthcare Initiative Foundation](#) and [Greater Washington Community Foundation](#). More information about the [work of Dr. Woolf](#).

## FISCAL YEAR END CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT KASEMAN HEALTH CLINIC



If you are reading this, you are probably passionate about helping the most vulnerable in our community gain access to quality healthcare. This is our passion as well!

These past fifteen months have pointed out how our neighbor's health not only affects their own quality of life – it can affect each of us as well as the whole community. COVID illustrated this fact as it spread indiscriminately. Although all of us were at risk, those with underlying medical conditions, especially conditions that were not well controlled, were at higher risk of a poor outcome from COVID. The longer COVID remained active in one's body, the more likely many others would be infected. The point – more healthy individuals does not only mean a better quality of life for those we help; it means a better quality of life for us all.

At the Kaseman Health Clinic, we provide Montgomery County residents with the highest quality health care in a dignified, respectful setting at an affordable, low cost. In addition to treating one-time health issues, we can diagnose, treat and educate patients with chronic illness. Delivering this care requires expensive medical equipment, laboratory tests, highly trained staff, and more. Costs are substantial. However, the return on investment is great – a more productive workforce, fewer hospital emergency room visits, lower health costs for all as fewer need treatment for poorly controlled chronic illness. When we are able to provide regular medical care, our whole community benefits. One small investment leads to big returns.

As we (hopefully) begin to see the end of this pandemic, we ask you to donate to the Kaseman Health Clinic so we may continue to offer compassionate, culturally appropriate, high quality care to hundreds of medically underserved Montgomery County residents. By keeping our community healthy, we potentially lessen the impact of future pandemics, and we increase the quality of life for all of us.

If you want to learn more about our clinic, please visit [www.CMRocks.org/mkhc](http://www.CMRocks.org/mkhc), or contact Executive Director Agnes Saenz at 301-917-6806, [ASaenz@CMRocks.org](mailto:ASaenz@CMRocks.org). You can donate through our website – please choose “use this donation for” and mark “Mansfield Kaseman Health Clinic.” Checks can be made payable to Mansfield Kaseman Health Clinic and mailed to Community Reach of Montgomery County, 1010 Grandin Avenue #A1, Rockville, MD 20851.

Thank you for considering the request to help Kaseman Health Clinic serve our community. Thank you for sharing our passion!

## VOLUNTEER STOR(IES)

Have you considered volunteering, but wondered what you would get out of it? Here are some Google Reviews about volunteering with our Kaseman Health Clinic:

**Matt 1 review** 2 weeks ago - I started worked at the clinic as a volunteer last year. The staff are so incredibly warm and friendly. They are so appreciative to have volunteers so they really just shower you with opportunities to do and see things. I was a covid tester, helped at the vaccination clinics, and am now going to start working as an interpreter, helping physicians and nurses communicate with patients. The experience is unparalleled, but I'm really just so happy to be here because the kindness of the staff is kind of contagious. I would definitely recommend volunteering here, and would be happy to be here as a patient too.



**Jordyn G 1 review** 2 weeks ago - I volunteer here ~2x/week, and the experience has been great. I help with administrative things like filing, as well as calling patients. It's really enjoyable, and I've learned a

ton about patient interactions and communication skills. The staff are incredibly friendly and helpful. I would definitely recommend this volunteer experience to anyone interested!

**Jorge Murillo 3 reviews** 4 months ago - I volunteered at the Kaseman Clinic for a few months as a Spanish interpreter and I can only speak to my experience there as a volunteer (not a patient). I enjoyed the experience very much and I got more out of it than I expected to. I was able to interpret for patient and clinician which was great for two reasons. First, I was able to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between them, so that their interaction could flow smoothly. Second, I was able to see what it's like for a clinician to see a patient, hear them out, and treat them with compassion. This was helpful since I want to be a physician in the future. I was also able to learn about how the entire clinic functions. The clinicians, nurses, and administrators were all very helpful and accommodating to me which I appreciated. My experience at Kaseman helped solidify my goal of being a physician and also made me interested in community health!

