

HARLEM UNITED ISSUE 7: PRIDE IN PROTEST EDITION



BEFORE NYS STATE ASSEMBLY ON COVID-19

4

and Protests

Harlem United

Efforts During Covid-19

5

6

9

Welcome from the CEO

Dear Harlem United Family,

This has been a difficult time, there's no way around it. In May, we lost a dear colleague and friend, <u>Wilhelmina Blanch</u>. The loss of a beloved member of the Harlem United family would have been hard to bear under any circumstances, but the suddenness of her passing has been heartbreaking. Our thoughts are with her loved ones in this sad moment of grief. We will miss her dearly.

2020 has been a year of strong emotions: first anxiety, then sadness, and now, anger too. We begin June 2020, LGBTQ Pride month, against the backdrop of 12 weeks' of working from home due to Covid-19, national unrest, and protests to decry police brutality.

We grieve and are outraged by the ongoing police brutality against Black people; we remember all who have been terrorized and murdered - George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and countless others who came before them. We stand in solidarity with our Harlem United colleagues, family, and friends who are people of color, knowing that this time has been especially painful and stressful.

At Harlem United, we know that the movement for Black lives and the movement for LGBTQ rights are necessarily and deeply connected. This is nothing new. For the last 30 years, Harlem United has worked tirelessly to address the intersectional inequalities in healthcare, housing, and social services for for Latino/a and Black communities without barriers of discrimination, racism, homophobia or transphobia.

In line with our harm reduction philosophy, where we build towards positive change in all aspects of our health, we invite all staff to <u>follow us on social media</u>, where we're sharing safety tips for protesters, resources on antiracism, and wellness posts, alongside our vision for a healthier, more just future for the communities of color whom we serve and for us all.

This Pride month, we somberly remember our 1980s roots as an AIDS service provider in the epidemic, at a time when few providers cared about the lives of LGBTQ people of color. We carry on that legacy today, providing not only HIV treatment and prevention, but now offering housing, healthcare, and supportive services in a culturally affirmative, trauma-informed approach to underserved communities.

Again and again, I want to thank each and every one of you for showing up and doing the work that has to be done as providers of essential services. It's not easy, but our clients depend on us and you have all made Harlem United proud. Together, we shine with pride, in where we have come from, and where we will reach, as we continue to work hard, building a future that provides equal access for all.

In Solidarity and Strength













CEO Editorial

2

Thanks and Strength from the CEO

Community Advocacy

4

CEO's Testimony to the NY State Joint Public Hearing on Needed Solutions for Covid-19's Impact on Communities of Color

Current Events

5

Black Lives Matter, Wellness Resources, & Pride

Special Projects at Harlem United

Evaluation & Population Health Presents on Social Determinants of Health

Strategic Advancement Updates

Fundraising during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Social Media Updates

8

#GivingTuesdayNow Peer-to-Peer Campaign Report

Harlem United Programing at a Glance

2_0

The Wellness Center and IT efforts during Covid-19

Staff Resources - Covid-19

10

Updated List of Covid-19 Resources

Staff Highlights and Announcements

10-11

Acknowledgements for a job well done

HR and Training Corner

12

Trainings for June and July 2020

Upcoming Days of Interest

12

June and July 2020 Important Events



New York State Legislature
Jacquelyn Kilmer
CEO
Harlem United

Solutions to the Disproportionate Impact of Covid-19 on Minority Communities

On May 18, Jacqui Kilmer gave testimony before the New York State Senate Joint Public Hearing entitled <u>"Exploring Solutions to the Disproportionate Impact of Covid-19 on Minority Communities."</u>

In light of Harlem United's 30 years' expertise in serving communities of color who have been continually impacted by a lack of healthcare, housing and social services access, she offered short and long-term solutions to fortify underserved communities affected by Covid-19 from even further devastating damage and to address the systemic barriers that contributed to this public health crisis.



Testing

We must prioritize testing in the hardest-hit communities. To effectively reach people where they are, testing should be available at community health centers and other community-based alternatives like syringe exchange sites.



Regulatory and Payment Changes

Certain regulations that were temporarily loosened (for example, for provision of telehealth services) due to Covid-19 to allow providers to be appropriately compensated for services should be made permanent to make care more accessible.



