

Helping Others Through the Holidays

The Importance of Relationship Building to Support Communities

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INTRODUCTION

- “Commonwealth Mental Health and Wellness Center [CMHWC] is a comprehensive Behavioral Health and Wellness clinic designed to provide the highest quality of care, while meeting the diverse needs of our clients. Through service excellence, exceptional clinical quality, community leadership and compassionate care, we are committed to offering innovative services that set the standard for behavioral health care” (CMHWC, 2020).
- CMHWC employs holistic approaches to traditional and non-traditional methods of therapy (CMHWC, 2020).
- CMHWC empowers children, teens, adults and their families by promoting collaboration between clients, their community supports and the CMHWC team to improve their behavioral, mental, and emotional health and social issues (CMHWC, 2020).
- CMHWC Serves about 200 or more families yearly (CMHWC, 2020).

CMHWC services include:

- Individual, Family & Group Mental Health Counseling
- Individual, Family & Group Substance Abuse Counseling
- LGBTQ Focused Services
- Women Focused Services
- Youth Focused Services
- Alternative Medicine Therapy
- HIV Education, Testing, and Counseling
- Community Supportive Case Management Program

RELATED LITERATURE

- Research demonstrates that food desert environments limit low-income shoppers’ ability to purchase healthy foods, thereby increasing their likelihood of diet-related illnesses (Palmer, 2013)
- Obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes disproportionately affect low-income, urban communities (Palmer, 2013)
- These food environments affect shopping and eating behaviors, putting residents of low-income urban communities at a disadvantage in achieving healthy eating habits and thereby increasing their risk of diet-related illness (Palmer, 2013)

WHY ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD MATTERS

- Accessing healthy food is a challenge for many Americans—particularly those living in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, rural areas and small towns.
- Access to nutritious food is associated with lower risk for obesity and other diet-related diseases.
- Healthy food retail creates jobs and helps revitalize low-income neighborhoods and towns.

INTERNSHIP PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Developed a tracking systems to document demographical information of families served by CMHWC
- Conducted a needs assessment to determine the needs of families served by CMHWC
- Created and sent correspondences to CMHWC providers and donor organizations regarding the Thanksgiving Holiday Basket giveaway and how they could help
- Formed a spreadsheet of needs assessment questions, clients' information as well as donors Information.
- Contacted providers to collect clients' names and phone numbers
- Established a grocery list of items to buy for Thanksgiving baskets
- Constructed and distributed the Thanksgiving holiday baskets for giveaway

Household Size	Housing Status	Food Restrictions/Allergies	Cooking/Kitchen Materials	Received Basket
3	Section 8	no	yes	Yes
4	Section 8	no	Yes	Yes
4	Section 8	no	yes	Yes
6	Section 8	no	yes	Yes
4	house	no	yes	Yes
6	section 8 (Home)	no	yes	Yes
2	section 8 Home	no	yes	Yes
5	Home	no	Yes	Yes
4	Home	no	Yes	Yes
5	Home	no	Yes	Yes
2	program shelter	No	yes	Yes
4	Rent	No	Yes	Yes
3	House	No	Yes	Yes
4	house	no	yes	Yes
2	Public housing	no	yes	Yes
4	Home	No	yes	Yes
4	Apartment	No	Yes	Yes
2	Apartment	No	Yes	Yes
3	apartment	No	Yes	Yes
5	House	No	yes	Yes
8	Homeless (Scatted Shelter)	No	Yes	Yes
2	Home	no	yes	Yes
4	rent	No	yes	Yes
5	apartment	no	Yes	Yes
6	House	No	Yes	Yes
3	rent	no	yes	Yes
4	rent	peanuts	yes	Yes
3	renting	Fish/peanut		Yes
1	house	no		Yes
2	rent	no		Yes
4				Yes
2	house	No		Yes
3	rent	no		Yes
2	rent	no		Yes

ABOVE: Needs Assessment questionnaire spreadsheet

895 Blue Hill Avenue
Dorchester, MA 02124
www.cmhwc.com
T 617-506-8188
F 617-297-5039

Date: 10/16/20

Dear Potential Community Donor,
My name is Takyi Jamison, currently I am a Student Intern from Salem State University, working at Commonwealth Mental Health and Wellness Center (CMHWC). We have two clinics, one located at 895 Blue Hill Avenue, Dorchester, MA and Lynn MA. CMHWC is a community based Behavioral health clinic. We provide services to families in need of mental health and substance use disorder support. We provide In Home Therapy, (IHT) Therapeutic Mentoring, (TM) Out Patient, (OP) Community Support Program, (CSP) and Substance Use Disorder, (SUD) to residence in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Hyde park and Lynn. We are writing to request your support in helping to provide baskets to 30 or more of the 200 families we service. We realize that we can't help everyone, so we are doing our best to help as many as we can.

We appreciate any donations your store is able to donate. We accept gift certificates and any food products you are able to contribute. We have attached a list of donation items.
It is Donors like you who help those in need especially during these challenging times that have a true understanding of Thanksgiving. We appreciate your contributions and on behalf of CMHWC and our families we sincerely thank you. For additional information feel free to review our website: www.cmhwc.com. Feel free to contact me at 617-506-8188, or you can email me at tjamison@cmhwc.com.

Sincerely,
Takyi Jamison

ABOVE: official donors letter sent to organizations

To: All CMHWC Providers

From Takyi Jamison CMHWC Intern

Re: Thanksgiving Baskets

My name is Takyi Jamison, and I am a Student Intern here at CMHWC, attending Salem State University. I am writing to inform you of a project that I am doing for my class. I am coordinating the Thanksgiving Basket donations from CMHWC, to ensure that 30 families have food for this Thanksgiving.
Since we only have 30 baskets to give, please respond to Lisa at this email ASAP ntives@cmhwc.com. The baskets will be given away on a first come first serve basis. You can also contact me at my email or phone number below, so I can gather information about the Client's you serve that you think will be in need of a basket. I won't take up a lot of your time and I look forward to speaking with you.

I will be contacting the Providers that respond to the email. Just in case we do not connect, here is my cell phone number: 617-225-5904 or you can email me at jamison@cmhwc.com and I will be sure to get back to you.

Thank you,
Takyi Jamison

617-506-8188

ABOVE: memo to all CMHWC providers

RESULTS

- Collected 35+ referrals from clinicians and all referrals participated in the needs assessment
- A total of 11 donor letters were sent out to organizations, we received donations from 4 out of the 11
- We served families and children under 16 years of age
- We were able to provide 50 families with Thanksgiving Holiday baskets with assistance from the Mayor's office, who donated extra turkeys.



CONCLUSION

Throughout my internship experience at CMHWC I was presented with many networking opportunities that led to forming relationships with clinicians as well as clients. I learned what it takes to work behind the scenes and put together an outreach initiative. Some communities may lack resources in the areas of: mental health, education, healthcare, etc. Building these connections and relationships with people in these areas are important because I was able to give back to the same community I was raised in. I believe low-income families need the most help. By establishing these connections now will benefit the things I would like to accomplish in the future as a healthcare professional. Reaching back and helping my community will always be one of my top priorities.