

W Y M A N COVID-19:



THE IMPACT AND OUR RESPONSE

In the spring of 2020, our nation was faced with a global pandemic that changed life for all of us.

COVID-19 and the accompanying economic crisis highlighted, and exacerbated, daily challenges that so many of our young people face – systemic racism, poverty, and educational inequities. Adolescents are uniquely socially oriented and impressionable, and therefore face significant challenges from school closures, social distancing, and isolation. Youth anxiety, depression, and loneliness have increased drastically, and youth feel disconnected from their peers and schools. They report feeling concerned about their health, well-being, and futures.

Because of this, we altered our program delivery and our work environment to continue offering crucial supports to our young people. We quickly adjusted our direct services to virtual delivery, and adapted curriculum and facilitation methods to accommodate the changing needs of youth. Our **priorities throughout the last year have been focused on reaching all our youth** and maintaining consistent relationships, connections, and supports; attending to the emergency needs of our young people; and listening, learning, and adjusting our work.



When schools closed and social distancing orders went into effect, **WYMAN LEADERS** moved to virtual engagement opportunities for youth – including academic enrichment lessons, virtual college tours, online college application prep workshops, weekly Zoom meetings focused on building peer relationships, and Summer Bridge sessions focused on study skills, navigating online classes, and mental health for youth in postsecondary schools.

Our Wyman Leaders also met virtually with Wyman staff one-on-one to receive social-emotional support and coaching, and received personalized care packages so they could engage in educational, social-emotional, and advocacy activities within their own homes. We were able to secure funding to provide technology resources (e.g., laptops, tablets, internet services, etc.) to teens who needed them, so they could fully participate in virtual school and Wyman Leaders, and so they could remain in touch with friends during this difficult time.

Young people in our **TEEN OUTREACH PROGRAM® (TOP®)** also transitioned to virtual school and program delivery within the Ferguson-Florissant School District, and the School District of University City. Our TOP® staff worked alongside our school partners to adjust programming in a way that aligned with the online learning methods implemented by each school district. They succeeded in delivering content through a variety of online strategies, keeping youth engaged and connected, delivering TOP® content, maintaining relationships, reaching out to parents, and providing additional support and resources for families as the crisis unfolded.

Our **NATIONAL NETWORK** began delivering trainings virtually – redesigning and producing virtual versions of the Training of Trainers for our Teen Outreach Program® (TOP®), summer Facilitator Institutes, and their Annual Coordinator Learning Exchange. The National Network also partnered with our local teams to adapt our programming so we can continue to connect with youth in this socially distanced environment. In partnership with our TOP® team, they adapted and released **OVER 40 TOP® LESSONS FOR VIRTUAL IMPLEMENTATION**. Along with our Wyman Leaders team, they piloted a virtual Teen Connection Project (TCP) over the summer with teens in our Wyman Leaders program.

The **WRAP AROUND SERVICES** team at the School District of University City, along with additional Wyman volunteers, distributed **OVER 600,000 MEALS** and delivered household supplies, books, and even desks to students who needed them.

We know that the young people we serve and their families were among the first to be impacted by this pandemic, and will be among the last to recover. We know that recovery will take time. We will remain consistent in our steadfast commitment to our mission, and our relentless support of the young people who count on us, to ensure a productive recovery for our community's youth.

