

FORT BEND RECOVERS

COVID-19 Weekly Meeting 05/19/20

Participants

1. Delena Pinkney – United Way
2. Caroline Egan – FB OEM
3. Nadar Afshari – Endeavors
4. Mike Youngblood – City of Richmond
5. Amy Harkins Ph.D. – Easter Seals of Greater Houston
6. Halley Goldstein – United Way
7. Stevie Ballow – Shady Oak Primary School
8. Jacqueline Washington - Endeavors
9. Vince Mannio – Agri Life Extension
10. Calvin Obey - Endeavors
11. Jagruti Sarkar - Sewa International
12. Lori Marcus – Texana Center
13. Pennie Degroot
14. Rashmi Singh – Sewa International
15. Palak Jalan – Access Health
16. Alvaro Hernandez - Endeavors
17. Dominique Reed - Endeavors
18. Mia White – Houston Tool Bank
19. Chelsea Lucas – Katy Responds
20. Qwentadria Ware – Endeavors
21. Deysi Crespo – Katy Christian Ministries
22. Penny Meek – The Henderson-Wessendorff Foundation
23. Anthony Pryor – City of Richmond
24. Timothy Stroud – Easter Seals of Greater Houston
25. Selamawit – Endeavors
26. Roy Hayley – Attack Poverty
27. Stacy Christ – Harvey Home Connect
28. Sue Levin – HGI Counseling
29. Elise Kaufman – Friends of North Richmond
30. Jimmy Fenwick – Sugar Land Methodist Church
31. Avalon Sykes – Attack Poverty
32. Diana Turner – Access Health
33. Annie Derry – Endeavors
34. Andrew Van Chau – Brazos River Rotary
35. Sarah White – Second Mile
36. Anna Gonzales – Fort Bend Health and Human Services
37. Naeem Raja – ICNA Relief

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Introduction

Caroline Egan – Fort Bend Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Good morning and thank you all for joining us today. Unfortunately, Mary will not be able to join today. She had a conflict, but that is not a problem, we will have a great call. I am going to give everyone a couple minutes more to join and we will start the call with updates.

Workgroup Updates

Lori Marcus – Texana Center

The Behavioral and Spiritual Workgroup will not meet this Thursday; however, we will meet the following Thursday, May 28th. If you would like to join our call please send me an email at Lori.marcus@texanacenter.com and I will send you the Zoom information.

If you have favorite sites that you would like to share with us to put on the Padlet, send me an email and we will be happy to look it over and put it in place.

Amy Harkins – Easter Seals of Greater Houston

The Behavioral and Spiritual Workgroup has been brainstorming what types of things we want to publish to the public. The Padlet is the place that we will put useful articles, websites, and activities that we think apply to the community. We are beginning to launch it. We would love to have your input on what is helpful and useful. In addition, we are putting out a call for the collaborative to do 2 to 5 minute videos that deliver some good news. You would highlight something your agency is doing or a trick or tip that could be helpful for the community. We challenge everyone of you in the group to do this. We would like folks to reference 211 at the end of each video to bring awareness to the services. If you are interested in submitting a video, there is a form that will be pushed out to you all by Delena.

Stevie Ballow – Shady Oak Primary School (Richmond)

I am part of the Creativity Group that falls under the Behavioral and Spiritual Health Workgroup. One of things that we are doing that started at the school but has since expanded, is called Infinite Ribbon. It is an art project that ties us together in a symbolic and meaningful way. If you can challenge yourself to think about things that are in your world that can be a ribbon (hose, thread, snake, etc.)- you can thank someone, highlight a hobby or get us to think about our connection to others in a creative and beautiful way. The barrier to entry is simple - all you need is a camera and be able to upload photos to social media. There is an Instagram and Facebook page dedicated to this project. Anyone who wants to join in on this project can submit a photo with the information that they want to accompany it to Infinite RibbonProject info: @infiniteribbonCOVID19 on IG and FB. DM pictures and text "blurbs" to me via IG and FB account or you can email to me (Stevie) at theartandmakerspace@gmail.com. If you post on your account, tag @infiniteribbonCOVID19 and use #infiniteribbonCOVID19

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Elise Kauffman – Friends of North Richmond

The Basic Needs Workgroup had a quick call yesterday, there is not much new to report. Things are continuing to move forward, there were no changes to distribution sites or what people are doing.

The Feeding the Homeless initiative is moving forward. The flyer for that is done and I will send it out shortly. As we prepare for this event on May 30th, we want to ensure that we are only inviting the homeless. It is not a hot meal for everyone. The reality is that the homeless do not have places to prepare meals, so we want to make sure we are only serving them because we do not have the capacity to serve everyone in Fort Bend. We will probably serve about 75-100. We are partnering with River Front Church to set up chairs to abide by the social distancing rules.

The resource sheet will be sent out, there was one correction made to it. I will get it out soon.

COVID-19 Agency Updates

Caroline Egan – Fort Bend Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

As you can see from our Response Hub, we are reporting 7,581 cases. Across Texas, staff are getting tired, so they are not reporting cases over the weekend, but we know there is more. We will likely see our case count rise through the week.

On the hub, near the number of confirmed cases you will see three tabs underneath that says “current history” and “daily case count”. If you click on the daily case count tab it will bring up a chart that shows the new reported cases for the day. A button in the right hand corner will allow you to expand this chart so that it is more easily read.

We have been working hard to make the sites more mobile friendly. There is a place on the site where you can switch to a mobile version.

