

Paul's Place and Covid-19: Managing the Unexpected

An update from the heart of Pigtown

Every day for the last 9 months, all of us at Paul's Place have witnessed the effects of the pandemic on our guests. During these difficult months, the significance of our mission – to provide programs, services, and support that strengthen individuals and families, fostering hope, personal dignity and growth – has been life affirming and lifesaving – for our guests – and for us.

During the pandemic Paul's Place has provided meals, clothing, case management, conducted health assessments, done laundry for neighbors, and has partnered with organizations to expand services and outreach.

We have done this because:

- Residents of Southwest Baltimore need services to stay afloat
- Our neighbors need to find stability
- After the pandemic, the need will remain, but so will the path to hope

SINCE APRIL:

- Rain or shine, tables are set up on Ward Street offering boxed lunches and mail service to those who use Paul's Place as their address. Originally offered three days a week, this quickly expanded to five.
- Case managers have provided services outside to assist with or provide referrals to services. One of the first tasks was to help guests secure their stimulus checks and get IDs to access services.

SINCE JUNE:

- Our nurse moved to our garden to triage care and offer referrals to the University of Maryland or Total Health Care.
- The clothing bank re-opened with a menu of available items and runners who selected the items requested by guests.
- Area partners asked to join Paul's Place curbside to expand services: Baltimore City offers health screening; Spark (a project of Johns Hopkins) holds a preventative clinic weekly in front of Paul's Place; and Maryland Legal Aid meets weekly with clients outside.

IN JULY:

- The Census joined us to provide information and answer questions for neighbors and guests.



IN AUGUST:

- We partnered with 4 additional community groups to prepare 170 meals for distribution each week.
- We held a lunch barbeque to add a festive atmosphere to the end of summer.

IN SEPTEMBER:

- One of our regular nursing clinic staff and her nursing students began outreach efforts to several homeless encampments close to Paul's Place. They provided onsite triage in addition to delivering non-perishable food and hygiene/toiletry kits.
- Upon receiving a grant from the State of Maryland's Opioid Task Force, we added two Peer Recovery Advocates who have joined the nurses for outreach efforts and who have helped a great deal as the pandemic has deepened the addiction crisis.
- We maintain mask wearing and social distancing for all of our services and we continue to use other safety protocols supported by State and health officials.
- We had hoped to bring all services – except for lunch – inside as the weather changes. We have re-configured our spaces with safety and health restrictions in place and we have received training to ensure we do everything possible to keep our guests and ourselves safe. As we see a rise in cases and concern from health officials, we will implement protocols to ensure we can be here to meet the needs of those who count on us.
- At the end of September, we celebrated our 38th anniversary serving Pigtown. Reflecting on how much the world changed in the last 9 months, our resolve to help has only deepened.



I am grateful to so many – our supporters, volunteers and staff – who have supported Paul's Place during these difficult times. You have made an immeasurable difference in lives in South Baltimore.

With your support, Paul's Place remains an anchor institution in the community. With your support, we will continue to serve.

With deep appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill McLennan".

William J. McLennan, *Executive Director*