

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2020

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH, ENGAGEMENT, AND RESILIENCY

2020 has been an impactful year. Read on to see the impact OCHER has had!

Wellness Checks & Social Calls

Tucson House Surveys

Helping Hands Care Bags

Resource Cafe

Media and Recognition

Partnerships

The **mission** of OCHER is to co-create interventions with communities that focus on inherent strengths and that promote resiliency, especially with underserved communities of color, and to create or strengthen pathways of opportunity for all people to achieve their full potential.

OUR VISION

We are deeply embedded in communities to promote health, well-being, and resiliency hand-in-hand with our community partners. Our work aims to build community capacity and solve complex social problems through partnership in order that we are all stronger, communities are empowered, and together we achieve positive social change.

Social Calls and Wellness Checks



Began 04/17/20

Began 04/09/20



784 calls made

954 calls made



64 residents

98 residents



48 volunteers

20 volunteers

SOCIAL CALLS AND WELLNESS CHECKS

Social isolation has long been a problem among home-bound adults -- one that's increasingly recognized as having dire physical, mental, and emotional consequences. Individuals with less social connection have disrupted sleep patterns¹, altered immune systems², more inflammation³, and

higher levels of stress hormones⁴. Loneliness can accelerate cognitive decline⁵ in older adults, and isolated individuals are twice as likely⁶ to die prematurely as those with more robust social interactions.

Since the start of COVID-19, social isolation has become an even more significant problem; starting in April of 2020, OCHER pivoted to address this need. Volunteers began calling residents of the Tucson House for Wellness Checks - to see if the individual was in need of any supplies or food, and Social Calls - to create the opportunity for robust social interactions and connection through new relationships. Since then, more than 1,700 calls have been made, and over 100 residents reached. With 48 volunteers involved in Social Calls and 20 volunteers involved in Wellness Checks, the volunteers have been essential to the success of the program. Our volunteers come from many backgrounds, including University of Arizona medical students, ASU Masters of Social Work students and interns, members of local government, and other community members. Although the program was developed to benefit the residents of the Tucson House, many of which reported looking forward to the calls, volunteers often reported a benefit, too. They were given the opportunity to not only "provide social support," but the experience also gave volunteers "another person to talk to during a fairly isolating time" or simply "brightened [their] day." After 9 months of the program, relationships have been built, and both volunteers and residents continue to benefit from their weekly calls.

To further support community members outside of the Tucson House, OCHER launched the REACH AZ warmline; in partnership with the UA Center of Aging, UA Public Health, UA Mexican American Studies, and Pima Council on Aging; to provide social and emotional support to community members. Since its creation in April 2020, 34 volunteers have been trained to work the warmline, and they have completed almost 200 shifts. OCHER looks forward to continuing social calls and the REACH AZ warmline into 2021.

1. Luo, Y., Hawkey, L. C., Waite, L. J., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2012). Loneliness, health, and mortality in old age: A national longitudinal study. *Social Science & Medicine*, 74(6), 907-914. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.11.028>

2. Nutt, A. E., Nutt, A. E., & Nutt, A. E. (2016, February 1). Loneliness grows from individual ache to public health hazard. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/loneliness-grows-from-individual-ache-to-public-health-hazard/2016/01/31/cf246c56-ba20-11e5-99f3-184bc379b12d_story.html

3. Yang, Y. C., Boen, C., Gerken, K., Li, T., Schorpp, K., & Harris, K. M. (2016). Social relationships and physiological determinants of longevity across the human life span. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113(3), 578-583. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1511085112>

4. Cacioppo, S., Capitanio, J. P., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2014). Toward a neurology of loneliness. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(6), 1464-1504. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037618>

5. DiSalvo, D. (2015, July 25). Loneliness Is A Mind Killer -- Study Shows Link To Rapid Cognitive Decline In Older Adults. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/daviddisalvo/2015/07/24/loneliness-is-a-mind-killer-study-shows-link-with-rapid-cognitive-decline-in-older-adults/?sh=3691a2c17aec>

6. Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010). Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review. *PLoS Medicine*, 7(7), e1000316. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316>

TUCSON HOUSE SURVEYS

As part of a larger community change effort, 50 volunteers and OCHER staff spent 2,926 hours gathering the opinions of Tucson House residents to inform future community improvements. Taking the form of an interview, this information-gathering not only gave residents the chance to express what they see as the strengths and opportunities for improvement of their community and neighborhood, but also the chance to be a part of the solution.



