

YOUR HELP DURING COVID KEEPS THE CORNER GOING

A message from Versell Smith, Jr.,
Corner Executive Director



This has been an extremely difficult year, but your support of the Corner has allowed us to continue serving youth without interruption. You helped us implement telemedicine within days of the COVID shutdown. You've provided us with masks, cleaning supplies and other PPE. You've done virtual drives for the Corner Store and Food Pantry to serve our youth who are struggling.

More than \$75,000 from individual donations has been received to assist the Corner through the pandemic. In addition, we have received COVID relief funding from **Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Ethel & James Flinn Foundation, First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, Rotary Club of Ann Arbor, United Way of Washtenaw County, and others.** We continue to work with **Michigan Medicine and Ford Motor Company Fund** to deliver much-needed mental health care and programs to our community.

I was so proud when our staff and medical providers participated in the "White Coats for Black Lives" demonstration to show our support for #BlackLivesMatter. More than just providing quality care for all, we are actively finding ways to promote equity in health care in our community. We hope to share more with you about these developing projects in our next newsletter.

So thank you to each of you for being active partners in our work to keep young people healthy through the pandemic and beyond.

Versell Smith, Jr., Executive Director

Corner Health Center Board of Directors 2020-2021

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* In memorial



We are grateful to Jack Billi for his leadership as board president for the past two years. Dr. Billi helped build a new leadership team at the Corner, and oversaw the creation of our 3-year strategic plan. He supported changes in financial and human resource management that continues to strengthen the Corner. Dr. Billi is a passionate advocate for healthy youth. Thank you, Jack, for your service!



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Your Gift Today Gives Youth a Healthier Tomorrow

More than ever, your gift today helps the Corner continue our mission to keep youth healthy during the pandemic and beyond. Gifts of stock and other appreciated assets, or through your Donor Advised Fund can offer additional tax advantages. You may make a tax-deductible gift securely online at www.cornerhealth.org.

If you have included the Corner in your will or estate plans, you qualify to become a member of the Corner **Lotus Society**. For more information, contact Paula Brown, CFRE, at 734-714-2251 or pbrown@cornerhealth.org.

Thank you!



FALL 2020

You Find Babies at the Corner!



Lakhaila and Armani with newborn son, Major

You know about our mission to serve 12- to 25-year-olds, but one of the happiest events you'll see at the Corner is the birth of a baby. The Corner works with our teens and young adults to help them plan when and how to start their families. We provide top-quality contraception and prenatal care, and support the moms through birth and post-natal care. Your support helps these parents provide for their babies and assures each family is off to a strong and healthy start.

The word about the Corner's Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP) is getting out. "So far this year, we have seen **31 births compared to 20 births over the same time last year**," says Kate Share, MIHP Coordinator. "We're also seeing double the number of pregnancies to women under 21 since January, many since the start of COVID, so we are watching closely to see if this trend continues."

The Corner is an important resource for maternal-infant health. **In Washtenaw County, infant mortality is identified as a top concern** by the 2019 Community Needs Assessment report compiled by University of Michigan Medicine, St. Joseph Mercy Health Care System, and Washtenaw County Health Department. The Washtenaw County rate of infant mortality is

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most critical in low-income and/or African-American babies. At the Corner, 66% of our prenatal patients last year were Black or African-American, with 20% of these women age 19 years or younger; 90% of all Corner patients are at or below the federal poverty line.

"Birth can be a very scary thing for our first-time moms. For women who may not have family support, or who just want extra help during birth, we pair them with a doula," explains Kate. A **doula** is specially trained to provide comfort, encouragement and support during labor. **Thanks to The Mericos Foundation and donors like you**, we are able to expand our doula program over the next 12 months to help with this increase in Corner births.

Another simple, cost-effective way to promote the health of the baby and the mother is breastfeeding. In the US, only about 60% of African-American mothers breastfeed compared to 80% of white mothers. Reasons include lack of education on the benefits, feelings of embarrassment and discomfort, lack of access to lactation support, even cultural attitudes based in racism.

Lisa Herranz, RN for Corner MIHP and International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, explains, "Breastfeeding is a wonderful way for mom and baby to bond, and offers great nutritional value for the baby. We spend a lot of time before the baby is born to educate the moms on breast feeding, and support their efforts after the baby is born. That's why **most Corner moms breastfeed their babies.**"

New parents Lakhaila and Armani were recently in at the Corner for their 3-week old son Major's check-up. "A friend recommended the Corner when I found out I was pregnant," explains Lakhaila. "I knew I wanted to do everything natural. The Corner connected me with a midwife, and before Major was born, they taught me all about breastfeeding. It was scary, because at first Major started losing weight. But the Corner team kept working with me, and now he's doing great!"

