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AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE CORONAVIRUS

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Mayor Breed's Early Actions Helped Stem Spread Of Covid-19 In San Francisco

By Gail Berkley

an Francisco Mayor London the nation Stayat-Home order issued to fight the spread of the coronavirus is being credited with helping to save untold numbers of lives in San Francisco. Mayor Breed said Tuesday that she thinks San Francisco has benefited from residents' taking the threat of COVID-19 seriously as early as February.

"I think from the very beginning when we talked about a declaration of emergency in February, people started to behave differently at that time. That played a major

low cases in our city compared to other cities," she said.

Mayor Breed announced a declaration of emergency February 25, even though there were no confirmed cases of coronavirus in the city. The first confirmed cases were announced on March 5. The Stay-at-Home order was effective March 17.

As of Tuesday morning, 1468 residents had been diagnosed with coronavirus, 29 were in ICUs, 87 hospitalized and 23 residents had died from the COVID-19.

"Fortunately, as high as those numbers are, the work we're doing is having an effect on what could have been higher numbers," Mayor Breed role in what we're seeing in said. She added that contact

in the city. She credited the contact tracing with stopping the spread of the virus, after an outbreak occurred at the city's largest homeless shelter.

Notably, Breed said San Francisco has also not had a disproportionate number of deaths and cases in the African American community. She said that 6% of those infected have been African Americans, and out of the 23 deaths, three were African American.

She said the numbers are not as significant in the SF African American community as in other cities nationally. "I think it's because we have an equity team imbedded in the Emergency Response Center." She added that one of the first

our city. We are seeing record tracing has been expanded to provide medical services during the pandemic was in Bayview Hunter's Point, and a testing site was later added in that location.

> She said a team also goes out every day to give out masks in public housing sites and to the homeless, 37% of whom are African American.

> One of Breed's major goals during her tenure as Mayor has been to get thousands of the city's homeless sheltered and off the streets.

She said the fight against the COVID- 19 pandemic has had "somewhat of a devastating effect" on those efforts as city resources have been diverted. She said the city is facing a \$1.1 to \$1.7 billion deficit, due to the economic clinics opened in the city impact of COVID-19.



Mayor London Breed

Currently the city is working to move the most vulnerable permanent housing. Then, homeless, including seniors, into hotels, Breed said. She could be moved into the SROs. added the challenges of working with the homeless remain. "The issues of

mental illness and drug abuse don't go away because there's a pandemic."

She said the city currently has three goals with the homeless population. First to move people back into shelters, with appropriate public health measures in place.

The city is looking into acquiring or leasing some hotels for the long term, and is also working with Tipping Point and hopes to acquire 400 apartments to transfer people who are able to live on their own from Single Room Occupancy hotels to other homeless individuals

Breed and SF Director of Continued on page 8

Dion-Jay Brookter

Young Community Developers

Executive Director

Sheryl Evans Davis

or many, the disparate impact of COVID-19 on

Unfortunately, some have come to expect as commonplace that



Sheryl Evans Davis

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Naomi Kelly

SF City Administrator

uring the coronavirus Francisco's first female and first African American City Administrator, is helping lead the response for all San Franciscans while ensuring that disparities and inequities in the system are addressed head-on.

During normal operations, she oversees a 2,700-strong workforce in over 25 city departments, divisions, and programs while responsible for an annual budget of nearly \$750 million dollars. One



Naomi Kelly

such example is the Moscone

Continued on page 8

James Spingola

Collective Impact Executive Director

never thought I'd be doing this work, but it all fell in my lap. I was born and raised in San Francisco. I lived a different lifestyle; I was on the other side of the fence, but thanks to support, guidance, and access to helpful resources, here I am. At the end of the day, I'm just trying to make sure that my people don't get left behind; I do this work because I love my community. I try to bring as many resources as I can all over the City to make sure everyone has an understanding of

That education piece is critical right now in the midst

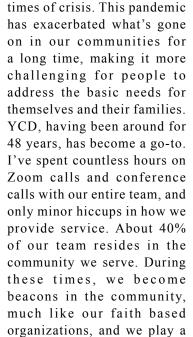
what's available.



