

Due to the pandemic, all services of Madisonville Education and Assistance Center (MEAC), a Madisonville, OH based non-profit, have been impacted and modified in some way. This has radically changed MEAC's ability to achieve its mission of offering access to education, services and engagement that enable all neighbors to thrive, reach self-sufficiency, and independence. Currently, they do not utilize any outside volunteers and the offices and public spaces are closed. All services have been limited to phone, email, and appointments only. Our community liaison has been working remotely on reduced hours since March. Literacy camp was virtual, with supplies being handed out with the food boxes and online guidance and activities provided remotely by their literacy coordinator. The back-to-school event was conducted via drive-thru and they distributed about 150 full backpacks.

The COVID pandemic created a state of economic stagnation that was detrimental to the gentrification going on in Madisonville. Although we do not have much data, the MedPace building that was usually the lively center of the neighborhood has been empty since the pandemic started. Without the influx of commuters daily, the population of Madisonville for the past few weeks has been primarily its historic residents.

Unfortunately, MEAC's food pantry has been closed to shoppers since March. Starting on July 7th until present, MEAC offers a drive-thru food service on the first and third Tuesday and Thursday of each month. Members of the community can drive to MEAC and the staff will load a box of food into the trunk of their car in order to maintain social distancing. Community members must sign up in advance for this food service to ensure that each family can have adequate meals. This drive-thru system will continue until the food pantry can safely open, but MEAC anticipates this will likely impact food distribution through the fall and winter. They plan to distribute Thanksgiving dinner boxes with increased safety measures. The annual Holiday Shop will also be replaced by a dinner/family gift box. The Thanksgiving dinner boxes and the Holiday Shop gift boxes will both be distributed via drive-thru.

MEAC has not been able to accept any donated items from individuals. Therefore, people have had to go without household items they would normally have when the pantry was open. The food pantry prior to COVID allowed people living in

Madisonville to make their own choices as to which food items would best fit their family's needs. Although MEAC is doing an excellent job at providing these families with food, it is at the cost of personal preference. COVID affected the MEAC drastically because they were forced to be extra cautious to prevent the neighbors from being exposed. Despite the pantry being closed, the need for food supplies is still present in the community so the staff needs to explore new and innovative ways to support the residents of Madisonville. The way that this drastic pandemic situation is pushing MEAC to explore new options is going to determine the future of Madisonville. We hope that this gives the historical residents of the community a chance to strengthen their foothold on the area's culture and create a great place for them and their future children to live happily and healthily.

In these challenging and unique times, MEAC has not been able to engage with the community members in the traditional fashion. In fact, many of MEAC's most popular and engaging programs such as Monday night dinners, literacy nights, and the food pantry have had to be closed indefinitely. This has led to an unfortunate decline in community member engagement and support. MEAC has done all it can to provide support in a socially distant manner, however, many community members lack access to technology that makes remote assistance most effective. Finally, like countless people around the world, MEAC and their community members have lost the vibrant sense of community and social support that comes with communal gatherings. This lack of social support is undoubtedly having a negative impact on the health and well being of the Madisonville community in addition to disproportionately impacting those who lack resources.

MEAC services are utilized by community members from low-income backgrounds and many of them are elderly. As such, they are less likely to have the technology required to digitally communicate with MEAC, especially with libraries significantly hampered or closed due to the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, MEAC events were advertised primarily through word-of-mouth. Since social distancing has reduced these normal resident interactions, MEAC has been contacting neighbors through phone calls and emails. The drive-thru events they have been able to organize have been well-attended, showing that many neighbors are still being reached.

Additionally, MEAC has transitioned its summer literacy camp to be virtual this year, with activities provided remotely by their literacy coordinator. MEAC recognizes that it can be difficult for some neighbors to participate virtually, and some families relied upon the cost-free camp to provide childcare and meals for the children during the summer. Despite these real challenges, MEAC has moved their operations online as much as possible in order to maintain the health and safety of the community.