Technology Investment

Funding is critically necessary for providers to invest in IT infrastructure to transition capacity from in-person services to telelhealth. Additional funding is needed to provide technology like internet and smart phones to individuals in low-income communities and shelters so they can keep in contact with their providers.



Medical Respite Facilities

We need to greatly expand the number of Covid-19 medical respite accommodations for convalescing or exposed community members. This is particularly critical for people experiencing homelessness, people living in nursing homes, or people living in multi-generational homes.



Long-term Needs

We must make affordable housing, healthy food options, and livable-wage jobs available to every New Yorker, with equitable access to communities that are hardest hit, such as Black and Latino/a communities. This will take significant and ongoing investments from every level of government. We must also address the distrust of the healthcare system by ensuring that there are safe, affirming, compassionate places for communities of color to receive care.

Resources in a Time of Stress and Grief

Harlem United stands in solidarity with our community as we protest for an end to police brutality against Black people and seek racial justice in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. Black Lives Matter.

For many of our staff who identify as African American or Latino(as), and/or who may have experienced community violence or police brutality firsthand, the events of the last week have been especially distressing and outrageous. These tragedies and subsequent news broadcasts have been relentless, shocking, and scary.

But you are not alone. We would like to remind all staff that these experiences of vicarious trauma, grief, and exhaustion are collective and that we have resources to support us during this difficult period in our country's history.

Here is a list of online resources providing mental health resources specifically by and for Black people who may have specific needs during this time.

- <u>Dive In Well</u>: Digital wellness classes
- Sista Afya: Individual therapy and groups for Black women
- <u>HealHaus</u>: Digital wellness classes
- · Therapy for Black Girls: Directory of culturally affirming therapists and free weekly support group
- The Nap Ministry: Blog and Instagram championing Black rest as a form of reparations

Here is a list of resources available to all, regardless of ethnic or racial identity.

- All Harlem United employees can access licensed counselors remotely through the Employee Assistance Program. Call 800-386-7055 or visit www.ibhworklife.com
- Inclusive Therapists: Directory of culturally affirming therapists regardless of race, sexual or gender identity, religion, or ability
- NYC Well: Free online mental health support All July Holidays on social media/ Social media through 7/5
- NYC COVID Care Network: Support for essential workers and their families

LGBTQ Pride Month

June is LGBTQ Pride Month. Normally, this month is a time to gather with chosen family and celebrate the LGBTQ community at special events, marches, and parades held to affirm the rights of sexual and gender minorities.

Before the last few months, Harlem United staff and clients were excitedly planning the great events we anticipate all year: the ADHC Pride Show, NYC Pride, and Harlem Pride. But all that has changed. Pride this year looks very different, due to Covid-19 social distancing measures and, more recently, the protests against police brutality throughout the US. Now, many of our staff and clients are attending the daily protests to make our world a better, brighter place for everyone, and especially those who are Black and Brown. This too, is in the true spirit of Pride, where we commemorate the Stonewall Riots.

The Stonewall Riots began when police raided the Stonewall Inn on June 28, 1969. According to many accounts, <u>Stormé DeLarverie</u>, a Black butch lesbian, evaded her unjust arrest and encouraged the growing crowd to fight back, starting the uprising that would become the Stonewall Riots. Lead primarily by trans women of color such as <u>Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera</u> (pictured in the background on this page), thousands of protestors took to the streets over the next six nights, looting, freeing people arrested by the police, and damaging police property in acts of resistance and defiance against police harassment and violence. It was these riots, dubbed the Stonewall Uprising, that gave birth to the modern LGBTQ rights movement and began the annual tradition of the NYC Pride March and subsequent celebrations throughout June.

Most major social justice movements in the U.S. share these two things in common: they were powered by the leadership, ingenuity, and hard work of African American and Latino/a people (many of whom were LGBTQ); and they included both non-violence protests and riots that included destruction of property.

This year, Pride looks like supporting the protests against police brutality and systemic racism in any way possible.