The Corner also supports moms and babies through group programs around topics like Safe Sleep for Baby, Self-Care for Moms, and Parent Café, which we look forward to resuming after COVID. We also counsel them on contraceptive options after their babies are born to promote healthy spacing between births. "The Corner is dedicated to the health and wellbeing of young mothers and their babies," says Kate.

For more information, visit www.cornerhealth.org and click on Sweet Pea MIHP under "Services."

Long Time Donors Finding New Ways to Help

David and Carol Clifford have been strong supporters of the Corner for more than 20 years. David is a past president of our Board of Directors, and served on the capital campaign committee to purchase and renovate our buildings. In September, David and Carol decided to provide extra support to help the Corner during the pandemic through a special program, #HalfMyDAF.

#HalfMyDAF is a movement created by philanthropists Jennifer and David Risher to “unlock \$120 billion in hidden funding” resting in donor advised fund (DAF) accounts by encouraging those with DAFs to contribute half of their fund’s assets to charitable causes. Because of the current increase in need for support, the Risher’s offered a **matching grant** opportunity for the charities benefiting from this challenge if the donor provided confirmation of halving their DAF by September 30th.

David and Carol decided to jump on this opportunity, with the Corner at the top of their giving list. “We feel this is a very unique way to give extra help to our favorite organizations,” explains Carol. “We’re excited to be part of this innovative method to give, which also gives our favorite charities a chance at additional funding.”

The Corner thanks David and Carol for this special gift. For more information about this program, visit www.halfmyDAF.com and speak with your DAF financial institution. You may also call Paula Brown, CFRE, Director of Development at the Corner, 734-714-2251 or pbrown@cornerhealth.org.



YOUR SUPPORT INCREASES OPTIONS FOR YOUNG WOMEN

Long-Acting, Removable Contraceptives, or LARCs are highly effective, safe and private options for preventing unplanned pregnancies. But they are very expensive and not always covered by insurance. And for some of our younger patients who need to keep their contraception private, using insurance is not an option. Lisa Herranz, our MIHP Nurse wanted to do something about it. She wrote a letter earlier this year to select individuals in the community about the need to provide LARCs for those who need them but could not pay.

And you responded! Our goal was to raise \$3,000, and so far more than \$8,000 has been raised! Thank you for making this option available for anyone needing this protection. For more information, please contact Paula Brown at pbrown@cornerhealth.org.

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Corner Health Center is to inspire 12- to 25-year-olds (and their children) to achieve and sustain healthy lives by providing judgment-free, affordable health and wellness care and education.



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS WORKING AT THE CORNER

In September, Vicki Degraffinried celebrated 20 years working at the Corner. Her first role was helping patients apply for WIC benefits and now, 20 years and thousands of young patients and participants later, Vicki continues to greet and care for our youth each day as our Front Desk Receptionist. For many of our patients, Vicki is the Corner.

“Sometimes, I feel like I need to be a mom with our patients, and teach them positive ways to work with their health care provider,” she says. “They don’t always have someone in their life that can help them like that.” She has stayed at the Corner because “I love what we do for our patients. I will fight for them to make sure they get the care they need.” She is optimistic about the future of the Corner, in spite of the pandemic. “We’ll be okay. We’ll just work a little harder.”

YOUR CORNER UPDATES

- ▶ **Thank you to all our mask makers and mask donors!** In addition to helping our staff, we are distributing these to patients to help keep their families safe.
- ▶ The Corner is planning a Saturday **Flu Vaccination Clinic** on October 10th for all ages to receive their flu shots. This is in collaboration with the Washtenaw Health Department. Visit our website for more information – www.cornerhealth.org.
- ▶ **Healthy Youth Healthy Futures** at the Corner held summer virtual cooking and nutrition classes and physical wellness activities outdoors this summer with strong attendance.
- ▶ The Corner has a new power generator that keeps our vaccines, medicine and food pantry refrigerators and freezers running through occasional power outages. Thanks to **The Carls Foundation** for this important protection!

WELCOME TO NEW STAFF!

- **Stephanie Benedict**, Human Resources Coordinator
- **Lisa Blake, RN**, Associate Director
- **Kamilah Davis-Wilson**, Community Outreach and Youth Education Manager
- **Adenike Griffin, MS, LMSW**, Behavioral Health Manager
- **Brianna Minor**, Health Educator



The **Corner Store** provides food, toiletries, diapers, and other needed items to our patients. **If you would like to organize a drive** for our Store, you may call Ava Ohlgren, Development Associate, at 734-714-2237. Please visit our website for a list of our most needed items - www.cornerhealth.org