



Hand to Hand Chronicle

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Our Mission

Hand to Hand makes an impact in the lives of women and girls in San Diego County by directing resources to programs that empower change and self-sufficiency.

handtohandsandiego.org



Hand to Hand’s Grantee Relations Committee is honored to share the following program information from our 2020 Grantees, all of whom were significantly impacted by the challenges brought on by Covid-19. In their own words, here are their stories.

GIRLS RISING: Big & Little Sisters

During the pandemic and stay-at-home orders, Girls Rising is operating virtually. And we are still going strong! Our at-risk Little Sisters need more support than ever right now, and it is so important that they have their mentors to connect with and talk to.

Our matches are connecting with each other by delivering care packages, doing virtual crafts, baking together, and often just talking about feelings and challenges.

Our in-person community events shifted in 2020 to Zoom gatherings and delivery events. We are keeping our community strong with virtual fitness events, a graduation celebration, game nights, meditation and stress reduction classes, a virtual career day, book club, a back-to-school supply delivery, a Halloween pizza and movie night. Our most recent event was a Holiday Event with games and gifts delivered to our Little Sisters. We are remaining flexible to serve our girls with what they need most!

Girls Rising continues to boast the following results from our program: 100% high school graduation rate, 0% teen pregnancy rate, 81% increasing self-esteem each year, and 94% meeting their annual goal.

Nicole Hmielewsky, Executive Director
December 2020



SMART Girls: Boys & Girls Club of Vista

Over the past year, the girls in SMART Girls have learned about teamwork, friendship, respect, kindness, fitness, nutrition, hygiene, goal setting and perseverance – all while having fun in the process. We are excited to continue building our program upon these subjects and guiding the girls to developing a healthy attitude, a growth mindset and high self-esteem.

Boys & Girls Club SMART Girls program served 25 middle school aged girls in the 2020 grant period.

A signature piece of our program in 2020, amended due to Covid-19 restrictions, was a Vision Board Project. SMART Girls were asked to reflect and journal about their personal goals, both for now and the future. Each girl collected pictures from magazines or online that reflected their goals and aspirations and assembled them as a collage on their own Vision Board. An enthusiastic participant described her Vision Board this way:

“This project helped me reflect on my goals and believe that anything is possible. I learned about how and why vision boards work. If you look at your goals every day, you are more likely to achieve them!”

25 girls were served in our SMART Girls program during the 2020 grant period.

Susan Arias, Boys & Girls Club Vista
December 2020



READING LEGACIES: Family Connections

We are still actively promoting our program model, adapted for COVID restrictions, to serve women and girls impacted by incarceration or drug addiction. There is no better time for the healing power of time spent reading together!

We have always known that reading aloud together bridges distances and feelings of isolation for mother and daughter alike.

We have learned that because bridging distance was always our focus and using technology always a part of our programs, we are uniquely suited to create opportunities for comfort and healing for families... even during the pandemic! In this climate, our programs are more important than ever.

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READING LEGACIES: Family Connections, *Continued from Page 2*

Through the formation of our Volunteer Family Outreach Committee, Reading Legacies has been able to provide additional follow up support through phone conversations with program participants during the Covid era. We have succeeded in circumventing the correctional and rehabilitation facility closures to outside volunteers by creating a partnership with Don Allen ParentCare. This partnership allowed us to continue to promote the critical educational and bonding experience of reading aloud together for mothers in rehab with their daughters.

Through this partnership, 50 women and an estimated 63 young girls will benefit from this outreach alone. When they complete a survey about their read aloud phone call, Reading Legacies will then send an additional book home to their daughters/granddaughters/nieces to encourage future reading time and give the pair more opportunities for bonding.

Betty Mohlenbrock, Executive Director
December 2020

**OPERATION HOPE-North County: Step to Independence**

Despite COVID-19's ongoing challenges, we were able to sustain our program during a time when our services are needed now more than ever. From the start of the Pandemic, we faced an added strain on our already limited cash flow and faced the real fear of closing our doors. Through the overwhelming support and generosity of our community we survived 2020!

Funding from our Hand to Hand grant was used to provide shelter and case management services to women and children experiencing homelessness during this global pandemic.

While 2020 presented overwhelming changes that no one was prepared for, we were able to continue serving our most vulnerable population. With adjustments to our program to allow for longer stays as needed and moving all our classes to a Zoom format, we were able to navigate the changes and challenges that COVID presented us. Despite these challenges, in fiscal year 2019-2020, 119 individuals were placed in stable housing.

As the need for our services continues to grow in 2021, we have over 200 individuals actively seeking shelter. The long-term sustainability of our program remains a focus of our organization as we work to continue to provide shelter and supportive services through this pandemic and beyond.

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History

Hand to Hand was established in October 2008 as a charitable fund at Coastal Community Foundation.

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OPERATION HOPE North County: Step to Independence *Continued from Page 3*

In February 2020, we started our own Pantry of Hope in response to widening food insecurity caused by the pandemic. This program allows us to provide families who have recently graduated with continued access to nutritious food while they continue their journey toward independence. Each week families can come to the pantry and receive fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy goods, canned and boxed food and now fresh meat. We continue to see this program growing as the need for access to food is growing. To date, we have handed out over 30,000 lbs. of food to families and members of the community!

As families successfully exit our program and are placed in stable housing, we are thankful to stay connected to them. With the continued support and generosity of our community, we can continue to be a resource to them. This past holiday all our Alumni families and women received holiday gifts, food to make a holiday meal and resources as needed.

Nicole Ketcher, Director of Development
December 2020



Operation HOPE



Reading Legacies: Books awaiting delivery



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