

November 17th meeting Long Branch Partners Covid 19 Response Check in

TogetherProgram opening discussion

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Margaret Crosson: In the past, their couple's expert had been a couples and family therapist where they work with couples and individuals. They execute a 6 weeklong session or workshop series where it is purely a psychoeducational workshop consisting of 5-10 couples. The size can vary. It is important to note that this program is by no means therapy or group therapy. However, they can provide resources for that if a couple is looking for that though. This program is mostly working together as a couple and learning the tools and tips on how to effectively manage stress, conflict resolution, communication skills, and coping skills as a backbone to talk about financial matters.

These talks may include:

1. Talking about credit together
2. Managing debt
3. Looking at bills together & figuring out what the best family budget may look like

Program incentives (This program is federally funded & so they have surveys. These surveys total 1 ½ hours combined. So, this is why they have incentives):

1. The program is free
2. Gift card incentives are provided up to \$200 per couple/ \$100 per person

Sarah Fritz: There are not many qualifications. They make sure that participants are at least 18. Workshops are offered in both Spanish and English. Couples do not have to be married. Couples also do not have to live together. The workshops are currently conducted over Zoom. So far they have served over 100 out of their total 800 couples in the last five years and the results have been pretty much the same since implementing the program over Zoom. Workshops for the upcoming round will start in April because they are currently in a planning period.

What they are doing during planning period:

1. Editing curriculum to involve the impact of COVID-19
2. Looking to build partnerships
3. Developing a community needs assessment

John Brill Questions/Main points

1. He questions if they are national or worldwide?

Sarah Fritz responds that their target areas are Prince George's and Montgomery County. However, they do not have resident restrictions. So, they do not check addresses. They will also probably be serving the entire DMV area. Apparently, they went national for a little while in

April 2020. However, after talking to their grant officer, she said to keep it local because they did not want to take away the client base from the other grantees. Their grant comes from the Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children and Families. More specifically their grant comes from Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood. So, their grant is nationwide, but they are targeting Maryland.

2. He questions where they are seeing most of their clients coming from? since she mentioned Prince George's and Montgomery County

Sarah Fritz responds that because they are a product under the University of Maryland, they had a lot of resources to advertise their program within the University system. So, she feels like they got a lot of students and staff from the College Park area. These areas also include Hyattsville and Riverdale park. Margaret responds that it is kind of hard to tell because of COVID. Before COVID, they were in Largo, VA, and not so much in Montgomery County. They did a few workshops at Montgomery College. A lot come in from College Park, Riverdale Park, Hyattsville, Largo, and Silver Spring. But, they are hoping to get more couples in different areas throughout PG and Montgomery County.

3. He asks if Case Management is assigned and how does their case management process work?

Margaret responds that their case management is voluntary. At each workshop, there is an assigned case manager. The case manager sets up the workshop for that cohort. A needs assessment survey is sent out to each participant for the case manager to review. So, their main point of contact are the case managers as opposed to the facilitators.

4. John follows up from Vanesa's 2nd question: Will you have the same outreach materials distributed in English and Spanish equally? And do you have a way to do that?

Sarah responds that part of their planning period is translating. They recently hired their first bilingual case manager. Since they are not doing cases right now, she will be doing a lot of translating. They are also working on web development and possibly creating a phone app. So, the IT companies working on that should also be able to help with translation as well.

5. John mentions that since their case manager won't actually be doing cases till April. It could be possible that we send over case referrals to them if they would want to do so

Sarah responds that cases would need to be screened and entered into their government database. This is a process that will not really be available until April. However, after attending a partner's meeting with the City of Gaithersburg and Housing Initiative Partnership, she was told to spread the word about this referral system. If anyone needs case management, refer them to this site: <https://finnav.org/interest-gburg> and a housing counselor will call them up to 4 times to connect

with them and will refer them to services such as financial coaching, domestic violence help, and filling out various forms for financial assistance.

Vanesa Questions/points

1. Is there a special reason why Montgomery and PG County are a target?

Sarah responds that there was a comprehensive 85-page application that was written by their program creator for their government grant. They were targeting cities that were heavily impacted by COVID-19. So, some of their targets within Montgomery County are Gaithersburg, Germantown, Wheaton, Silver Spring. She also mentions that they intend to serve low-income families as their programs are designed to. However, they do not have a low-income cutoff. They partner with Work Source Montgomery and Employ Prince George's. They also partner with Family Services Incorporated in Gaithersburg where they try to hold workshops. However, there was a barrier due to not having workshops in Spanish at that time. Now, they do offer workshops in Spanish though.