James Spingola

of the spread of COVID-19. Some members of the Black pivotal role in trying to close community think it's just

Continued on page 8



trying times. In the spirit of

continuous improvement,

YCD will continue to refine

and adapt our service delivery

models to best serve our San

Community-based

organizations are pillars in the

community, and especially in

Francisco Residents.

Our top five priorities

the gaps in vital supports.



Dion-Jay Brookter

COVID-19 crisis are:

Housing: We're helping families with eviction protection, and working on getting funding from foundations and the Mayor's office to support this work.

Connectivity: We're providing laptops and tablets to our customers, and we're also offering job training, educational tutorials, and oneon-one meetings via Zoom.

Basic Necessities: We've been able to secure over 200 Safeway gift cards, even offering them via an online platform by text and/or email to minimize in-person contact.

Childcare: We're working with foundation partners and community based organization partners to address the challenges of childcare while children aren't able to go to school and many parents still have to work.

Transportation: We're supporting families who are

Continued on page 8

Executive Director, San Francisco

Human Rights Commission

comes as no surprise. Early in San Francisco Human Rights Commission's community outreach to encourage social distancing and get people to stay inside, we heard statements like, "This is the purge," and, "Just another attempt to get rid of us." The "us" being Black people, and "another attempt" referring to the longstanding disparities that have long plagued Black communities.

keep ourselves from losing it.

Folks are acting out, acting up,

hiding out, smoking out, and

stressed out. One of the things

we want you to know is you are

not alone, there is support in so

many different ways even when

At Rafiki we teach about using

meditation and yoga for centering

practices, in order to ground us in

our day. These are ways that our

it doesn't feel like it.

Executive Director, Rafiki Coalition for Health and Wellness any of us during this Rona pandemic are just struggling to survive, pay bills, eat, take care of our families, help kids with homework, stay safe, and

Monique LeSarre

Monique LeSarre Continued on page 6

as we navigate the

We're here for you. The SFPUC continues to work around the clock to ensure essential water, power, and sewer services for you and your loved ones.

sfwater.org/coronavirus





SFHRC - Sun Reporter Supplemental - Outreach To AA Community

n light of the COVID-19 outbreak and shelterin-place orders, San Francisco's African American communities are experiencing disproportionate impact due to pre-existing inequities when it comes to accessing necessary resources. The City and County of San Francisco and The San Francisco **Human Rights Commission has** made considerable efforts to fill gaps and support the safety, health, and general wellbeing of its African American citizens.

Many of these efforts have been made on the front line, delivering immediate support directly to people in need. The San Francisco Human Rights Commission has provided emergency funding to several organizations focused on African American community needs so that they are able to continue doing the crucial work that's only become more urgent in this time. We've also taken on hot meal distribution for families in public housing sites and across the City, and are offering informational fliers along with the food.

We've entered into a partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District Equity Studies Task Force to develop practices to minimize impact of shelter in place on learning. We're making sure that families have internet access and devices to stay connected, especially for students who are not in school and wouldn't otherwise have a way to continue learning and keep up with online instruction, and we've developed culturally relevant online engagements. Some of our most respected community leaders have stepped up to share virtual story time sessions: Mayor London

Breed offered a reading of Maya Angelou's "Life Doesn't Frighten Me At All"; Supervisor Shamann Walton read "Honey I Love" by Eloise Greenfield; and Police Chief William Scott read Thunder Boy Jr. by Sherman Alexie. We've also compiled and distributed activity kits for families who are now at home together far more than they usually are. And when we aren't putting these resources directly into the hands of families, we're offering gift cards for them to get their own essential needs, including food, hygiene products, and cleaning and disinfecting supplies.