Virtual Pride Events:

TBA

Harlem Pride

June 9 – 29

Criminal Queerness Festival

lune 13

Brooklyn Pride

June 19 - 21

Pride 2020 Dragfest

June 22

Garden Party Kick-Off

June 27

Dyke March

June 28

NYC Pride Broadcast

For daily updates about protests around the city @JusticeForGeorgeNYC on Instagram or visit the Movement for Black Lives website

Evaluation & Population Health Present at Conference

Danielle Strauss, Associate Vice President of Evaluation & Population Health, and Katerina Chapman, Population Health Specialist, presented at the 32nd National Conference on Social Work & HIV/AIDS in late May 2020. It was held virtually via Zoom due to the pandemic. Their presentation, "The Impact of Social Determinants of Health on Viral Load Suppression Rates of a Cohort of Low Income PLWH of Color from NYC," discussed results of the PRAPARE (Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks and Experiences) assessment of social determinants of health administered to patients at the Nest.

The results of the assessment, conducted with 283 patients, revealed that PLWHA who received services from the Nest were significantly more likely to report problems with transportation for medical and nonmedical reasons, compared to patients of the Nest who were not HIV positive. There were also significant differences between the two groups with regard to education.

HIV positive patients overall reported more problems with the social determinants of health compared to the HIV negative patients, and virally unsuppressed patients reported more problems compared to the virally suppressed patients.



Recommendations for next steps include consideration for assisting the HIV positive patients at the Nest with transportation as well as restructuring how we administer the survey to ensure that it is a safe place for the patients to talk with their providers about some of these difficult and sensitive issues such as safety and domestic violence.

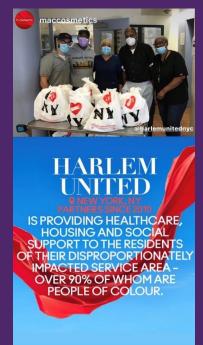
Congratulations, Danielle and Katerina! The presentation is available here.

For more information, please contact <u>Danielle Strauss</u>, Associate Vice President of Evaluation & Population Health.

Partners Recognize Harlem United

MAC AIDS

MAC AIDS highlighted Harlem United on their website and social media as part of their VIVA GLAM campaign.



Amida Care

We received a shout-out on Twitter from Amida Care for our services during the COVID-19 crisis. Congratulations to all for the great work you've done these past few months!



Strategic Advancement Updates

The Strategic Advancement department transitioned to working 100% from home mid-March 2020 at the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic. To assist our staff in keeping in touch, we implemented the use of check-in/check-out emails with our daily task lists. Also, we have been using Slack, a free communication software that functions like a chat platform to facilitate "office drop-in" conversations and questions about assignments, conducting one-on-one and group meetings using Zoom.

Grants

Over the past 12 weeks, our team has submitted approximately 20 grant applications, as we raced to ensure that special Covid-19 related funding opportunities were taken advantage of to the fullest. Our hard work has paid off and we have received 15 different awards from foundations, government supplements, and family foundations from March until May 2020. The awards total a whopping \$1,527,545, with significant funding coming through HRSA (\$985,045).

Communications

We also stepped our efforts across our communications channels to ensure that the community around us knew what we needed and what services we were offering. We made sure that we highlighted our essential service staff and that our website and social media amplified the services that we offered both on-site and virtually. With the help of members from the Leadership Team, we engaged new donors through social media to lead a Covid-19 Response Fundraising Campaign in timing with #GivingTuesdayNow, an international giving day that was declared to help nonprofits make up for lost revenue due to social distancing requirements and closings.

Individual Giving

This led to phenomenal results in individual giving, with Harlem United raising \$24,275 in cash gifts from 231 donations throughout the months of March, April, May and the first week of June 2020. Additionally, 24 individuals and organizations donated in-kind gifts, such as personal protection equipment, cloth masks, soap, and pantry boxes, with a total value of \$47,580 in goods. Overall, this brings our FY20 monthly gift average to just over \$4,000 (\$4,158.90), a 40% increase from our monthly individual giving revenue in July 2019. These funds, and those from the private foundations awarded through grants all go directly to Harlem United's General/Unrestricted Fund, helping us to maintain program flexibility and to pivot for the agency's projected needs.

We would like to especially recognize staff, friends and family who donated during this period; we are so thankful to you all!