Learn more about volunteer opportunities with Reach [HERE](#).

## SUCCESS FOR ROCKVILLE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Ms. J raises three children alone (ages 10, 14 and 17). She lost her income when the business where she worked closed because of COVID. After several months, she was facing eviction and didn't know where to turn for help. She was afraid of losing her apartment and becoming homeless with her children when resources at the County Courthouse sent her to REAP. REAP was able to pay two months of the rent she owed, and intake coordinators

helped Ms. J connect with current county and local resources for the balance. REAP also connected the family with resources for food, a childcare subsidy, energy assistance, and with child support enforcement.

Since Ms. J no longer has to spend hours each day dealing with the immediate emergencies of keeping her family housed and fed, she has had the time and energy to apply for new work opportunities. She now has several employment interviews on her calendar.

Find out more about [REAP](#) here.

## A REQUEST FROM AN LOP TEACHER

How can I describe what Reach's Language Outreach Program (LOP) means to me? I have been teaching in the program for over seven years. Here are some brief Q and A reasons I do it:

- Does it give me **more satisfaction** than I had dreamed would happen after I retired nearly nine years ago?---Yes.
- Does it help immigrants **yearning to learn the language** of their adopted home?— Yes.
- Has it **adapted** to the requirements of the pandemic extremely well?—Yes.
- Am I thrilled to meet so many wonderful and **hardworking people** in my classes?— Yes
- Do my students **teach me things** that I need to know about myself and about their

struggles?—Yes.

- Is it a **great feeling** to help people who aspire to navigate their new American home better?—Yes.

Working with immigrants in this program is one of the finest activities I have ever participated in during my adult life. I can't imagine what I would do if I weren't beginning again with a new class this coming September 2021.

These are just some of the reasons I am concerned that the LOP budget contains a much reduced grant from the City of Rockville, leaving the program with a \$30,000 gap which must be filled.

My wife, Lynn, and I have decided to contribute \$500 to help reduce this gap. It may not do much, but if everyone reading this also contributed something to the program, maybe that gap can be reduced to zero.

Let's give it a try!

~ David Strauss, LOP Advanced ESOL Teacher

To make a donation to directly decrease the FY 2022 LOP revenue gap, click [HERE](#) or send a check to Community Reach of Montgomery County, 1010 Grandin Avenue #A1, Rockville, MD 20851. Please write "**LOP Revenue Deficit**" in memo.

## ***Mark Your Calendar!***

***Tuesday, July 5, 2021***

### ***LOP SUMMER CLASSES BEGIN***

Virtual

Schedule and Registration [Here](#)

***Thursdays 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.***

### ***COVID-19 VACCINES***

Kaseman Health Clinic

8 West Middle Lane, Rockville

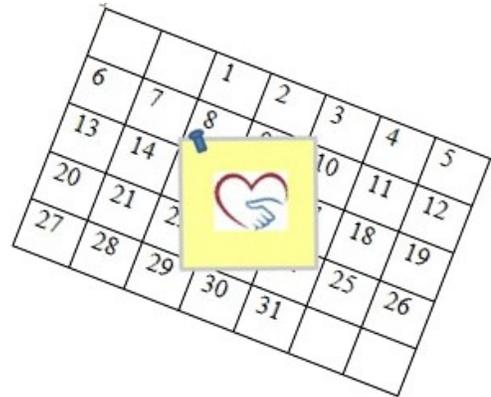
**301-917-6800 BUT NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED**

***Thursday Evening, October 28, 2021***

### ***KASEMAN HEALTH CLINIC FUNDRAISING EVENT***

Virtual

Stay Tuned for Details!



## **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. We will soon be assembling a committee to plan the MKHC fundraiser scheduled for late October 2021.

**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 staff document their work processes 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 9:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. -5:00 p.m.) 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. Volunteers may also be able to assist remotely by collecting information from callers and providing basic answers.

**INTERPRETERS** at the Kaseman Health Clinic are needed for four-hour shifts once each week between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through 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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**DONATE TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY**

STAY CONNECTED





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