From the Frontlines: A 2020 Reflection

By Ellen Izuka

Someone asked me recently what I will remember most about 2020. Looking back, I will never forget the uncertainty and fear when a new contagion known as COVID-19 spread throughout the world, spiking again and again as nations failed to control new outbreaks. It was a year of isolation and resignation as we sheltered in place, cancelling travel plans, gatherings and celebrations. While coping with the statewide shutdown, we also witnessed record-breaking wildfires racing across California and nationwide riots and protests sparked by social injustice and systemic racism. George Floyd will be a name remembered along with COVID-19 when I think about the calamitous events of 2020.

I was fortunate in 2020. While I missed seeing my friends and family, I avoided the dreaded COVID virus and no one close to me was severely impacted by illness or financial turmoil. The minor issue I experienced of not always being able to find certain items at the supermarket, couldn’t compare to what our clients went through on a daily basis, sitting for hours in a long line of cars, winding for miles through the city of East Palo Alto, simply for a box of groceries to feed their families. I was blessed to have job security and not be in an environment where I felt threatened by potential acts of violence due to my ethnicity. But I met many people who did lose their jobs, whose entire family caught the Covid virus, and some who even lost loved ones to the virus. Events of 2020 made me realize that life is fickle, and we should never take things for granted.

During the pandemic, people across the globe reacted to help those in need. This could not be truer in our own community. Last year, I witnessed youngsters in our community baking pies and holding food drives, collecting hundreds of books and toys for homebound children, creating safety kits, and even starting new non-profits and websites to benefit the less fortunate. I saw crafters produce hundreds of masks and face shields for front-line and essential workers, a neighbor compiling a cookbook, and small businesses who donated their services to patrons in return for donations to charities. Individuals, businesses, clubs, service groups, congregations, and foundations pitched in to ensure the hungry had enough food on their tables and a bed to sleep on. Our collective humanity and the outpouring of concern and goodwill allowed us to survive and carry forward. The memories of these positive acts and their powerful impacts are what should continue to drive us to do better in 2021 and beyond.

I am looking forward to the end of the pandemic and to the full reopening of our community. I hope those who were adversely affected are recovering and regaining their footing. We cannot replace the lives cut short by illness, nor those who we tragically lost from acts stemming from social injustice and racism. But we should remember these tragic events of 2020 to encourage broader transparency, equal opportunity, social justice, and just plain kindness. It is the kindness factor that makes our EHP family special and our community a better place for everyone. I hope the rest of the year goes smoothly for all, and I wish everyone good health and good fortune.
Schools are preparing to reopen this Fall and our children need your help to reacclimate to In-class Learning. Please help support our families with gift cards so they can shop with their children for Back-to-School gear.

*The most requested gift cards are: Amazon, Walmart, Target and Costco.*

If you would like to donate items, Backpacks, school supplies and hygiene products would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for giving our students a head-start to a successful school year!

Donations can be dropped off at 2411 Pulgas Avenue, East Palo Alto, M-F, 9:30 am—4:30 pm

For more information, please call LaKesha at 650-323-7781 x1200 or email: LaKesha@ehpcares.org

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Food for Thought ...

From January 2019-December 2019, we served 5,230 households, 15,690 individuals and 31,380 food boxes

From January 2020-December 2020, we served 8,954 households, 26,862 individuals and 40,293 food boxes

We registered 3,425 new families
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
Statement of Support and Expenses
Year Ending June 30, 2020

Cash Support
Individual Donations 2,658,818
Corporations 282,735
Congregations 94,913
Community Groups 23,995
Foundation Grants 704,800
Special Events 1,971
Other Revenues 4,878

Subtotal Cash Support & Revenue 3,772,110

In-Kind Support 4,109,962

Total Support & Revenue 7,882,072

Expenses
Administrative 263,678
Fundraising 177,197
Program 5,290,267

Total Expenses 5,731,142

Net Assets
Change in net assets 2,150,930
Net assets at July 2019 3,118,903

Net assets at end of June 2020 5,269,833

EHP strives to maintain at least 12 months of operating expenses to allow flexibility in responding to changing economic circumstances.
DEVELOPMENT

Fundraising is an important part of any non-profit organization, especially one like EHP, that fights poverty in the local community. At EHP, these two factors have made a big difference in our development efforts throughout 45 years of serving families-in-need:

- First, we’ve constructed a diverse mix of funding sources to ensure sustainability even in tough times.
- Second, we don’t look at development as simply fundraising, but rather as an opportunity for others to get involved in a vital and successful social service organization.

Our funding comes from four primary sources. This creates a macro-level of diversity in funding that is sustainable. Additionally, each of our four primary sources is structured with additional micro-levels of diversity to further strengthen our funding sustainability:

- Congregation, community group and corporate income (11% of total income in 2019-2020)
- Individual income (70% in 2019-2020)
- Foundation income (18% in 2019-2020)
- Fundraising income (<1% in 2019-2020)
- Other income (1% in 2019-2020)

We receive no federal, state, or local government funding. This diverse funding mix is part of the reason we’ve been successful for 45 years, regardless of the general economic environment.

Donor Bill of Rights

To assure that philanthropy merits the respect and trust of the general public, and that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in the not-for-profit organizations and causes they are asked to support, we declare that all donors have these rights:

1. To be informed of the organization’s mission, of the way the organization intends to use donated resources, and of its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes.
2. To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization’s governing board, and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities.
3. To have access to the organization’s most recent financial statement.
4. To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.
5. To receive appropriate acknowledgment and recognition.
6. To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by law.
7. To expect that all relationships with individuals representing organizations of interest to the donor will be professional in nature.
8. To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of the organization, or hired solicitors.
9. To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that an organization may intend to share. (Note: The Society of St. Andrew does not share its mailing list.)
10. To feel free to ask questions when making a donation, and to receive prompt, truthful, and forthright answers.

This Donor Bill of Rights was adapted from the ten-point Donor Bill of Rights created in 1993 by the Association of Fundraising Professionals in conjunction with other fundraising and nonprofit groups.

Read about Ecumenical Hunger Program on Charity Navigator, America’s largest and most-utilized independent evaluator of charities, and add us to your charities!

EHP is a Platinum-level GuideStar Exchange participant, demonstrating its commitment to transparency. Write a review about us!

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