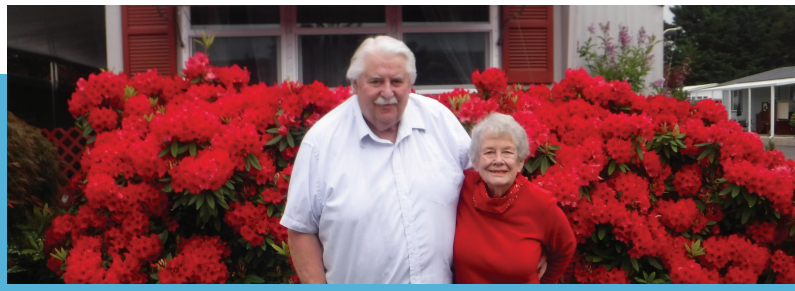
2019-2020

Impact Report



Community**Action**

Helping people. Changing lives.

“Through pandemics, through recessions, and whatever challenges the future may bring – Community Action is here. Together, with you, we always will be.”

Community Action leads the way to eliminate conditions of poverty and creates opportunities for people and communities to thrive.

Dear Supporter,

We are living in a moment of rapid change. It is a moment when we can see how major disruptions to the systems we rely on – public health, social justice, climate – have a direct and individual impact on us all. In these uncertain times, where assumptions about our world are flipped upside-down, we look for touchpoints to keep us grounded. Community Action is one of those touchpoints.

As COVID-19 took hold of our community, we recognized the critical role we needed to play both in the immediate response to a public health crisis and the long-term response to an economic one. Our staff has risen to the challenge, responding with creativity, compassion, and a dogged determination to serve. In the stories that follow, you will see how our spirit of service has delivered meaningful change in the lives of people across Washington County.

While our staff may be on the front lines, our spirit of service is driven by you – our supporters. Your support is the foundation upon which we deliver hope, help, and change to so many. Fifty-five years ago, we were founded by this community to serve this community. Much has changed about our world in that time, just as this moment will change much about the future. But the constant through all of this is Community Action and our commitment to be here to meet challenges as they arise and serve people in need.

We are a community that is strong and resilient. We are a community where everyone belongs. We are a community that believes everyone should live with dignity and security. Through pandemics, through recessions, and whatever challenges the future may bring – Community Action is here. Together, with you, we always will be.

With gratitude,

Kemp Shuey
Executive Director

After being homeless for three years, Kira and her kids finally got into an apartment. The pandemic put all that at risk.

After battling an addiction that landed her in prison, Kira knew she needed to make serious changes in her life. It wasn't easy. After serving her sentence in 2016, Kira entered treatment, reunited with her children, found full-time employment, and focused on building a strong and stable family.

Despite her hard work, she still faced one problem that seemed insurmountable – finding housing. Even with all the progress she made, that criminal conviction haunted her with every rental application. She could not find a landlord willing to rent to her. Without a home to rent, Kira was stuck paying the higher cost of staying in a hotel. But that wasn't sustainable on her wages. When money for the month ran out, she would arrange for her kids to sleep over at friends' houses, and she would sleep in her truck. Managing housing instability while trying to get her kids to school and keep her job left her stressed out and exhausted.

In November 2019, after three years of being homeless, she was elated when she found a landlord willing to rent to her. She no longer had to worry about where she and her kids were going to sleep each night. She no longer agonized over how to get her kids a warm meal or when they would get their next bath. She and her kids finally had a warm, safe home.

Then the pandemic hit, and Kira lost her job. She could no longer pay her rent and she was scared. She feared that they would end up back on the streets. And she was worried that if she lost this apartment, it would take years to find another place.

Kira found the help she needed at Community Action. With your support, we were able to pay Kira's rent for three months through our Emergency Rent Assistance program. Because of you, Kira and her kids kept their home during this difficult time, providing her and her family the stability they need to continue on a positive path.

"I cannot stress enough how hard it was to get into my current place because of the criminal conviction. I knew it would be years before I could find a place that would rent to me again. For Community Action to step in and save this place for us was a Godsend." —Kira

The pandemic devastated housing security. But with your support, our rapid response kept families in their homes.

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on housing security. With widespread unemployment, families who were already living paycheck to paycheck have no way to pay their rent. For many in jobs with no paid sick leave, quarantine means lost income and difficult decisions. Not able to afford rent, many are deciding to forego medication, reduce their meals each day, or even charge rent on their credit card.

