

Yarmouth Community Task Force Report

April 29, 2020

Call Center: Margaret and Tom Downing

During the last two weeks the Call Center has successfully transitioned from a library-based operation to a home enterprise. There have been no significant problems. Thank you to Heidi Grimm and her staff for accommodating the project.

Former library-based volunteers were trained in a Zoom session and have been recovering and responding to calls from home.

Last week, nine (9) volunteers with no call center experience were also trained and have tested the call recovery procedure.

Call volume continues to be light and sporadic which underscores peoples' concerns about not reaching everyone who may have needs. It may be a reflection on how well Yarmouth is coping. The majority of calls are food-related requests. The interface with YCS and Shop Gap has been smooth and seamless.

The Call Center's fame has grown after Governor Mills mentioned and praised our organization. Information and materials (manual and Call Center Operations) about the project have been provided to Peaks Island and Freeport at their request.

Volunteers have been diligently signing up for scheduled shifts and covering them. Tom and Margaret Downing continue project oversight.

Volunteers who have not been active are ready, willing and eager to become involved in public health activities (ie. call outs or contact tracing programs) as they evolve.

Various approaches of how to best utilize volunteer capacity are being considered and will be vetted.

Neighborhood Communicators: Carla Hunt

This week the communicators kicked off #GratitudeProject, an opportunity to engage the Yarmouth Community in thanking all the many people of Yarmouth who are helping us move through this pandemic. The message: Not all heroes wear capes.

Each week, ten signs will be placed throughout Yarmouth highlighting:

- medical care workers,
- teachers,
- public safety,
- food producers and distributors,

- parents,
- mail and delivery services and
- the Yarmouth community.

Each person chooses how they might thank their neighbors: heart notes, daffodils at the doorstep, baked goods, a serenade, balloons, a note or email... the sky is the limit!

Communicators are encouraging our neighbors to actively thank the spotlighted groups of people in our own neighborhoods. Acts of gratitude will be posted to Facebook pages as: #GratitudeProject.

A one-hour call with two healthcare professionals offered communicators ideas for opening communication with our neighbors about stress, anxiety, loss of freedom. We were encouraged to call neighbors to connect and we also talked through a streamlined pathway to Leslie Hyde via email: **yarmouthemotionalfirstaid@gmail.com**. People can now access Leslie directly with their concerns and she'll respond by email or phone call.

Yarmouth Taxi service has been engaged once for transport to a medical appointment. Two trips are scheduled for next week and the following week.

YCAN and Task Force Finances: Jean Rafford

Donation numbers:

As of April 28, the Food Pantry has received \$17,175 in donations and the YCCVTF has received \$9,750.

Art has paid \$1000 to Winston Wy Contortion for videos.

We are still waiting for invoices to cover the oximeters, signs, and flyers from Karyn and Jennifer.

Members should submit bills to Art Bell (YCAN treasurer) at (abell9086@aol.com) or
YCAN
PO Box 553
Yarmouth

A sub-group now reviews funding requests. Members of this group are:

Sharon McDonnell
Debbie Roux
Margaret Downing
Mary Calvin
Whit Ford

Shop Gap Program: Dan Ostrye

Schedule signup status - very good coverage and like call center, many volunteers relative to the number of orders coming in.

Documentation - We have published PDF versions of our shopping lists and our guidelines for both the Shop-Gap and Neighbor to Neighbor programs. You can find them on the YCAN website.

Timeframe of: Thursday, April 23-April 29.

YCS received 4 phone calls for food-based support, only two required shopping/driving. One was very happy with the use and access to the Food Pantry and YCS connected her with various resources to help some other needs identified in the conversation. One driver/shopper volunteered for the first time and said how easy it was to help. The challenges remain with one neighbor who will not return our calls. YCS has passed this family's name onto the General Assistance office as many of the needs are beyond what we are equipped to handle (except food).

Issues/Ideas

- Rosement pickup question and decision to have them use their delivery service for a nominal fee
- Walgreen's prescription pickup should be reserved for emergencies in they offer free 2 day shipping and it could take us that long to go through order intake and scheduling
- Training - we have new volunteers and there may be interest from the communicators and task force members. We may do a Zoom session to talk through the protocols and experiences we've had.

Emotional Support: Leslie Hyde

As part of the Emotional First Aid Monday meeting with the Neighborhood Communicators, I invited Lori Whittemore - M Div, and colleague on the Red Cross Spiritual Disaster Care Team - to attend. She put some slides together to explore compassionate listening involving the principles of safety, hope, coping, and connectedness. We had a lively hour-long conversation, which I believe was taped for others to hear.

One of the recurring issues for emotional first aid is finding/accessing those who need it. We are exploring developing groups like moms and kids or caregivers to host a Zoom support chat.

We also discussed creating and publishing a new email for me so that folks who want to connect can reach out any time and I'll respond. I will talk with Whit Ford about possibly having YCAN help me with the technological aspect of creating this.

