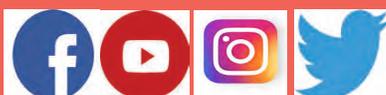




## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

- Mix & Mingle Coming Up October 1
- Back to School Celebration - Pandemic Style
- Who Helps? - Merrick Staff & Partners in the Spotlight



Search Facebook, YouTube &  
Instagram: MerrickCommunityServices  
Twitter: @MerrickStP

## Stepping In and Up - Masked!

Looking back on past newsletters and communications, I reflect that we have often talked about Merrick's work "putting a smile on people's faces." While we have continued to support feeding, and employing our East Side neighbors, we haven't seen many smiles. At least since March of this year, they've been obscured by masks as we've come to grips with managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Our work has been remarkably both the same - and extraordinary - in these past six months. We have reinvented almost everything about the way we do things, even as we provide the same kinds of support that have been needed for over a century.

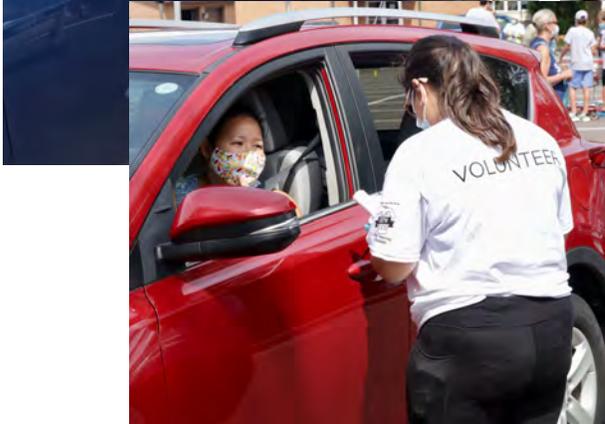
I invite you to read more here, join us for upcoming events, and continue to stay engaged. We need your participation to continue growing stronger, together.

With Sincere Gratitude,



Daniel A. Rodriguez, Executive Director

# 1000 Backpacks Distributed - Pandemic Style!



On August 28, 2020, Merrick Community Services hosted our annual Back to School Celebration, distributing **1000 backpacks** to East Side youth in preparation for a most challenging and unpredictable school year.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered, provided food and supplies. We couldn't have done it without you!

Special thanks to our contributing partners **Sunstream Business Services** and **Woodland Hills Church** for providing financial support this year as well!

## MERRICK BY THE NUMBERS

**17,000** Meals to Seniors in need on the East Side and in surrounding Ramsey and South Washington Counties

**217** Phone calls capably handled by MCS case management staff during the first week of the COVID stay-at-home order

**68,000** Pounds of food distributed each month by the Merrick Food Shelves

## THANKS TO BRANT!

Brant Ingalsbe has been a familiar face at Merrick, on and off, for many years (*masked in the picture above*). Brant was a staff member several years ago, and more recently, has worked as a consultant and interim staff in Merrick's Employment Services. As we welcome Dominic Amegashitsi as Merrick's new Employment Services Manager, we say thank you, again, to Brant for his good work and steady support of Merrick!

In May and June 2020, Rev. Patricia Lull and Ramsey County Commissioner Jim McDonough helped us host two community conversations, just ahead of our annual Merrick Momentum Breakfast -- all virtual gatherings in support of Merrick's work. With deep appreciation to Bishop Lull, Commissioner McDonough, and about hundred Merrick supporters and partners, we met the fundraising goal for the "Nourishing Our Neighbors" campaign, raising \$60,000 to close out Merrick's fiscal year at the end of June 2020.



## VIRTUAL GATHERINGS!

### THANKS TO OUR 2020 SPONSORS



## JOIN US ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1!

This year, we are offering a special opportunity to mix and mingle from the comfort of your own home! Join us virtually to support Merrick Community Services

**YOU'RE INVITED!**

**MERRICK  
MIX &  
MINGLE  
OCTOBER 1, 2020**

**DATE:** Thursday, October 1, 2020

**TIME:** 6:30-7:15 pm

**VENUE:** Your couch & computer

**VALET PARKING:** Don't worry about it!

This year, we'll be making a difference for the East Side of Saint Paul and surrounding communities in Ramsey and Washington Counties with a fabulous silent auction (including some fun and COVID-appropriate offerings), inspiration from Merrick program participants and staff, and just a little extra East Side love!

RESERVE YOUR SPACE AT THE EVENT NOW, BID, and GIVE AT:

[www.bidpal.net/Merrick2020](http://www.bidpal.net/Merrick2020)

# Who Helps?: Kaitlin Meye, Cross Lutheran, & YOU!



“I am all for breaking down systemic barriers to racism; and Merrick is a place I can do that work”

~ Kaitlin Meye

**Kaitlin Meye** has crossed the river from Wisconsin to find a new work home at Merrick. Kaitlin is serving as a Community Resource Navigator, working with Merrick's Family Services staff.

As a student at the University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse, Kaitlin focused on Cultural Anthropology and Sociology, and quickly recognized that she frequently had to 'check her privilege' as a student, and out in the world. "I left my college experience realizing that I have some agency as a person, with at least opportunity, if not an obligation, to do what I can to help others get their needs met -- and move forward as they want to in life." She has found a happy fit with Merrick, appreciating the opportunity to do important work in a community she cares about, and with people that she has quickly come to call her 'work family'. "I really like the environment that Merrick has created. The organization is inclusive and we get to work closely (COVID notwithstanding) with each other. I've found all my work colleagues to be really caring, accommodating and willing to help each other out when needed."

When she's not working on behalf of East Side families - helping with housing, health, and education supports, she might be found watching the latest Milwaukee Bucks or Green Bay Packers game. (Clients may be warned not to show up in Vikings clothing.) While she competed as an athlete in high school, Kaitlin will show her team spirit for her homestate professional teams and, of course, the Merrick staff team!

Working with the rest of the Family Services team, Kaitlin helps identify resources that Merrick families may need. She works directly with individuals and families; and, supports the rest of Merrick's case management team to have the information they need to share with program participants.

Merrick has supportive relationships with several area faith communities. Recently, we got to call out one in particular with

## **Cross Lutheran Church**

in a request for funding from the Domestic Hunger grant program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). This request gave us an opportunity to shine light on our long-standing relationship with Cross Lutheran volunteers and John Glenn Middle School that resulted in the "Backpack Jet Fuel" program about a decade ago - initially reaching about 40 John Glenn students. Through an inspired partnership, and with the support of key donors, that effort is now the Community Market at John Glenn, distributing about 5000 lbs of food to 150 families during a school year! Sylvia Graham (a 2018 Merrick volunteer awardee), shared that the winning combination is: many willing volunteers from both Cross Lutheran Church and John Glenn, a generous donor, and Merrick staff who advise and support the purchase of appropriate food items each month. Sylvia said the Community Market is a "no-lose situation: we are helping Merrick serve more people; John Glenn students are getting much-needed food; and, we get to fulfill our mission by serving community".



**YOU** help Merrick already as a supporter, a donor and a partner. The other important way you can help is to vote this November and remind others to do so too!

Merrick is working to ensure that East Side residents register and vote. If you can help us, reach us at [info@merrickcs.org](mailto:info@merrickcs.org) or 651-771-9339.