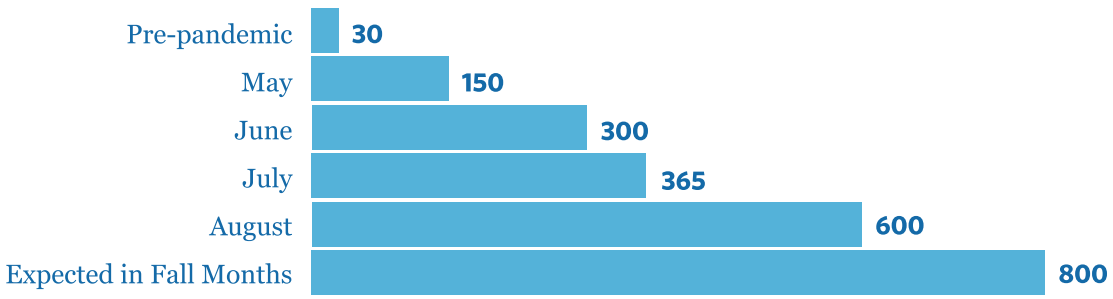
As the virus spread in the community, the economic impact grew, and the need for assistance skyrocketed. More people needed rent assistance and they needed it for a longer period of time.

At the same time as demand was growing, we at Community Action were learning how to provide these services remotely.

Our response was immediate. We quickly scaled up our operations to meet this growing need. Before the pandemic hit, we served approximately 30 households each month with emergency rent assistance. That went up to 150 households in May, 300 in June, 365 in July, 600 households in August, and we anticipate serving up to 800 households each month in the fall. Going from serving 30 to 800 households a month is a big task, but one that was necessary. And we could not have done it without generous supporters like you.

The future is still uncertain. We don't know how long this pandemic will last and we don't know its long-term impact for many of the families affected. But we do know that with your continued support, we will continue to adapt and meet this crisis head-on in whatever shape it takes.

HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING RENT ASSISTANCE PER MONTH



WHEN ONE PERSON GOT SICK...

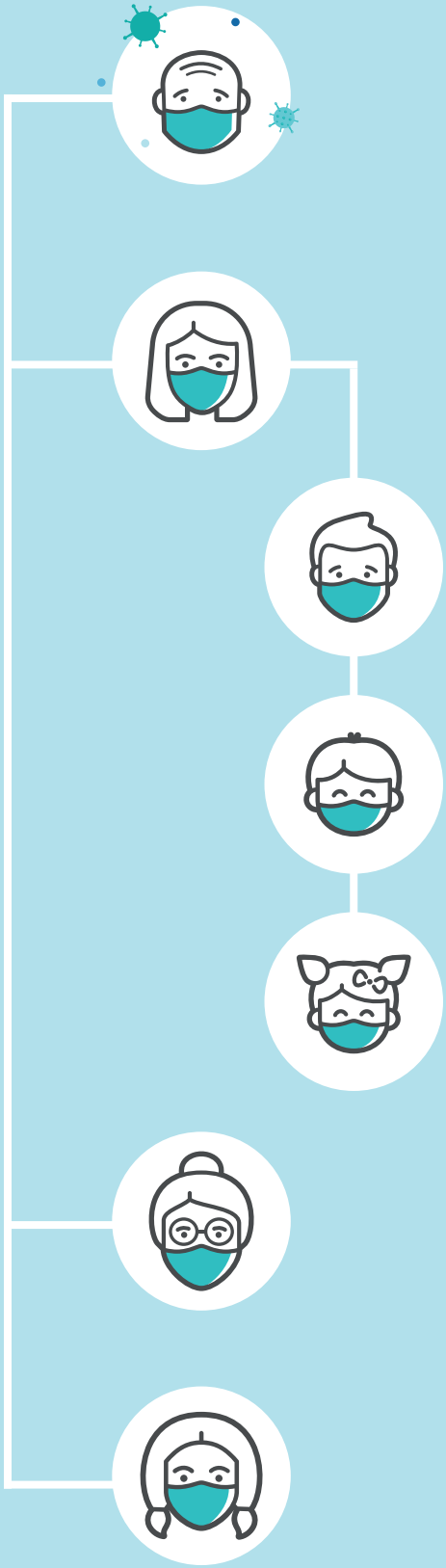
To illustrate the devastating impact of this virus, consider Anna, a mom of three who was employed by a local farm. Her dad was diagnosed with COVID-19 and had to be hospitalized. Because of her contact with him, she had to quarantine. That meant no work, no pay, and no way to make rent, on top of the stress of her father's illness.

