Dear friends,

The global pandemic, the historic movement for Black Lives, and the economic crisis have impacted all of us. And while we are all weathering this storm together, the effects are intensified for people who were already on shaky ground prior to the pandemic because of low wages, lack of stable housing, or health or mental health challenges.

Over the past seven months, we’ve doubled the amount of rental assistance we were providing, recorded videos on how to access unemployment benefits in 13 languages, and distributed over 800 devices with internet access to families so they can learn at home.

While these essential services are necessary, we cannot ignore the systemic racism that has kept Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) less healthy and educationally and economically marginalized. In Seattle, redlining kept Black families segregated to the Central Area. Later, when housing became less affordable throughout Seattle, Black families were pushed out and today, what was once a hub of Black business, culture, and spirituality is majority white. Racist housing policies and gentrification have perpetuated school segregation and opportunity gaps. Neighborhood House works to disrupt racism by joining the chorus of Black-led organizers and allies to call for defunding of police and investment in community solutions.

Neighborhood House’s deep experience, language and cultural diversity, and strong relationships in neighborhoods across Seattle and South King County are helping our community navigate through this immediate crisis and the long-term rebuilding and reimagining process that will follow. We all benefit when everyone reaches their potential and raises their voice for change. Thank you for joining us as we make our community stronger.

Janice Deguchi

Census & Elections

There are two incredibly important civic events happening this fall. The 2020 Census and the 2020 General Elections. Are you ready to participate?

Census

The census happens every ten years. Collected data determines billions of dollars in federal funding for our communities, legislative district boundaries, and allocation of Congressional representation. Reminder: Everyone is required to fill out the census. All answers are kept anonymous and used only to produce statistics.

Complete the census at www.2020census.gov.

Elections

Ballots will be mailed on October 14 to all registered voters. Completed ballots can be returned to one of 70 drop boxes in King County or should be postmarked by November 3. Deadline to register to vote online is October 26. If you miss the deadline, in-person registration and voting can be done until November 3 at 8 pm.

Learn more at www.kingcounty.gov/depts/elections.

In July, we launched a diaper drive to meet a growing need in our early childhood programs. Thousands in our community have lost income since the spring. Public benefits such as food stamps do NOT cover diapers or wipes. And these necessities can quickly become a large expense, especially for those with large families.

Thank you to everyone who has been able to contribute to the drive so far. We are close to meeting our goal and helping even more families have a 3 month supply of diapers for their child. Can we count on you? Consider making a donation at www.nhwa.org/diaperdrive.

$25 provides 2 weeks of diapers for 1 child
$50 provides 1 month of diapers for 1 child
$150 provides 3 months of diapers for 1 child

We miss having the opportunity to gather and build community with you, our neighbors, and our supporters. We’re continuing to think of new and creative ways to include you as we provide assistance to Neighborhood House clients and ensure our programs remain a safety net for the future. We’ll be in touch throughout this fall and into the New Year so you can stay up to date on our work, even if we can’t get together in person. If you have any thoughts or feedback on engaging with us during this physically-distanced era, get in touch with Ward at wardw@nhwa.org.
What did you do over the summer?

Here are some highlights from the season. Don't forget to follow us on social media to keep up with the latest.

Youth program participants showing off their art creations made from care packages our staff compiled and mailed.

Staff at Jefferson Park after a Black Lives Matter march in June.

Volunteers have sewn hundreds of masks for staff to wear during essential work - thank you!

Signing of weekly rent checks. Since the pandemic began, Neighborhood House has distributed more than $840K in housing assistance to over 350 families.

Last month, we teamed up with the Somali Health Board, Neighborcare, and Seattle Housing Authority to provide COVID-19 testing in the neighborhoods we serve, in addition to distributing face masks and hand sanitizer.

Would you rather make sculptures out of aluminum foil or knead your own play dough? Perfect the art of sidewalk chalk doodles or create construction paper wreaths?

Teachers in our early learning programs curated a series of playful and educational activities this summer to share with families each week. If you’re looking to get in touch with your inner child, here’s a look at one of the art projects:

Tear off a sheet of aluminum foil. Encourage yourself to tear, fold, crinkle, scrunch, etc. to create a sculpture of whatever you want! These sculptures can be painted; you can also add colored tape, beads, small found objects like bottle caps, or bits of natural materials like twigs and leaves and see how you might incorporate them into the creations.

What you are learning: Completely open-ended activities like this can spark your creativity and imagination. You will also be investigating the physical properties of foil as you are manipulating it – you’ll use your scientific inquiry skills to figure out how the foil behaves when you act upon it in different ways.

See them all at www.nhwa.org/cd_learning_resources.

"There have been times when the immediate needs of the public housing communities have been so great that the total energy of the agency has had to be devoted to the delivery of services. But the social conditions that create problems for low-income people must be dealt with if the condition of the poor is to change rather than [be] patched up."

A Neighborhood House staff member wrote these words in the Holly Park Grapevine newsletter, published March 10, 1977.

Our agency has a legacy in not only running programs to increase access to health, education, and economic opportunity, but also supporting policy changes that affect us all. We have always known that solely focusing on one without the other will not do true justice to our communities.

Learn about the positions we’re taking up today and how you can take action at www.nhwa.org/advocacy.