Regarding testing, you all have been great with pushing the message out. There has been an increase in the amount of testing we are doing, and we have a lot of capacity to continue. Please continue to help us to push that messaging out to the community.

The County has been asked why we are not using the Rapid Test if it turns out a result quicker. Dr. Mentor with our local health department has been adamant about only using testing methods that are FDA approved. This test was given an FDA Emergency Use Authorization, which means you can use it for emergencies. Although, there is not a lot of science behind it. A recent study published about rapid test found that 48% of the time it indicated a negative when the person was positive. Fort Bend County will not use this test.

Testing sites will be open through the end of June 1st or 2nd as sites still needs to be confirmed.

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CDC is changing the way that it defines positive tests. If a family member test positive for COVID, they will automatically assume that the rest of the family who resides in the home with that person is positive, and they are calling it “probable positive”. We are still waiting for more guidance on this change.

Rashmi Singh – Sewa International

We partnered with Houston Responds to help the Masks For All campaign. Six hundred (600) homemade masks were distributed over the weekend at our food drive that served 225 families. We gave 2 masks per family along with food. Our next drive will be off West Belfort Road on May 23rd.

PPE and hand sanitizer is still available through request.

The information will be shared by Delena through an email.

Sue Levin – HGI Counseling

This summer we hoped to launch the White Tail Wellness Program funded by the Henderson Wessendorff Foundation that offers wellness and mind body skills to community and civic organizations, work groups and nonprofits. It will be similar to the disaster camp set up.

We hope to offer in person events in the future. Meanwhile, we have pivoted to offer support, stress management, wellness activities online for groups. If you are interested in having classes for your staff, please reach out to us. Amy Harkins from Easter Seals is working with me.

Caroline Egan – FB Office of HS&EM

It would be great if everyone could start compiling statistics related to COVID-19 and how your organization has been helping. For example, the number of distributions, wellness sessions, volunteers, or clients that you have seen. Any type of statistics that can be posted to Slack so people can see the work that has been done would be great. It sends a positive message to people of authority in the county. If they do not see the data, they may assume that there is not a need in the community. The data can tell a very powerful story about the work that is being done in the community by you all. I would love to be able to share that message.

The County has received \$134 million dollars in CARES act funding. There is a lot of talk about how to allocate this money. In fact, there is a special commissioner court in session today at 1 pm to talk about a potential budget and how this will be allocated. The reason I bring this up is because I know that the County wants funding as well as the jurisdictions. There has also been some talk surrounding allocating money for utility assistance and rent/mortgage assistance. We do not know how the money will be allocated yet. If you would like to watch the proceedings, you can do that on the Fort Bend County site.

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Stacey Christ – Harvey Home Connect

Harvey Home Connect is still accepting Hurricane Harvey home repair applications.

Hurricane Preparedness

Caroline Egan – FB Office of HS&EM

I was on a call last week that had a discussion surrounding how do we begin preparing for the next storm cycle. Some of the ideas/things that were talked about were:

Clean Up/Muck and Gut - It would be good to know what type of PPE you feel would be needed if you were out mucking and gutting after a disaster or if you were meeting one-on-one with a client. The thought is we may need to start ordering these things ahead of time. There was also talk about making sure there is proper sanitation available to folks like hand washing stations and port-a-potties. What are other things that you may need? This will help us greatly prepare for hurricane season.

Volunteer Management - How do we want to solicit volunteers moving forward knowing we may not have a physical place like volunteer reception centers for volunteers to come to?

Donations Management – How do we collect things in a safe manner. What protocols do we need to put in place? What things do we need to start asking for now?

Roy Hayley – Attack Poverty

I had a discussion on the VOAD call last week about the volunteer aspect. One of the main questions was how we do home repair with volunteers. I am going to work with Volunteer Houston and other agencies that have the same desire to figure out the best way to move forward. We are going to put together a volunteer best practice. I will try my best to share that information as it comes in.

Sue Levin – HGI Counseling

We are in a new era dealing with COVID, what we now know is very useful in terms of communications is these online Zoom meetings, Facebook Live and alternative ways of communicating with people. We have new opportunities to get information out to people using social media and technology, so they do not have to go somewhere to sign up for things. We have found new ways to do that.

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Caroline Egan – FB HS&EM

Playing devil's advocate, what will happen if we have a storm that knocks out the internet or any form of communications. I think we would also need to identify meeting places, granted they may need to be outside. Who has a parking lot where we could set up training that will allow people to implement social distancing? I totally agree that we need to utilize technology and social media moving forward.

Stevie Ballow – Shady Oak Elementary School

One thing that I have done is put out recording of my lessons, flipping my classroom. I wonder if there is a space to provide videos of mucking and gutting that are branded Fort Bend Recovers approved that will allow people to get trained even if they cannot make an in-person training. We could post the videos online to be utilized by groups or individuals who would like to assist and need a little training beforehand.

Vince Mannino – Texas Agrilife Extension

What Stevie just talked about is exactly what Extension is trying to do. We have always done face to face but now with the pandemic, every one of my agents are dwelling at every level with online media resources and technology and presenting programs for the public. We are also taping and allowing those segments to be sent out and downloaded to allow people to save and watch at a different time. Everything is recorded or pre-taped. Moving forward, most all our educational programs will be conducted in two forms: face-to-face and Zoom or Teams. We have been talking about doing this for 15 years now and this pandemic has finally forced us to do it. I guess that is the good thing about this situation.

-Next Meeting Tuesday, May 26, 2020