



Hand to Hand Chronicle

JUNE 2020 | A FUND OF THE COASTAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In this issue:

2020 MID-YEAR GRANTEE REPORTS

[Reading Legacies](#)

[Boys & Girls Club of
Vista](#)

[Operation HOPE- North
County](#)

[Girls Rising](#)

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**](http://handtohandsandiego.org)



2020 Mid-Year Grantee Reports

Due to the world-wide COVID-19 Pandemic, all our 2020 Grantees had difficulty in conducting their programs during our nationwide “Stay-at-Home” order and overall shutdown of the US economy. Nationwide, many non-profit charities were forced to cease operations altogether, while others, particularly the smaller organizations that Hand to Hand supports, were forced to cancel scheduled fundraising events that provide vital cash to their annual budgets. Others are still operating, but with only a small fraction of their former staffs.

This particularly challenging year has severely affected the operations of all four organizations that *Hand to Hand* funded for the 2020 grant cycle. All were impacted in one way or another. However, as you will read in the summaries of how each of them faced this crisis, you will find a resilience, ingenuity, and a never-say-die spirit that will put a smile on your face and make you very proud of the philanthropy we have provided!

Our four Grantees were contacted by our committee members and asked how they are doing, how the pandemic has effected their operations, what if any part of their programs they were able to conduct, salvage or change in order to stay afloat and connected to the people they work so hard to serve.

Here are their “COVID” stories!

-K.J. Koljonen, Grantee Relations Committee Chair



Reading Legacies

As expected, all of Reading Legacies hands-on work has stopped. They have not been allowed into the women's correctional facility and don't know when things will change. They have pivoted to things that they can do and seem to be quite enterprising in ways to encourage reading as a way to strengthen family bonds. They have a new virtual read aloud program on social media, called *Reading Legacies Story Time*, where people can tune in on social media to view books being read out loud.

They are also working with the probation department of boy's juvenile facilities where the boys can participate over ZOOM. They will extend this to girls as well, continuing to mail books to the homes of the participants for their children.

They are also starting to work with retirement homes to foster reading connections between grandparents and grandkids. Their thinking today is to take what they were doing from the inside out and move it to the outside in.

I spoke with Betty, and she was so very appreciative of *Hand to Hand*, and the way we are handling this situation. She really could not say enough good things about us and indicated that they are not necessarily finding as much forbearance from their other donors.

-Joyce Mehlberg

Boys & Girls Club of Vista



I spoke with Matt Koumaras, President & CEO, regarding the organization and how grant fund utilization was managed.

As with most organizations there have been evolving obstacles. The organization utilized very pragmatic strategies in order to meet the needs of the individuals they serve, and the ever-evolving issues.

Since the middle of March, and the major impact of the pandemic, total staffing was reduced from 26 to 5 employees. All employees took pay cuts. They have subsequently been able to rehire some of their staff (currently at 14 staff members). They have been able to experience this partial recovery because, among other things, they received government PPP loans, and they are now part of the "Day Camp" program that is allowing some parents to return to work.

Although funding for the Smart Girls Program is temporarily on hold, it is anticipated that they will be able to serve approximately twelve individuals, but it is not clear at this time if the individuals who will be served will all be girls.

Additional Comments: It is important to note that the Boys and Girls Club of Vista has remained open during the pandemic. For a period of a month and a half, they provided 500 meals a day as part of the "Day Camp" program, for the children of essential workers.

-Mary Murphy



Operation HOPE-North County

The COVID-19 Pandemic created a harsh reality for the residents and staff of Operation Hope. The factors that placed an added strain on the already limited cash flow included: shelter in place, closing of daycares and school districts, the reduction of all volunteer programs, increased staff hours, the cancellation of one of their largest fundraisers of the year, and the San Diego County health guidelines for ALL shelters.

They are continuing to seek additional funding to sustain the year-round shelter model, but have managed to reduce monthly expenses down about \$10K. Now more than ever, they are feeling the need to meet the needs of the community and especially families with children.