For more information, please contact <u>Mari Eva Mendes</u>, Associate Vice President of Strategic Advancement

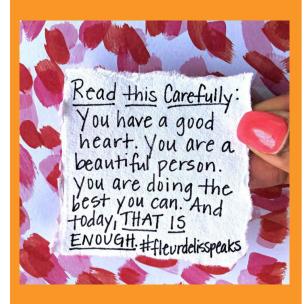
Top Social Post

The top Facebook post in April was a highlight of Christophe Wandaogo, Patient Navigator and Jitney Driver. The post was shared in French and English. Christophe shared the French post on his personal Facebook page and got a great reaction! 817 people responded to the post, including words of encouragement and thanks in French and English.

To recommend a colleague for a social media shout out, <u>email Maya "Marty" Martin-Udry</u>, Director of Communications and PR.



In May, the top Instagram post was a heartfelt affirmation from Instagram user FleurDeLisSpeaks. In this difficult time, 50 liked, forwarded, and bookmarked these words of care.



Covid-19 Peer-to-Peer Digital Campaign

From May 1st to May 12th, the Strategic Advancement team worked with 15 members of the Leadership Team to raise funds for Harlem United's Covid-19 response, with the goal of raising \$5,000 to help cover lost revenue and additional costs due to the Covid-19 crisis. The campaign exceeded expectations, and we raised \$9,200 from 95 donors.



Example eblast from the peer-to-peer campaign



campaign

Timing the campaign to coincide with #Giving-TuesdayNow, a new global online giving day to help non-profits impacted by Covid-19, our strategy utilized peer-to-peer crowdfunding, allowing individuals to fundraise in their personal social media networks on Harlem United's behalf. This approach is often more successful because people are more likely to give when asked directly by someone they know.

We worked with our Leadership Team participants to set up personal fundraising pages on the crowdfunding site GoFundMe Charity, with personal fundraising goals ranging from \$350 to \$2,000. All of these fundraising pages were linked to our central campaign, so any money donated automatically went to Harlem United. Staff then shared their personal fundraisers with their own circle of friends and family over social media and email.

We supported staff fundraisers on Harlem United's official channels, sharing links to staff fundraising pages on our social media accounts.

On #GivingTuesdayNow, we sent two eblasts to Harlem United's email marketing lists (totaling 4,503 contacts). Adhering to email marketing best practices around sharing concrete goals and setting close time limits to encourage increased donations, we asked our subscribers to help us reach our

\$5,000 goal within 24 hours.

Thank you to all of our fundraisers: Dr. Vera Antonios, Raesha Cartagena, Laura Grund, Mohammad Karim, Olga Keber, Jacqui Kilmer, Tom Marino, Tamisha McPherson, Mari Eva Mendes, Dr. Deborah Ottenheimer, Shaneequa Parker, Kevin Rente, Mike Rustin, and Preston Wholley. We applaud all your efforts in supporting us to raise a significant amount in a short period of time, and we are grateful to you.

For more information, please contact Maya "Marty" Martin-Udry, Director of Communications & Public Relations

The Wellness Center

The Wellness Center at The Nest continues to be a place of healing, strength-building and emotional support in Harlem since its start in November 2015.

Located on the first floor of The Nest, the Wellness Center is an inclusive environment providing comprehensive mental health services to the community such as individual, group, and family psychotherapy, as well as medication management and psychological evaluations (both in person and telehealth). Currently, the center sees an average of 145 patients a week in on-site and telehealth appointments during this time of increased stress and uncertainty.

To help address the issues of those most in need in our community, Harlem United's Wellness Center also offers:

- In-office service for crisis prevention;
- A 24-hour crisis line (917-969-5504);
- A resource guide of mental health strategies is available upon request;
- Behavioral health services for those who want only medication management; and
- Counseling for those individuals who would like therapy.

We are excited about collaborating with other departments in our Harlem United community: referrals from other departments for new clients are being accepted. New groups, such as ones to work through grief, anxiety or women's issues are being considered at this time and we welcome new suggestions.

Finally, we are proud to send out a shout out to Managing Clinical Director, Preston Wholley, for his leadership and due diligence with his dedicated staff during this critical time. All referrals and prospective patients can be sent to the intake specialist, <u>Latisha Hopewell</u>.