Anna called us worried that she and her kids would lose their home. And because of generous supporters like you, we were able to pay her rent through our Emergency Rent Assistance program. Your support relieved Anna's worries. She could stay in her home and focus on her family's health.

But it didn't end there. In talking with Anna, we found out that her mother and her sister were in the same situation - forced to quarantine with no way to make rent.

When one person got sick, it forced three households to the edge of homelessness. The impact of this virus affected her entire extended family. It pulled the rug out from under their otherwise tight-knit family support network.

Your support kept them all safe in their homes allowing them to focus on their health. And for that, they are forever grateful.



With your help, a family keeps learning, stays safe in their home, and begins to rebuild.

When America's twin girls turned three last fall, she jumped at the opportunity to enroll them in Community Action's Head Start program. She needed to go back to work to help support her family. And she and her husband wanted their girls to start learning skills for school. Thanks to donors like you, America was confident that in our Head Start program, her daughters would learn, grow, and build a strong foundation for kindergarten.

At first, she was nervous about the transition, but the twins did great. Within a few months, they became more confident, more independent, and more cooperative at home. Their parents were thrilled to see that they were also learning their numbers, letters, and learning to speak English.

America found a job working the early shift at a restaurant. Her husband worked the evening shift which made drop-off and pick-up manageable. They were both employed, and the girls were thriving. Things were going well.

Then the pandemic hit.

America and her husband both lost their jobs and the Head Start classrooms had to close. Suddenly they were all at home together. And they had no income.

At Community Action, we knew that the low-income families in our early childhood programs were struggling with the economic impact of this crisis. Because of the generous support from people like you, our family advocates were able to begin intensive outreach to these families. We began placing calls to each and every family to offer our support and services. That's when we heard about America's situation.

America was worried about how her family would pay for rent, groceries, and other bills. She had grown anxious and depressed. At night, she would lie awake worrying that they would lose their home. Where would they live? On the streets? At a homeless shelter? How do you stay safe from COVID and shelter at home when you don't have a home?

Because of your support, we were able to offer America and her family emergency rent assistance to keep them in their home. She was so relieved when she found out. With three month's rent paid, she could turn her focus to her daughters, keeping them engaged in distance learning and keeping them safe from the virus.

Things are still uncertain for America and her family. She is looking forward to a time when the kids are back in the pre-school that they love and when she can go back to work. But for now, she is so grateful to you. Your support keeps her family safely in their home as they prepare for whatever comes next. And she knows that you will continue to be there to support them as she and her family re-build.

With your help, seniors find stability in their home.

Despite a lifetime of hard work and service, Brian and Diane found themselves slipping further and further behind. A Vietnam Veteran in the Marine Corp, Brian worked hard all his life and continued to work well past a traditional retirement age. When mounting health problems and injuries forced him to stop working, Brian and Diane watched in dismay as bills piled up and their home fell into disrepair.

Six years ago, Brian and Diane bought a mobile home in a quiet retirement community. Shortly after moving in, they realized the home needed some major repairs. The couple did their best to keep up with maintenance on Brian's part-time income, but many repairs simply had to wait.

Years of deferred maintenance took its toll. Rainwater leaked from the roof, seeping into the floor of their bedroom, causing it to rot and buckle. Worried about the dangers of black mold, they struggled without success to dry the floors with fans and electric heaters. In a desperate attempt to stop drafts, they taped up the cracked metal frames of their single pane windows. But it seemed they could never keep out the cold. Heating bills overwhelmed their finances. At $300 a month, Brian often had to pay the electric bill with his credit card.

Then, in the late summer of 2019, a fall landed Brian in the hospital. His injures required a long recovery and he was unable to return to work. Brian and Diane yearned for a safe, comfortable home where Brian could heal, but the repairs now felt utterly out of reach.

They knew they needed help, but they didn't know where to turn. Then a neighbor told them about Community Action's Energy Conservation program that offers free home weatherization repairs and improvements to low-income families.

Thanks to your support, we were able to send our Energy Conservation team to help with their home. Our team completed a thorough inspection, and quickly got to work. We repaired the water-damaged walls and floors, installed exhaust fans and energy efficient windows, and fully insulated the house and ductwork. Brian and Diane watched in awe as their home was transformed. But the biggest surprise was the new heat pump we installed. They were so relieved to finally have a reliable and efficient heat source and overjoyed that with all these improvements, their utility bill was cut in half.