COVID-19 has presented many challenges. In order to reduce the potential spread of the virus, they had to reduce their volunteer program from 80 volunteers a week to less than 10! Loss of these volunteers increased the staff hours required to operate a 24-hour shelter program to keep up with the cancellation of all schools, childcare and stay at home orders that forced families and children in shelter 24 hours a day. The San Diego County Health guidelines for shelters required additional staff to maintain social distancing and sanitation protocols which increased staff and cleaning costs. Currently they are serving 10 family rooms including 14 adults and 16 children; 24 of whom are women and girls.

Because Operation Hope's meal program was greatly impacted and paused during this time, they launched the Pantry of HOPE. The goal of this program is to provide families who recently graduated the program with continued access to nutritious food while they continue on their path to independence. Each week families can come to the pantry and receive items such as fresh fruit, vegetables, canned goods, bread, healthy snacks and dairy items. So far 8,000 pounds of food has been distributed!

Successes despite the pandemic include clients continuing to work towards achieving their goals and personal pathways to stable housing. Since COVID-19, nine families have successfully completed the program and have moved into their own homes. One client was able to graduate from High School because of the safe environment and supportive services she received. With her high school diploma, she now has a part time job, and will be enrolling in community college in the fall, making her a first-generation college student!

Funding from *Hand to Hand* was used to provide bed nights and adjusted case management services. Their ability to continue these services was made possible with funds from *Hand to Hand*. Operation HOPE North County also received several generous contributions and emergency relief funds. Many of these are one-time gifts or funding sources. Funding will be critical to sustain the year-round shelter.

They extend a heartfelt thank you to the *Hand to Hand* family for believing in their mission and supporting the program. Together we are changing lives!

-Trisha O'Neal





History

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

Committee Chairs:

Organization Chair:

Patricia Kelting

Grants Chair:

Carla Anderson

Grantee Relations Chair:

KJ Koljonen

Finance Chair:

Trisha O'Neal

Membership Chair:

Betsy Jacobson

Coastal Community Foundation

162 S. Rancho Santa Fe Road
Suite F-50
Encinitas, CA 92024
grants@coastalfoundation.org

handtohandsandiego.org

Girls Rising

First of all, we are SO very appreciative of how Hand to Hand took the initiative right away to contact us and let us know that we could use the grant for General Operating costs. As you all know, funding became very unpredictable with the pandemic, so this flexibility means a lot to us.

We did hold our Big Sister Appreciation Night in January, so that event was a success! We really celebrated our Big Sisters, gathering at Thorn Brewery for drinks and dinner. Big Sisters were given T-shirts, a handwritten letter of appreciation from their Little Sisters, and gift cards for shopping. For our activity, we made succulent designs, guided by Sweet Digs.

The other 2 events, the Back to School Picnic and STEM event are on hold. The STEM event was supposed to happen in June and the Picnic in August.

As far as how our program is operating during the pandemic, we are still going strong at Girls Rising! Our Little Sisters need more support than ever right now, so I'm so glad they have their mentors to connect with and talk to. During the beginning of the pandemic, Girls Rising was mostly helping our Little Sisters and families connect with resources. For example, not all Little Sisters had phones or laptops, many are food insecure, etc. So we helped them connect with sources to provide these needs. Now all of our Little Sisters have devices and are able to connect with us virtually!

Our matches are connecting by delivering care packages, doing virtual crafts and baking together, etc. We are supporting our Big and Little Sisters with tools to cope during this time, and creative ideas on how to stay connected. We are also having group Zoom gatherings for yoga, a graduation ceremony, etc. to keep our community strong.

We have a record breaking 25 little sisters on our waiting list for when we can re-open the program (we have decided not to create new matches virtually, and to wait until we can do this in person again).

We can't wait to get together again! Our Facebook page is always a great spot to check in and see what our matches are up to! [Facebook.com/girlsrising](https://www.facebook.com/girlsrising)

Nicole Hmielewski
Executive Director, Girls Rising



For more information about ***Hand to Hand***, contact:

Grantee Relations Committee

K.J. Koljonen

4KJKSD@GMAIL.COM