For more information, please contact <u>Stephanie Young-Geye</u>, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, Behavioral Health

IT Department

Recently, we spoke to Mohammad Karim, Vice President of IT, about Harlem United's 4-person IT team. He shared his thoughts about IT and the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on how we function as an agency, "My team has stepped up tremendously in the past 8 weeks to help staff adjust to working offsite, while still letting staff know we are present to deal with their needs, even though it's through virtual communication." Currently, the IT team works 5 days a week. Staff alternates working on-site Mondays and Wednesdays and works remotely the remaining 3 days.

A majority of HU staff is now working from home, using computers and cell phones, to provide support services to clients. Healthcare providers and Health Home staff were given laptops or tablets to provide telehealth services. With staff working offsite, there has been an increase in the number of requests to IT. Within the past two months, the IT team has experienced at least a 10% increase in service requests. For perspective, in the last year alone, the IT department reported an average of 4,006 ticket requests; that is over 300 requests per month. According to Mohammad, the challenge is not only addressing multiple issues, but in resolving problems in a timely manner. Frequently addressed issues are:

- Password problems;
- System freezes
- Connection issues to the shared drive;
- Folders are not available; and
- Email access security breaches

Troubleshooting remotely has not been easy, given the fact that tickets have increased approximately by 10% from this time last year. Quick Resources:

The IT team is accessible via cell phone or email;

Tech issues should be emailed to Tech_Support@harlemunited.org; this provides access and review of the queue by the entire way IT team and they can get back to you right away; Urgent matters should be copied to Mohammad Karim; and If the problem persists, contact your supervisor directly to work with IT (for example, a problem with your equipment or if there is a need to order a replacement). The IT team has already begun looking at what the our new normal moving forward will be. This would include: Upgrading our security system to a Multiple Factor Authentication (MFA) platform to help secure our data information through a Cloud configuration; Refurbishing and replacing outdated IT equipment and laptops for optimum remote work; Ensuring that staff feels connected to the IT Department despite only having virtual communication; and Securing funding through Strategic Advancement to build the IT department and enhance the agency's technological infrastructure and resources. On behalf of all of us at Harlem United, we wish to thank the IT Department for its hard work and keeping us connected during this critical time!! We couldn't do it without you. For more information, please

contact Mohammad Karim, Vice President of IT.

IT Department Staff. From left to right: Dennis Sockwell, Alex Abreu, Mohammad Karim, and Allen Hong

Staff Announcements

We are proud to announce the recent promotions of three of our Harlem United staff:

Eddy Canon was promoted to Senior Director, Human Resources;

Jamila Taylor was promoted to Director, Administrative Operations; and

Anné Bullard was promoted to Managing Director of HRA

We thank them for their dedication and hard work. They are tremendous assets to Harlem United!

We honor the following staff members for their 10+ years of dedicated service to Harlem United:

Alycia Cooksey – AOD Specialist, ADHC West Earl Cox - Vice President, Housing Benita Vera – Senior Mental Health Specialist, Housing

> You are tremendous assets to our organization!

Farewells and Condolences

Last month, with heavy hearts, we bid farewell to Wilhelmina Blanch, Program Director in Prevention. In more than four years at Harlem United, Wilhelmina worked tirelessly for our testing clients, making deep connections in the Harlem United community. Recently, she took on a greater leadership role, directly overseeing the centralized peer program. The loss of a beloved member of the Harlem United family would have been hard to bear under any circumstances, but the suddenness of her passing has been heartbreaking for so many of us. Our thoughts are with her loved ones in this difficult time.





JhaMauL-AnToine Pinkney, Medical Office Assistant at the Nest, has reached out to several potential individual donors and so far has successfully secured a donation of 200 KN-95 (valued at \$850) from Valentine Ewudo, BSN RN.

Danielle Strauss helped her neighbor, Amy Micallef, right, make 1,000 cloth masks for patients and residents to use at our facilities. Thank you, both!

Covid-19 Additional Resources

In the last edition of our newsletter, we included a list of Covid-19 resources. Here are several additional resources that we have added to that list.