The COVID pandemic has affected staffing and volunteering at MEAC in several ways. The operations manager, Tracey McKinney, has been working remotely on reduced hours since March. There is a limited number of full-time staff working on-site each day. In addition, MEAC offices and event spaces have been closed to the public since the pandemic started. They have adapted many of their services to be delivered through email or phone appointment only. Before the pandemic, MEAC regularly employed volunteers from the community and local church to organize community events and deliver services. Since the pandemic, the organization has not been able to use any outside volunteers in order to protect the health and safety of volunteers and the community members that utilize services. This has resulted in a dramatic impact on the staffing and availability of normal programs. MEAC is hoping the long interruption caused by COVID19 will not negatively impact the momentum of community enriching events in the long term future.

Due to the COVID19 global pandemic, the MEAC staff has been working remotely and on reduced hours since March. At the moment the best way to interact with our community partner would be virtual conference calls via platforms such as Zoom/Webex/Teams. Our LC had a couple of virtual calls with MEAC before COVID19, which were both informative and efficient. Although not ideal, this would at least maintain a connection with our community partner. Furthermore, most of MEAC's events have been cancelled or postponed, but a few have been completed remotely. For instance, this year's literacy camp had a mix of in-person and virtual components. Supplies and food boxes were distributed on-site, while online guidance and activities were provided remotely by MEAC's Literacy coordinator. In upcoming months, students may be able to volunteer for these remote events, or help with supply distribution while obeying social distancing and proper PPE.

We are also interested in assisting MEAC in facilitating COVID testing. Regarding the state of COVID testing, tests can be thought of as being split into “espresso” vs “instant coffee” models. The current tests available represent the “espresso” model - expensive (between \$30-\$150 per sample) and require expensive equipment to process. While these tests can provide greater sensitivity and specificity, cheaper tests that are roughly equivalent in performance are coming online. These tests represent the “instant coffee” model - they are cheap and able to be conducted at home without extensive training. E25Bio and a separate partnership out of MIT/3M are creating saliva-based paper assays that can be run at home for \$1 - \$5 per test. With support from government agencies and local health departments, we believe that it is possible to get these tests into the hands of MEAC’s neighbors at little to no cost.

In terms of education regarding a COVID vaccine, all education regarding the benefits of any future COVID vaccine will need to be done virtually via pamphlets or other instructional material. These pamphlets would be constructed by our LC team. MEAC has been distributing emergency food boxes every two weeks via drive-thru; information regarding the benefits of vaccination can be printed and included in the food boxes for distribution to the community. MEAC has had success with similar virtual education programs already, in that their yearly literacy camp supplies were distributed with the food boxes. Any questions community members might have subsequent to pamphlet distribution can be addressed via phone through our contact at MEAC.

As our communities across the world continue to be impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic, it is of utmost importance that each community does their part in helping to flatten the curve. These actions will not only be for the good of the community, but the good of our world as we all hope to get back to a new normal way of living. A main action that must be taken is to wear a mask whenever you are outside of your house or within 6 feet of another individual whom you do not reside with. The use of masks are vital as it can significantly impact viral load, however if all do not recognize this importance and wear a mask, then the impact of the mask in terms of reducing potential spread is reduced. Along with wearing a mask, following other CDC recommendations (washing hands, etc.) is vital in helping this community stay healthy. A pamphlet or a document expressing the importance of this information would work as

a great supplement to a short summary video regarding the impacts of covid and proper precautions to take. MEAC could also hold a virtual seminar that could be focused around Covid education and mask wearing. Furthermore, when community members come to get groceries, MEAC could hand out masks, hand sanitizer, and pamphlets regarding other proper covid precautions to take. These hopefully will increase the impact the masks have in the community, helping to reduce the spread of Covid in Madisonville and allow MEAC to bring back more of their normal functions.