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Merrick in a Time of Change: Adapting and Evolving

Welcome to Merrick Community Services Fall 2021 Newsletter
Thank you for your support of Merrick in 2021.

MCS' work in COVID-19

March 2020 ushered in a new way of work and interaction with our surroundings for all of us! As we've adapted to these new and shifting realities, we've gathered new ways of approaching our work with participants. We've also observed the multilayered complexities that participants have carried in this time--compounded stressors that threaten food, housing, and employment security. Here are some specific ways we shifted:

- Converted our physical working spaces into safe areas that are properly distanced. Masks are required in the building. When meeting participants in our building, new ways of sharing information have been implemented (ie, projecting information on a wall rather than passing around paper).
- MCS staff began to work via online tools to interact with participants--Zoom, Microsoft Teams, text, etc.
- Food distribution was shifted to a curbside model: food was pre-packaged and distributed outdoors straight to people's vehicles. The gym was converted to a food warehouse.
- Became more deeply aware and conscious of the importance of working through a racial equity framework and a trauma informed lens in order to more holistically work with participants.
- Learned of our capacity to shift service provision when circumstances demand doing so. This past year confirmed the importance of our work!

Growing. Stronger. Together.

A new year is quickly approaching and as we enter a season of gratitude, Merrick Community Services would like to take the time to thank all of you for the generous ways in which you've supported our work over this past year. It's an understatement that the past year has been filled with challenge and, yet, we are reminded of what emerges in times of shift and change. In this time of change, Merrick continues to **adapt and evolve**.

Throughout this past year, new ways of working together have revealed themselves, new opportunities unfolded, and creative problem-solving showed up. All of these silver linings have assisted us in serving those who have sought services at Merrick. Some brief highlights from our work:

- In total, MCS served over 11,000 individuals
- Our Food Shelves distributed over 1.5 million pounds of food
- Family Services assisted over 600 households
- Employment/Career Services worked with over 230 individuals in developing job search and career skills
- Meals-on-Wheels delivered nearly 30,000 hot nutritious meals to seniors throughout the East Side of Saint Paul.

These numbers tell a story--our work is critical within this community. Throughout 113 years of service--years always filled with change--Merrick's presence has remained consistent, reputable, and steady.

Due to the uncertain realities of COVID that remain, MCS postponed our annual October fundraising event to Spring 2022. As we continue to navigate challenges and uncertainty and a myriad of multilayered and compounded needs, we ask you to consider giving a financial gift in lieu of our in-person fundraiser. Your gift goes directly to programs reaching East Side residents and is part of the beautiful momentum that is unveiled in times such as these.

Key opportunities to give:

- Our Fall Funding Campaign, **Merrick in a Time of Change: Adapting and Evolving**, will go through November 30, 2021. You can donate online at <https://www.givemn.org/organization/Merrick-Community-Services> or send a check to our address located on page 3.
- **SUPER DONATE DAY:** November 18 is Give to the Max Day. On this day, donations received will be matched by a generous gift from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation. We are grateful to the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation's contribution in meeting basic and core needs via MCS services and programs.
- Sponsor our Holiday Share event with donations on behalf of East Side youth. See "Upcoming at MCS" for more information.

As we look forward to what lies ahead, we know we are stronger because of each of you. Thank you for your generosity and care of the East Side Saint Paul Community.

In gratitude and partnership,



Daniel A. Rodriguez
Executive Director

MCS thanks our generous organizational sponsors for their contribution in 2021:



Volunteer Appreciation and Opportunities

This past May, MCS assembled care packages for our volunteers. Volunteers, always critical to our service provision, played an integral part this past year as MCS modified its service provision model and met participants with greater need. Care packages included a mason drinking glass, MCS pen, gift certificate to an East Side restaurant, bookmark, and candy. Several awards were given to acknowledge above-and-beyond service in 2020:

- 3M Legacy Award: The Vomela Companies
- Dick McCarthy Award: Doug Schultz, Holiday Lights
- Mary Virginia Merrick Award: Kathy Sibbel

Thank you to those organizations that donated gift certificates for care packages: Swede Hollow Cafe, Brunson's Pub, Tongue in Cheek, East Side Bar, Caydence Records and Coffee, and Magnolias Restaurant.

Interested in learning more about ways to volunteer with MCS? Here are some current opportunities:

- Deliver hot, nutritious meals to East Side seniors via our Meals-on-Wheels program.
- Provide support for community events such as Holiday Share or Backpack Giveaway.
- Mentor a job seeker; assist with interview practice and job search.
- One time projects in our Food Shelves or in Development and administration.

For more information contact Larissa Little: llittle@merrickcs.org or 651-287-2092.



Kathy Sibbel with Daniel A. Rodriguez, Executive Director



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FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

East Side Saint Paul: By The Numbers

Did you know:

1/3

- Nearly one third of East Side residents are 17 or under.

65%

- Over 65% of the East Side community identifies as BIPOC.

30%

- Just under 30% of East Side residents are foreign born and 45% speak a language other than English.

35K

- One third of residents have annual incomes of \$35,000 or less.

11%

- Eleven percent of people have no health insurance coverage.

12%

- Nearly 12% of the East Side community has a disability.

Source: Minnesota Compass



UPCOMING EVENTS

2021 Holiday Share: Join us for our annual Holiday Share Event benefiting youth on Saint Paul's East Side with holiday gift distribution. This event is on Saturday, December 18, 9AM-4PM. For more information, contact Diamond Hunter at dhunter@merrickcs.org or 651-219-5558.

MCS Annual Report will be distributed within the coming months and will share more about this past year and additional opportunities.