2,926 hours



50 volunteers



104 residents

Volunteer surveyors and interviewers connected with 104 residents of the Tucson House before COVID-19 made in-person research impossible, and OCHER plans to continue this crucial conversation in the upcoming months.

Responding to the needs emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, another way OCHER pivoted to work with the community to support


its members was through the packing and distribution of 2,485 care bags. These care bags included COVID-19 essentials such as masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant, as well as household essentials such as soap, cleaner, and paper towels. Throughout the summer and fall of 2020, these bags were packed and distributed to residents of the Tucson House and members of the Old Pascua community. This effort was carried out in partnership with the

HELPING HANDS CARE BAGS


City of Tucson (Office of the Mayor, Housing and Community Development Department, and Ward 3), the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the San Ignacio Council. Helping Hands was made possible through funding from the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, and donations from Tucson Electric Power and many other generous community and individual donors. In addition to the physical donations from sponsors, 74 volunteers gave their valuable time transporting items, packing bags, distributing bags, and going door to door to deliver bags. OCHER looks forward to continuing to support the vibrant Tucson community in 2021.

Tucson House
August 2020

 850 bags packed

 19 volunteers


Tucson House
May 2020


 1000 bags packed

 20 volunteers


Helping Hands
Care Bags


Old Pascua
September 2020

 500 bags packed

 35 volunteers

Nash Elementary
December 2020

 135 bags packed

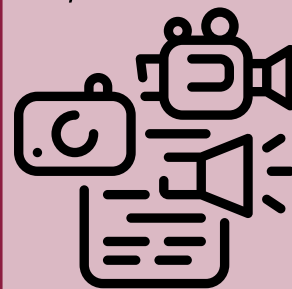
 7 volunteers

THRIVE RESOURCE CAFÉ

In response to the dire need for real-time resources after the pandemic changed our ability to access resources in person, OCHER created a unique opportunity for local organizations, non-profits, and other groups to highlight current resources available to our community during the COVID-19 Pandemic: the Resource Café. ASU OCHER hosted 100 community organizations since the first Resource Café aired in late April. These community guests have included representatives from various local groups to discuss new project initiatives, updates, services, and resources that are meant to benefit & serve all members of our community. This lunch-time chat continues to be broadcasted via Zoom & Facebook Live, and in 2020 we reached over 23,000 people! The most popular Cafés were with the Davis Mariachi Band (1,400+ views), the Million Trees Project (976 views), and Move Tucson (890 views). OCHER looks forward to hosting even more community partners in the coming months.

Resource Café

23,094 views



100 videos

MEDIA

Throughout the year of 2020, OCHER had several opportunities to be featured in local news, celebrating the community work being carried out. In May 2020, OCHER and the Thrive in the 05 initiative were featured by ASU's publication ASU Now, the Arizona Daily Star, and the local television station KVOA: News for Tucson. While the ASU publication focused on all of OCHER's COVID-19 initiatives (social calls, REACH AZ, the Thrive Resource Café, and Helping Hands), the KVOA feature highlighted one of the Helping Hands care bag

distributions at the Tucson House. In September of 2020, OCHER was once again highlighted by Channel 4 News for its partnership with the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council and AmeriCorps to pack and distribute more Helping Hands care bags to the Pascua Yaqui community. Also in September, OCHER and the Thrive in the 05 initiative were featured by the City of Tucson in the Ward 3 Newsletter. In October 2020, OCHER's director Dr. Mary-Ellen Brown was a guest panelist at the Middle Neighborhoods webinar "Community Engagement Strategies during COVID-19" due to our community responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. In December 2020, OCHER and Thrive in the 05 were honored to be featured in Mayor Romero's State of the City address.



