Community Resilience Program Highlights

Culturally Responsive Long-term Disaster

The Department of Emergency Management (DEM) in collaboration with the Office of Equity (OOE), the Human Services Department (HSD), Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) and the COVID-19 Urgent Response and Aid (CURA), and Feathervine are working to improve culturally responsive long-term disaster recovery. This project includes workshops with underserved community members on disaster preparedness and asset mapping of community-based organizations (CBO) and faith-based organizations (FBO). These trainings range from disaster preparedness response, understanding the emotional impact of disasters, to emergency preparedness for children. Lessons from previous disasters, bilingual trainings and workshops are available including outreach efforts. The development of the Universal Disaster Intake Process (UDIP) has allowed real-time reports for quick needs fulfillment and data sharing across agencies. It has strengthened the relationships between community organizations and county departments, identified community needs, and strategized how best to help residents recover from disasters. In addition, Disaster Emergency Financial Assistance contracts are in place with two CBOs to administer cash aid to underserved residents during a disaster.

For more information contact Chelsea Woodworth at Chelsea.Woodworth@sonoma-county.org.

The Living Room

The Living Room utilized ARPA funding to support their food services program which has reached nearly 2,000 unduplicated individuals and children in a single year. Beyond service delivery, through this expansion, the program has had the capacity to invest time and resources into improving their operations. Their capacity boomed and now the organization acts as an access point for food insecure individuals and families. They developed pantry bags to be nutritionally dense and accessible for those living in places without kitchens (i.e., unhoused locations, shelters, cars, etc.). As the program expands, former clients are now using their lived experiences as employees. In addition, The Living Room stepped up to hire Social Advocates for Youth staff upon its closing to mitigate the resulting gaps in services for youth. The organization continues to adapt as it increases its capacity to serve transitional age youth who are food insecure, housing insecure, and in need of mental health services. With that, The Living Room has become a safe, central place for clients and their 74 community partners to coordinate care, services, and resources for the community.

For more information contact Cristina Larsen at clarsen@thelivingroomsc.org.

Sonoma County Black Forum Financial Assistance and Black Therapy Fund

The Sonoma County Black Forum implemented a Financial Assistance program and Black Therapy Fund program (SCBTF). The Financial Assistance program offers support to address essential basic needs of many furloughed, unemployed, and underemployed Sonoma County residents. SCBTF is a no-cost, mental health program providing free services to up to 234 Sonoma County residents from culturally competent mental health therapy providers. The program is responsive to the needs of Black and African American residents, who have the

lowest human development index (HDI) scores in Sonoma County, living ten years less than any other ethnic or racial group. Although designed to focus on the needs of Black and African American households, the Black Therapy Fund welcomes a diverse range of applicants and lived experiences, having provided over 700 therapy sessions to Sonoma County residents and building trust and confidence within a community that has consistently experienced underservice and systemic racism. This program has provided a model for best practice as neighboring counties, like Marin County, are exploring ways to adopt and expand this framework.

For more information contact sonomacountyblackforum@gmail.com.

Whole Family Health Project

The Whole Family Health Project was developed to address the needs of low-income communities of the Russian River area with partnerships across Botanical Bus, Raizes Collective, West County Health Center, and Guerneville School District. The initiative recognizes the intersections of health, wealth, and education in ensuring youth and families thrive. It provided over 450 youth therapy sessions on a school campus and assisted more than 65 individuals with healthcare and basic needs through community health worker services. In response to the community's needs, bilingual Mind Body+ Workshops were implemented, engaging more than 1,300 participants. Four health and cultural engagement fairs were facilitated, attracting 1,500 attendees. One participant reflected: *"This program changed everything for me. I was struggling to find help, but through the Mind Body+ workshops and community health worker support, I found the care my family needed. I felt deeply connected to my community and heard for the first time in a while."* The program continues to assess and respond to the community, and new Spanish-speaking promotoras were onboarded to enhance outreach. Special programs like Farmworker Health Clinics and Cafecitos supported community healing and wellness. This multi-agency initiative has become a model for addressing the needs of a whole person, starting with youth and their families.

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Early Care & Education Recovery & Expansion (ECERE) Program

Community Action Network of Sonoma County has partnered with Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County (4Cs) to implement the Early Care & Education Recovery & Expansion (ECERE) Program. This program is a sustainable business model in post COVID-19 recovery by empowering residents to train, get licensed, and pursue entrepreneurship. The program is designed to 1) train new Head Start/Early Head Start teachers through an apprenticeship program and train individuals to become Licensed Family Child Care Home providers; 2) provide grants for childcare facilities to create healthier environments for children; and 3) increase capacity to support diverse Sonoma County childcare workforce and to increase parent access to quality childcare programming through targeted recruitment and retention efforts. In addition to licensure, the training program has provided participants with an opportunity to build community and skills to support one another in their entrepreneurial endeavors. A grassroots effort by participants has led to a Spanish speaking support group beyond the classes. The program offers one-on-one coaching and technical assistance for

participants beyond course completion to support them in their career or business ventures. In addition, childcare facility funding was granted to those who serve infants, toddlers, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) owned businesses, or located in a qualified census tract location identified to be underserved. This has provided stability and room for growth in many programs across Sonoma County. In addition, the program has seen a tremendous increase in the number of individuals becoming trained and licensed Family Child Care Home providers and empowered to thrive as small business owners in Sonoma County.

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