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Racial Equity and Social Justice Action Team

April 28, 2020 12:30 P.M.

Minutes

Join Zoom Meeting via your computer:

<https://ncsu.zoom.us/j/91604291233?pwd=MTdQdzkrYXZQQi9TWXpyVVFpYmhaUT09>

Join Zoom Meeting from your phone:

Dial 312 626 6799 or 470 250 9358

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Attendees: 17 attendees via videoconferencing

Welcome and Approval of Minutes- Nikki Lyons and Michael Ballen, Co-Chairs

COVID-19 Updates:

- Angelo Moore stated community members in vulnerable communities are being left out with regards to testing. No substantial effort is being placed where there is the most need. Are there opportunities to set up testing in SE Raleigh?
- Verna will investigate if Crosby can be a testing site but there are no updates at this time.
- Also, it is important to make sure there is support for workers at these sites including protective equipment, contact tracing, etc. These seem to be the best methods to combat COVID-19 in African American communities.
- Kristin F stated the hotel harassment and homelessness crises has been mentioned in multiple meetings. She has heard from community advocates that there are barriers in the county referral process for housing assistance. There are funds available to keep families in hotels through other partner and non-profits but there is a delay in requesting assistance and receiving assistance. There is a period where hotel residents are unable to pay. Due to this, residents are being harassed or pushed out-even though they have a contract and will be paid.
- Clif Lavenhouse said that testing centers are led by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Currently, they are not dispersing this information to local government. There are some people who already needed housing prior to the pandemic and some who were laid off from their jobs and lost their housing. There are 33 hotels the county uses to house people. Hotel vendors are afraid that they will not receive payment even though the county has vouched for these residents. They ask these residents for money every day. There is simply no need to harass these people.
- Nikki Lyons asked if we could identify these hotels? Some are in Knightdale and East Wake. A good portion of these hotels were not used prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A group member commented on voter engagement. There are 50,000 uninsured North Carolinians. These are essential workers that work in health care, in nursing homes, grocery stores, etc. Please contact your legislator to advocate for the importance of the expansion of Medicare.

- Clif Lavenhouse stated that senators are back in session starting today. There has been a discussion about a fund for uninsured essential workers, but he has not heard about the hotels.
- WakePrevent has temporarily changed their support of families in hotels. [Read more here.](#)
- Nikki Lyons asked Kristin F if there are any needs being brought to Crosby? Kristin listed the following areas and responses:
 - Housing
 - Mental Health. Social and Economic Vitality is working with the Community Counseling and Education Research Center (CCERC) to offer distance counseling. We are working on the logistics for counseling services over the summer via teleconferencing.
 - Nonfood resources. Toiletries, adult diapers, clothing, etc have been items of need. Verna Best has proposed the county open the Crosby Center 1-2 days a week to administer some of these essential items. If anyone has heard of similar needs or know of other ways Crosby can be helpful please contact [Kristin F.](#)
 - Education. Children at home with parents who are essential workers are not getting quality education, even with access to a computer. When these students return the gap in learning will be significant.
- Sheila Reich announced that Youthrive is showing most of their content via webinar. There are upcoming webinars regarding engaging youth. May is mental health awareness month. More information about how to connect with tele-health service is welcomed. Now more than ever, technology is needed. Please be on the lookout for stress, stay connected to friends and make sure to get you and your children outside for fresh air.
- In the future we can respond quickly to a crisis by having logistical support for immediate problem solving. Having ready structures in place to respond to areas of need is critical.
- This pandemic has shed light on the level of inequities in classrooms. For instance, teachers who have not done fast coursework are now expected to excel fast online. How can we advocate for parents to advocate for their own children? Where do we start?
- Kristin added that internet safety and safe use of technology is also a growing area of concern. This may be another webinar topic YouthThrive may want to offer.
- A group member asked about creating a GoFundMe to pull together resources for those who don't qualify for services.
- Melanie Hemphill attended a meeting with the Downtown Housing Improvement Corporation and brainstormed ideas about a potential housing development. The goal is to put families in homes first. They are looking to create a beacon site. If this opportunity does not happen with DHIC, perhaps Crosby can be a site. Melanie will connect with Verna.
- A group member asked what is being done for children without internet? These children are being connected to internet. There is no other alternative for virtual learning. This can be an equity issue with teachers. If home room teachers are not diligent about ensuring students have access to technology to continue virtual learning some students will fall behind.
- Another group member gave an example. More band and Spanish-language teachers have been calling around the clock to make certain students have necessary equipment to continue learning. It can be difficult for parents who do not have the time or ability to use internet or are aware of different terminology in virtual learning to convey this information to their children. It requires a moderate level of computer literacy.

- Michael Ballen stated that some families are essential workers who cannot help their children with school due to work. This can be another barrier for some students.
- Angelo Moore mentioned using faith-based organizations to engage the community as they are the center of vulnerable communities.
- Multiple group members asked to join any virtual chat or convening of local churches and faith-based organizations. Nikki Lyons stated that for these churches to meet current needs it would require a shift in their focus.
- SEV met with some faith leaders recently and has a small network. Wake Pastor's Coalition for Change may be a way for group members to connect. Their focus is different than SEV's but they can try. Nikki and Michael can reach out to Pastor Bale however, most resources mentioned are in reference to meeting immediate needs. The focus has not shifted to educational supports, housing and how the faith community can support.

Adjourn.

Next Meeting: May 13, 2020 12:30 PM