RECOGNITION

The year 2020 has also brought recognition to OCHER and its members. Every year, Tucson Metro Chamber recognizes local businesses and organizations with their Copper Cactus Awards. In October, OCHER was honored to be named a finalist for the 2020 Tucson Electric Power Social Impact category. In November 2020, Director Dr. Mary-Ellen Brown was honored by the Association for Community Organization and Social Action with the Emerging Scholar Award. This award recognizes emerging nonprofit scholars and practitioners who are creating and disseminating practical knowledge. Dr. Brown was once again recognized for her achievements in the

realm of social work when she was named Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Branch 2. This award recognizes social workers who embody the highest standards and values of NASW. Finally, ASU's Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions honored two of our members: OCHER's Associate Director Dr. Katie Stalker, with the Emerging Public Service Educator Award, and OCHER's Project Manager Nadia Roubicek, with the Outstanding New Staff Member Award. OCHER and its members are grateful for these opportunities to increase awareness of our work.



PARTNERSHIPS

OCHER's strength has always been in its partnerships. In 2020, OCHER reinforced old partnerships and built over 96 new ones. Notably, COVID-19 gave OCHER the opportunity to partner more deeply with its fellow Tucson university: the University of Arizona. Collaboration through ideas and implementation has built relationships with U of A's Department of Mexican American Studies, the Center on Aging, the College of Public Health, the College of Medicine and the Health and Human Values Program. Not only has

2020 brought new organizational and departmental partnerships, but it has engaged new community members as well. OCHER staff and partners presented to various working groups and colleges classes about current projects, developed the Resource Café as a new way to connect with the community, established the REACH AZ warmline and social calls to strengthen individual relationships and support, and continues working to find alternative ways to engage the community amidst a pandemic.

OTHER PROJECTS

As a social work organization, not all of OCHER's work can be captured in numbers. Here is a brief summary of another part of OCHER's work: grants for community change.

COMMUNITY-BASED CRIME REDUCTION GRANT

In the summer of 2020, OCHER received an implementation grant for the Community-Based Crime Reduction (CBCR) Initiative. The team has worked with community partners to strengthen four of the key CBCR strategies: Drug Market Intervention trainings have been conducted with the Tucson Police Department, three OCHER team members have been trained to teach the Community Resiliency Model, the You Can, Too! curriculum was developed, and the Youth Empowerment Solutions curriculum is being adapted for cultural considerations and a virtual setting.

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS GRANT

The Choice Neighborhoods planning team spent the year 2020 focusing on community strengths and opportunities. Strategies were developed to address opportunities for community improvement. In the spring of 2020, OCHER volunteers worked to survey the community and assess resident opinions and needs. This effort was continued in the fall in a virtual setting. The transformation team held consistent meetings throughout the year, strengthening the community partnerships needed to enact effective community change.

OUR TEAM

Dr. Mary-Ellen Brown
Assistant Professor of Social Work
Director

Dr. Katie Stalker
Assistant Professor of Social Work
Associate Director

Nadia Roubicek
Program Manager, Tucson CBCR

Valerie Sanchez
Community Outreach Manager

Mattea Pezza
AmeriCorps VISTA
Community Outreach and Research
Specialist

Alessandra Cebreros
AmeriCorps Public Ally
Program and Evaluation Specialist

Vivian Morrison
AmeriCorps Public Ally
Community Outreach and Volunteer
Coordinator

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2020

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH, ENGAGEMENT, AND RESILIENCY



The mission of OCHER is to co-create interventions with communities that focus on inherent strengths and that promote resiliency, especially with underserved communities of color, and to create or strengthen pathways of opportunity for all people to achieve their full potential.

THANK YOU!

2020 has been an impactful year, but none of this impact would have been possible without our valued community members and partners. OCHER would like to thank all community members for their time, passion, and presence in promoting a more resilient community.



Want to contact us or find out more about the work OCHER is doing?
Please email us at asuocher@gmail.com.