

SENECA STREET SENTINEL

SENECA STREET COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND
SENECA STREET CHURCH



In this Issue

What does the Community Need? cont
Page 2

Children in After School
Page 2

Children in After School cont

Enrichment Goes on!
Page 3

A Letter from the Executive Director
Page 4

What Does the Community Need?

During this challenging time so many wonderful people and SSCDC volunteers have reached out to our staff asking "What does the community need?". While there were a number of things we anticipated- laptops to keep up with school work, cleaning supplies, groceries- we did not anticipate the lack of food security not only in the Seneca Babcock community, but the city of Buffalo itself. Access to quality food is fundamental to our existence, but there are obstacles to getting that food on the table for many families. Lack of transportation, cost, and grocery stores located far away from your home are common issues for inner city communities.



What Does the Community Need? continued

Our staff, in collaboration with Seneca Street United Methodist Church and its dedicated Pastor Dee Finch, have handed out over 1,000 hot meals in the past two weeks. The generous owner of Fat Bob's Smokehouse also brought 150 additional meals for those in need, giving everyone a much needed day of rest.

Handing out so many meals is no small feat and could not have been done without the loving helping hands of our volunteers. Also provided to families were 15 boxes containing bread, lunch meat, fruit and other grocery items. How was this all made possible?

Leadership Buffalo took the time to create an online fundraiser for our children and families so it was possible to purchase what was needed. Special thanks to Darcy Connors for getting the word out and Cameron Smith for organizing the fundraiser! WNY Foundation generously provided an Emergency Relief Grant to help our children and their families with needs for food, technology and other necessities. The volunteers, church members, staff members and amazing organizations that continue to support and provide for the Seneca Babcock community- you're truly an inspiration. To the many kind hearts that made all of this possible we say THANK YOU! You're the true heroes in our community.

Children Enrolled in the SSCDC After School Program



The SSCDC staff works closely with the children enrolled in our after school program. As you can imagine many strong bonds have been formed over the years, spending at least 12 hours a week together! It was important to us that their needs were being met after school was canceled for a very long period of time. Many families relied on the Buffalo Public School meals that were offered everyday.

Staff has been working hard to pick up breakfast and lunch on the days the food is available and deliver it to 20 children in our program. To ensure no one falls behind on school work we handed out our laptops and with help from the WNY Foundation we were able to purchase the additional laptops needed, hotspots for internet access, and snacks. Everyone knows kids like to stay busy and after being home for an extended period of time it's easy to run out of things to do!

We have opened up our craft cabinets to anyone in need of supplies- puzzles, playdough, craft paper, markers and more. For families that couldn't come by to pick up what they needed we made sure the supplies made it to them. Keep on creating... and keep in touch! Everyone has been making an effort to keep in contact and continue to support one another while our program is on hold. Staff, parents and kids have been calling, texting, sending pictures, audio messages and even getting homework help through Zoom, a video communication app.

Enrichment Goes On!



Talented and dedicated enrichment activity leaders work so hard to share their special talents with the kids in our program. We did not want these opportunities to end just because we couldn't gather in the building. With a little creative thinking the staff has come up with ways to continue these enriching activities at home! The kids have worked so hard and we know a sense of normalcy continuing our weekly routine is important right now. If you took guitar lessons and practiced each week here at the CDC, we made sure you could do that at home! Guitars went out to everyone who took lessons on Tuesday and Thursdays, as well the music books that guided them. Staff received videos of at home practice sessions in progress and we were impressed, keep up the GREAT work!

Jason Holler from Pegula Sports stepped up to help his videography lessons continue to inspire and keep the kids creating! His thoughtful lesson plans and incentives inspired a 23 page story drawn by hand, he plans to produce and bring to life for a very talented 6th grader. It doesn't end there! Now that everyone's online with our laptops we had the ability to share architecture project challenges and Girls On the Run virtual lessons with fun physical activities via YouTube. The home activities focused on topics that are always important, but particularly important during times like this.

A Letter From The Executive Director

It has only been three weeks since this “new normal” began. Our lives have all changed in ways we never would have imagined, and that is even more the situation for our Seneca Street children and their families. Where would the food that kids usually get at school and at our after school program now come from? What about the households that did not have computers for their kids to do schoolwork? How would the families experiencing layoffs from work be able to make ends meet? I have been amazed by the response to this crisis on behalf of our kids and families. The WNY Foundation provided a generous Emergency Relief Grant to be able to purchase laptops, food, school and enrichment supplies and other necessities for our families. The Leadership Buffalo Class of 2019 did an amazing online fundraiser that raised money for food and paper products for our kids, their Moms and the Seneca Babcock community. Other generous people have provided gift cards, food and donations.

I can't say enough about the Wonderful Seneca Street CDC staff who have gone above and beyond during this time. Jamie delivers 100 meals/week for families that don't have cars and is also compiling and delivering boxes of craft supplies for kids. Melanie is providing online activities and mentoring for the kids daily through Facebook and email. Tamera is continuing to be there for our teens, providing encouragement and helping with Mayor's Summer Youth Applications. Beth has been in contact with many, many volunteers and friends to keep them updated on all that is happening at Seneca Street. We are also working with Seneca Street Church to provide take out meals twice a week to 150-200 people each time.

Thank you to each of you for your support, your thoughts and prayers, and for being there for our children and families. Without your help, we could not do this! All of us at Seneca Street CDC are very grateful.....Stay well!

Cheryl Bird

Help us meet the needs of the community

Donate online by clicking the link below

<https://donate.keela.co/seneca-street-community-development-corporation/default-donation-form-176>