I will speak with Katie Worthing (from the Yarmouth History Center) about "collecting stories" during the time of COVID 19 tomorrow. The History Center has been doing interviews, so they are somewhat set up for this. I am a believer that stories

are the best way to enlighten and inform. There are a number of concerns, from how to gather the stories (audio/visual) and who to interview. The folks I'd like to speak with the most, are the busiest - and many don't even live here. Police, support staff, grocery clerks, postmen often can't afford the prices.

Food Pantry: Nancy Gorden

- We have a family donating 15 dozen eggs every 2 weeks at least through May.
 - We have purchased a large banner that will be hung across the front of the First Parish Church.
 - We began today purchasing produce from Laughing Stock Farms. We will continue this weekly purchasing for the foreseeable future or until the Community Garden starts having produce for the pantry.
 - We noticed a slight uptick on numbers at the end of last week and this Tuesday.
 - Because we have been notified that the weekend bags will cease being offered for students, we are expecting an increase in our numbers.
 - GSFb has begun working on processing the food boxes for May. They should be available around the end of May.
 - YCFP will continue to get TEFAP food allocations every month for the next few months. Next time will be towards the end of May.
-

YCAN Website: Whit Ford

Updates on YCAN website happenings:

- Chief Gallant's new video posted
 - Neighbor to Neighbor PDFs updated at Dan's request
 - YCAN [Need Food page](#) updated to start with "Help with grocery shopping" section (based on question received)
 - Donations via PayPal continue to be received
 - [Maine and Cumberland County statistics](#) updated daily
-

Volunteer Coordination: Cassandra Baker

- 5 new volunteers since last week.
 - Flyer is almost ready, just deciding on delivery mode but hopefully to printers tomorrow.
 - Getting medical subcommittee up and running, finally.
-

Epidemiology: Sharon McDonnell

From the epidemiology point of view Maine has benefited from a very flat curve-- a by-product of constrained testing and everyone staying at home and reducing their contacts + acting more safely.

Regrettably, as the curve in NYC declined people have taken this as "it is time to get back to the way things were." I'm concerned that we don't have a plan for what that looks like.

The US has examined their death reporting to look for "excess" deaths to see if there were deaths that might likely be considered COVID-19 related. CDC determined that about 15,900 such deaths occurred which would put the US at around 80,000 deaths from COVID-19, to date. I offer the numbers of over 1,000,000 cases in the US today (Tuesday) and the 80,000 deaths (currently JHU site continues to report only confirmed cases as ~60,000) as evidence that what is happening is "important". In February if someone had said "you will have 60,000-80,000 deaths in the next 1.5 months that would have seemed like a disaster. The White House prediction of 200,000 deaths by August 2020 were based on the rate of spread and were prior to the Stay at Home orders and other interventions. The predictions now for deaths in August... well, I have not looked because things are so in flux about what interventions will be in place.

I am working with a National group through Johns Hopkins University to provide training materials on Case Investigation, Contact Tracing, and Isolation/quarantine support. These materials are funded through Bloomberg Philanthropies and will be used in NYC. Due date this Friday and launch date May 11, 2020. Tight timeframe.

In Maine, a working group for contact tracing includes hospitals, DHHS reps, and various others to advise and ask questions. I will learn more on Thursday. It has a bit of "black box" feel to it.

There are a few articles or visualizations that are very good:

1. Mike Osterholm PhD an expert on pandemics and his op-ed about testing and what we need to go forward.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/28/opinion/coronavirus-testing.html?smid=em-share>

Regrettably it is not a happy story insofar as testing is limited and will continue to be limited for awhile. Worse news is that the tests that are out there are not great. There are false negatives to the viral test and can less commonly even be false positives. The antibody tests (all 60 of them) are very "iffy" and there is not enough research to really help people know what the results mean and which are the "best". The regulatory framework is the wild-west and more importantly, this is a new virus. We cannot answer the question "does the immunity last 6 months because we do not have 6 months of history. On this we need to be patient. These antibody tests are not good enough to base policy on but worth doing LOTS of research.

In the meantime we need to change our definition of "cases" to include people with clinical symptoms consistent with COVID-19. There are new recommendations from

CSTE (Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists) and they have some guidance on this. Here is my blog post about this:
<https://onesalud.com/2020/04/07/make-sure-everyone-counts-change-the-way-we-define-covid-19/>

I spoke to the Leader of the Public Health Institute in Liberia and he was shocked (SHOCKED) at some of what he sees here particularly about the limitations on quarantine that come from lack of testing. He said "but you will never get your arms around it".

2. Every so often I get sent a great resource related to the pandemic. last week it was from Margaret Downs. This week it is from my husband Gib Parrish. It is a "beautiful data visualiation" about what influences spread of the virus.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxAaO2rsdIs>

My husband and I are giving online courses. Our UNH course on Epi modeling was Tuesday and can be seen online (I do not know the link yet).

We have another Friday with a former student about "One Health" -- an emerging view of public health that integrates human, animal, and environmental health. It will be at 3pm on Friday May 1, 2020. You can go here to get a bit of background and the link to register. Everyone welcome. We will definitely talk about Tigers, cats and dogs too :)
<https://onesalud.com/2020/04/28/one-health-and-sars-cov-2-a-presentation/>

Thanks to everyone!