2. Since when did you start having the workshops in Spanish?

Sarah responds that their creator is from Argentina. So, she is fluent in Spanish. Over the last 2 years, their creator created a separate sister program which was dedicated to Spanish. However, that separate program will probably end soon. Then the program will merge since they are now doing Spanish workshops. These new workshops will start with this new cycle of the grant around April 1st.

3. Vanesa mentions waitlist and capacity

Sarah responds that there is no waitlist or capacity. They have always been able to serve anyone who is interested and eligible. The only reason that they would not serve someone is if their conflict was too frequent, severe, if a client has untreated/severe mental illness, or couple therapy is needed first. They would then be referred out. Otherwise, they have rolling workshop schedules where cohorts are launched once or twice a week.

Kathe Quinn Questions/Points

1. Do you have any information to relay over about a special needs group for point of contact?

Sarah responds by giving the emails listed at the top.

2. What does POSNA stand for?

Bruce clarifies that it is Takoma Park based: Parents of Special Needs

Sarah adds that in terms of special needs that their organization may not be the best equipped. They have had blind people in their program

Clifton Park Baptist Church Presentation

Randi Drewry: Clifton Park initially did a monthly food program where they served about 200 families. The first Saturday of every month, they would bring everybody into the gym where they would get groceries. Other organizations would also attend to give services and resources. They also opened up a clothing closet. Once Covid hit, they lost their distributions. They then started partnering with the County. They were able to get produce and nonperishables. They were able to join 1 of the 8 hubs in the County. Each hub has a special way that they work dependent on what the community needs. For example, Germantown is focused on serving Covid patients. They do a distribution every Wednesday. The distribution serves about 550 households. 300+ of these families walk up to the Church to collect food. All of this takes place outside in the parking lot. They actually have police presence now because the roads get blocked. The problem is they need more community partners and more resource distribution. The area is in desperate need of food. Diapers are also starting to be given out. An insurance card, a small child, or a birth certificate needs to be brought. They initially had 70 families for the diaper distribution. They are seeking help with clothing though. They are seeking volunteers to come in and start sorting Ex bags saying boys size 6. They can't take a lot of clothing in right now. However, they want to get out the clothing that they already have. They are at the Church every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. They are normally there from 8:30 am till 2:00 pm. CHEER, a Vietnamese-American services group, and other churches are also partnering with the Church. Food gets delivered at the Church. Then the groups' bag and distribute their items. She also mentions wanting to get a box truck.

Pazit Questions/points:

1. Pazit mentions that there are conversations about HHS providing support to the hubs. Training could be provided. Speakers and brochures could also be given. The Food Access Health Center is a valuable resource for those experiencing food insecurity.

Vanesa Questions/points:

1. Vanesa mentions putting in the name of the Church & address: Clifton Park Baptist Church - 8818 Piney Branch, Silver Spring, MD
2. Vanesa stresses the importance of building relationships

Margaret Crosson Questions/points:

1. Margaret offers the suggestion of The Silver Spring/Takoma Park Mutual Aid Network could possibly help. The Dalia? Community Response in Langley Park could help as they do a lot of food security right now. They are distributing \$75 grocery cards and diaper distribution as well.

John Brill Questions/points:

1. Mentions the use of the box truck. He wonders if the box truck would be used for more door to door deliveries or organizational deliveries?

Randi responds that it could be used to do a little bit of both.

2. Mentioned New Hampshire Estates got some gift cards through the PTA etc... and that there is probably some crossover in the different organizations that are giving out gift cards. He is not sure if there would be a way to coordinate that, but it is just something that crossed his mind.
3. He asks Randi when she would like to start having a clothing distribution?

Randi would like to get the clothing prepared first. Then she will figure out how to distribute it.

4. He mentions that New Hampshire Estates may become the 3rd learning hub in the area. They are basically classrooms that have been converted to COVID-19 safe study areas for students.

Bruce Questions/points:

1. Bruce mentions how Vanesa also notices that there is a traffic backup issue with our distribution as well. We use a list. He mentions using case management for the people where over time a system can be created to better target. Extremes could also be managed better. He suggests using a list.
2. Bruce mentions the need for volunteers for our distribution

Shawn Morris Questions/points:

1. Mentions that their neighborhood events matching fund grants will be opening up the day after the meeting. They are about \$1,000 for community-based events in the Silver Spring area. Events would have to COVID-19 friendly

Closing statements:

Bruce says next meeting will be sometime in January or February