

COVID-19 Relief Fund Check Up



by Yurianna Mikolay,
Executive Director
Ocean Reef Community Foundation

It has now been more than nine months since the Foundation's COVID-19 Relief Fund made our first grants to key nonprofit organizations beyond our gates in Monroe County, Homestead and Florida City at the beginning of April 2020. In that time, we have given almost \$800,000 in grants to help sustain the many who are struggling in our region. Today, we are at the crux of breaking once unimaginable records for cases and lives lost on a daily basis with the glimmer of hope of a vaccinated country just out of reach ahead of us on the horizon.

With the hope of vaccinations finally becoming a reality for those in the most at-risk categories at Ocean Reef, many of you have expressed concern for those who work in the community and asked what can be done to support the effective rollout of vaccinations for others in surrounding areas. While I can't report specifics yet, I do want to assure you that we are working to identify, create, and support efforts to facilitate, accelerate and maximize availability of vaccinations for our neighbors. I expect to be able to share something more concrete soon.

Unfortunately, our neighbors to the north in underserved Homestead and Florida City are living in a COVID-19 hotspot, with Homestead Hospital at over 100 percent capacity. Early on we reported here on our relief efforts for the hospital's "Healthcare Heroes," as well as devices donated to help patients communicate



The Ocean Reef Community Foundation donates iPads to help Homestead Hospital patients communicate with their families who are unable to visit.

with their families who are unable to visit with them or say final farewells in person.

One effort we have not yet shared here is our grant to purchase special pulse oximeters, primarily for patients of Homestead Hospital. The hundreds of oximeters we donated allow the hospital to safely send milder cases of COVID-19 home while still being able to continue to monitor oxygen saturation, changes in breathing, hydration and other factors from linked software at the hospital. As hospitals are being overrun these innovative gadgets are helping to free up beds and resources for the most critical cases.

Just last week we provided a grant to Keys Area Health Education Clinics for Rapid Test Kits for COVID. Keys AHEC clinics offer healthcare in all the schools in the Monroe County School District. Normally this program helps stop the spread of illness in the schools with quick treatment, so you can imagine its increased importance now.

According to the organization's CEO Michael Cunningham, they had exhausted all funding options for rapid tests, the benefit of which is "... we know results

in 20 minutes. If a patient is negative, they can return to normal activities (school and teaching). If a patient is positive they can start their quarantine immediately and seek medical treatment. PCR testing normally takes

anywhere from 48 hours to one week to get results which can cause unnecessary delays in care." These simple kits will play an important role in keeping Keys students and faculty healthy and the schools open countywide.

To date the majority of our grants have been for hunger relief and emergency assistance for basic needs. To make a tax-deductible donation to the relief effort, please visit www.orfound.org or mail your check made payable to Ocean Reef Community Foundation, with COVID-19 Relief in the memo line, to 35 Ocean Reef Drive, Ste. 148, Key Largo, FL 33037. Those with an ORCF Donor Advised Fund who wish to donate from their funds, and anyone with questions about the relief effort, can email foundation@oceanreef.com.

Your support of All Charities provides important funding for the Ocean Reef Community Foundation. Become a Patron Supporter, call (305) 367-5996 to learn more.