The improvements to their home were life changing. “It’s amazing for people like us,” Brian says. “We are low-income people. We live on just our social security. And to get something like this — it is like a daily Christmas present.”

Life during the pandemic has been trying. Brian had emergency surgery in May and is still in recovery. As they heed advice to stay at home, they miss their regular activities and social outings to the senior center. But because of donors like you, Brian and Diane are able to find daily solace in their home. A home that is now safe, warm, and affordable.

Your support helped Patricia turn a devastating job loss into a new career path.

When Patricia lost her job and her home in the fall of 2019, she fell into a deep depression. For six years, she had been financially supporting herself and her three children as a bartender in a hotel restaurant.

But when hotel ownership changed and she lost her job, her whole world started to crumble around her. She could no longer afford rent and found her family facing homelessness. As she struggled to find stability, she became even more anxious and depressed.

Fortunately, because of donors like you, Patricia was able to turn to Community Action to find the support she needed to get back on her feet.

At Community Action, Patricia worked closely with one of our career coaches who encouraged her to consider additional training to increase her earning potential. Patricia liked the idea of becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), but she was afraid she couldn't handle the training. English is her second language and she had very little

schooling when growing up in Mexico. The idea of six weeks of classes in English to learn a new technical field was daunting.

But because of your support, her career coach was there to help her with every step along the way - starting with a resume. With her new resume in hand, Patricia applied to the Marquis Company's CNA training program, interviewed, and was offered a spot.

But she continued to face hurdles. She and her kids were living with friends and she still had no income. How could she afford the gas she needed to travel to Newberg every day for classes? How could she afford to buy the scrubs she needed? Your donations covered these expenses and supported her family's basic needs like children's clothes while she worked toward her goal.

The classes were difficult, and Patricia struggled to keep going. Throughout the six weeks of intense training, her career coach was a constant source of encouragement. When Patricia felt tired or frustrated, her coach was always there to say, "I know you can do it."

These words kept her going, and she went on to proudly prove that her coach was right. In February 2020, she successfully completed the training and became a full-time employee at Marquis Assisted Living!

In March, the COVID-19 pandemic would bring new risks to her health care position. But Patricia loves the fact that she is helping people every day, and she feels safe with the precautions and procedures that were put in place.

At Marquis Assisted Living, Patricia sees herself as more than a CNA. In addition to providing medical support, she works to alleviate the isolation so many of her patients are feeling right now.

And as the economic challenges of the pandemic continue to impact families, Patricia is grateful to be in a field that is in such high demand. That kind of job security is a huge relief to her.

Thank you for believing in people like Patricia. Because of your support, she has a job that she loves and a new-found confidence. Patricia sees this as a first step on a new career journey.

"I want to keep learning and do more. Who knows? Maybe by the time I am 60, I'll be a doctor!"
—Patricia

Our Impact

5,824 families stayed warm and safe with utility bill assistance.

1,151 local child care providers improved their quality of care through professional development trainings and coaching.

993 children from low-income families received a solid educational foundation in Head Start.

808 families avoided homelessness through emergency rent assistance.

632 families without utility service were reconnected.

622 new parents were supported through education and other resources.

208 homes were weatherized making them warmer, safer, and more efficient.

183 families received home-visiting support services helping them maintain a stable home.

179 homeless families got back into stable housing with short-term rent assistance.

103 people received career coaching.

83 homeless children and parents got back on their feet while staying at our Hillsboro Family Shelter.

Our Programs

CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL - Providing training and coaching to early childhood care and education providers, ensuring high quality childcare experiences to the families they serve.

HELP ME GROW – Connecting pregnant women and new parents to networks of support.

ENERGY CONSERVATION – Weatherizing homes to make them warmer, safer, healthier, and more efficient.

UTILITY ASSISTANCE – Keeping families safe and warm with utility bill assistance.

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT – Helping families increase their assets through education, coaching, and advocacy.

FINANCIAL SERVICES – Helping people build financial stability and reach their financial goals.

HEAD START – Preparing children for kindergarten and beyond with high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive services to children ages birth to five and their families.

HOMELESS SERVICES – Helping people experiencing homelessness quickly find housing and getting them the supportive services necessary to maintain long-term stability.

RENTER SUPPORT – Helping people avoid homelessness through emergency rent payments, longer term rent assistance, and tenant education.

WORKFORCE TRAINING - Working with clients to identify career opportunities and support the training that leads to living wage jobs.

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Community Action
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