CDC list of symptoms

NYC Citywide Information Portal

NYC LGBTQ resources

NYS Guide to Health Insurance Coverage for Older New Yorkers

Safety guidance for volunteers

NYC food delivery assistance

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Covid-19 resources

Resources for safer drug use during Covid-19 Crisis

Find a Covid-19 testing site near you

Visit the Children's Museum of Manhattan

virtually

Staff Highlights

We see you.

The Covid-19 crisis has been a difficult time for our agency and for each of us personally, but we are so proud of the way the staff has come together to support each other and our clients, patients, and residents. One of the ways we have seen this is staff stepping up and helping the agency to secure the additional PPE that is so critical at this time. Below are some of the wonderful letters and testimonies to all our staff has accomplished in the past 12 weeks!



Staff members from left to right: Sabrina Warren, Felix Ramirez, Matthew Goode, and Danita Matthews

Special Thanks from Margo Praylow, Managing Clinical Director at ADHC

We would like to extend our sincere "THANKS" to the **entire ADHC staff**, including Clinical, Nursing, Dietitian, Health Home/Health Home Plus, and the kitchen staff. Assisting community members with support services, such as food delivery, grab-and-go meals, telehealth services, care plans, assessment development, engagement for client teleconference, and medication re-fills, our staff have focused on the collective goal of assisting our community during this time of uncertainty. WELL DONE TEAM!

Huge THANKS from Diana Christoforou, Housing Clinical Director

To all of the staff at New Broadway, FHW, FHE, HUD Women and Children, and HUD FROST'D, we THANK YOU for all that you have done. The staff has worked effortlessly to ensure that the majority of their clients have primary care and mental health care in place by contacting clients weekly, providing referrals, and offering support even while they were dealing with their own loss. You have all gone above and beyond!

Thank you note from Gwen Didier, Managing Director for Health Home

These past three months have been quite trying, but the Health Home Team has proven to be up to the challenge! Thank you for all of your efforts, diligence and overall hard work. Because of your efforts, close to a 1000 clients have successfully received food, Covid-19 isolation hotel, primary care and substance use program referrals, and most of all, a comforting and guiding voice when so many felt lonely, anxious, and isolated.

Thank you from Anné Bullard, Managing Director Short Term Housing

Since the onset of working remotely, the program has maintained contact with 87% of our clients while successfully facilitating independent living skills' groups. Our clients expressed sincere gratitude for the program's ability to keep the groups going as it is a major outlet for their stress and anxiety.

Housing Client Success Stories from Sigrid Maxwell, Managing Director for FHE & FHW

Sigrid Maxwell shared client success stories with us over HUD Women & Children, FROST'D, FHE and FHW. In Women & Children, a new client was successfully housed during the pandemic, while another recovered from Covid-19 at home with her children. In FROST'D, a client just completed his Bachelor's Degree in Science, graduating early. He is now employed and certified as a security guard with hopes of moving on to another position after jobs become available. Finally, a FH client has added playing a new keyboard to his daily routine to combat substance use and depression with extra support from the Senior Mental Health Specialist. Thank you to all staff for making sure our clients are cared for during this difficult period!



Upcoming Events

June is...<u>LGBTQ Pride Month</u> & Men's Health Month

Daily Protests in NYC

JusticeForGeorgeNYC Movement for Black Lives AngelyssKay on Instagram

June 10th - 16th

National Men's Health Week

June 14th

World Blood Donor Day

June 18th - 24th

National Nursing Assistant Week

June 19th

Juneteenth

June 21st

Father's Day

June 21st - 27th

Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

June 27th

National HIV Testing Day, Virtual Dyke March

lune 28th

Reclaim Pride Queer Liberation Martc

July

July 3rd

Harlem United closed in observance of Independence Day

July 4th

Independence Day, Asalha Puja

July 26th

National Parents' Day

July 30th - 31st

Eid al-Adha

HR & Training Corner

ASSISTANCE

Please join us for a training on "Recognizing Personality Disorder" to address the following on Zoom:

- Knowledge and understanding of personality disorders and their different types
- Common comorbidities found with personality disorders
- Basic management strategies used in treating personality disorders

For more information, please contact <u>Jamila Taylor</u>, Director of Administrative Operations, at <u>itaylor@harlemunited.org</u>.



SUPPORT

TIPS

ADVICE