

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

THIRD WARD INITIATIVE

May 26, 2020 Update

EDUCATION

- Blackshear using Microsoft Teams. Typically, the College of Education (COE) does not provide tutoring during the summer. This summer COE is piloting a virtual tutoring program at Blackshear elementary school targeting K-2nd grade students. The Blackshear teacher will start the Teams session by inviting the UH tutors and Blackshear students into the online rooms. The tutors will work with individual students while the teacher is able to see and listen to the activity. Summer school starts on June 8th. COE expects to roll it out to our other elementary schools but the resources to do this for the summer have not been identified.
- Fall Tutoring at Elementary Schools – COE and UH Advancement have raised \$350,000 which is half the money to fund tutors, programming, and educational outreach efforts for a three year period.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- Assistance with PPP Loan Applications – University of Houston (UH) Board of Visitors (BOV) Third Ward Economic Task Force Chair, Aylwin Lewis noted that there is still Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan money available Third Ward businesses should apply for. He reached out to Steve Stephens, CEO of Amegy Bank, who quickly offered assistance. A conference call followed and it was agreed that a virtual training program should be announced with a tentative date of Monday, June 1st. It was also agreed that Unity Bank and TDECU should be asked to participate as well as the UH Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Mr. Jevaugh Sterling from Amegy Bank has been tasked with working with VP Elwyn Lee to solidify the details of outreach to the businesses and non-profit organizations. Applicants will be offered one-on-one counseling either virtually or by phone. The UH SURE Program and the Emancipation Economic Development Council (EEDC) will assist in spreading the word. Dean Pavlou of BAUER College of Business is tremendously supportive of this initiative.

HEALTH

- Food Distributions



Due to increased unemployment food insecurity has increased. UH, in partnership with community organizations, is assisting in distributing food. The TWI has assisted with food distribution at Trinity Methodist church (600 cars), Boynton Methodist church, SHAPE Community Center, and Riverside Methodist church, The Honors College Community Health Workers will distribute Fresh Food boxes to families in the Cuney Homes and the Royal Palms apartment complexes on June 10th.

- Mask Distributions

The UH Healthy Start staff made 300 masks which they distributed to families in its target zip codes. The Third Ward Initiative has donated hundreds of masks to Third Ward organizations that distribute them to residents as part of the effort to promote health awareness and prevent the spread of COVID 19.



ART & CULTURE

- Fellowship Updates -- Ryan, Carol, Carrie, and Sixto Wagan presented a [panel about the Fellowship as part of the CommonField convening](https://hyperallergic.com/558464/common-field-convening-day-2/), that was originally scheduled to take place in Houston last month. Due to COVID-19, CommonField became a virtual convening. Their panel was one of the most popular, with over 650 people registered, and nearly 350 participants signed in at the start of the session. The talk was then summarized in a live-blog from the national website Hyperallergic, and is available here: <https://hyperallergic.com/558464/common-field-convening-day-2/>

- 2020 Fellowships - KGMCOTA is prioritizing the health and safety of their artists and the communities, so they are putting a pause on the current fellowships and allowing the artists to do research as they are able.
- Jose is continuing his research, currently focusing on how communities of color are managing in this crises and looking through the lens of “essential workers” in grocery stores and in restaurants. He’s interested in how those employed in food industries are balancing safety, security, and financial health.
- Nicoletta is continuing to develop videos for self-healing rituals for the public, but cannot travel because of the crisis. As a result, KGMCOTA will be extending the current Fellowships beyond December and into spring of 2021.
- Another casualty of the pandemic is the PRH Summer Studios program. The Fellows were to mentor the local college students from UH, TSU, HCC, and other local colleges, but PRH determined that it was unwise to move forward this summer and cancelled Summer Studios this year.
- As with many programs in the college, KGMCOTA has paused the Cultural Loop Fellowships for Undergraduates. The projects and the events associated with this fellowship originally scheduled for the end of this month will be pushed into the fall as much as it is feasible. As Rick says, "It's ironic that my career and the classes I teach rest on the belief that power comes through social engagement and now the best way to manifest power is to disengage."
- One of Rick Lowe’s student has installed a public art memorial at Bastrop and Stuart Street to honor Anthony Mills “Zin”, a noted third ward figure who in 2014 founded All Real radio which can be accessed online and via an app. All Real radio is housed in a shotgun house owned by Project Row Houses. Last Week, the Houston Chronicle printed a photograph of the memorial and the artist standing next to it.

Elwyn Lee
 Vice President for Neighborhood & Strategic Initiatives