To make sure that our reach is broad and comprehensive rather than limited to those in our immediate network, we've been able to employ community ambassadors to reach specific populations. In collaboration with the San Francisco Police Department and the Street Violence Intervention Program (SVIP), community ambassadors are also distributing face coverings and emphasizing the importance of social distancing and other ways for community members to keep themselves and their families and neighbors safe. Our collaborative efforts have helped to secure emergency housing for members of the trans community and people who were recently released from prison without stable shelter, and we're working with Blackled LGBTQI organizations to connect their clients with food and medical support. We're partnering with homeless providers in the Tenderloin, where the plurality of clients are African American, to ensure that some of our most vulnerable neighbors are not left behind.

While there's plenty of urgent and what more is needed.

work to be done to support individuals in crisis, we're staying vigilant and active on big picture items like broad communication, messaging, and post-coronavirus policy. Our newly established weekly roundtables are focused on issues impacting the African American community. We're tapping into national conversations about economic recovery, continuing to move forward the conversation on reparations, and pushing for clear plans to address and remedy disparities that existed before COVID-19. On this front, we are continuing to work with our African American-led and -focused communications firm, PJS Consultants, to craft thoughtful and urgent messaging to keep our communities informed and healthy. The Black Equity officer at the Emergency Operation Center is focused on helping us remain intersectional in our response and avoiding exacerbating the impact of pre-existing structural inequities. We're also developing a partnership with PolicyLink to raise awareness about the intersecting impact of racism and the epidemic.

Finally, we're leveraging the power of print and digital media. We developed a community strategy with the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD), Project Level, and Collective Impact to reach African American partners and communities via email, text, and social media. We've also run "Rona Is Not a Game" ads in the Bayview Newspaper and developed a comprehensive special edition supplement in the Sun Reporter to highlight the impact on African American communities, resources available,



African American Women **Providing Essential Service**

By Gail Berkley

s San Franciscans shelter in place to fight the deadly coronavirus pandemic, one group of workers continues to provide essential construction services to the City and County of San Francisco. Among them are five African American women, excelling in nontraditional roles in the construction trades.

The pioneering tradeswomen, Deana Kelly, 30, Jewelia Haynes, 24, Jenell Daniello, 38, Dayunie Living, 25, and Larita Shambray-Robinson, 25, have been afforded the opportunity to sharpen their skills as they work on the lead and asbestos removal and clean-up project at Pier 70.

All of the women are District 10 residents and are employed by African American owned Eagle Environmental Construction, Inc., a subcontractor on the Pier 70 project. EEC previously completed biohazard remediation and removal work at 1800 Jerrold Avenue, and several of the women also worked there. EEC owner Ronald Baptise, his business developer Wilton Watson and Construction Foreman Earl Watson, are committed to providing jobs for residents of District 10 where EEC is also located.

The women have inspiring stories to tell about working in a male-dominated environment where they may face bullying, sexism and other challenges.



Deanna Kelly

Deanna Kelly, a single mother raising am eight-year-old daughter, is a lifelong Bayview resident. She is working during the shelter in place, despite the challenges it poses. Since her daughter is out of school, Kelly has to find resources to support her daughter.

Kelly completed the EPA Environmental Technician Training Program through Young Community Developers (YCD) and Hunters Point Family last November and began working almost immediately. She said she knows that she has to have a good work ethic and tries to respect everybody. "I don't have nobody; I'm doing everything on my own." She said her ultimate goal is to become an electrician.

She says her daughter is her inspiration. On workplace challenges she says, "Being a woman, the men always try to help me, and I don't need help. I feel like they want to help me

Submission: Brittni Chicuata,

community in San Francisco.

The history of structural

racism—including redlining,

job discrimination, and

concentrations of poverty—

make it so that we already

experience poorer living

conditions, lower wages, and

greater health disparities

than any other community

in San Francisco. We are at

the greatest risk of dying if

An NPR article from 2017

details how food has been

used as a tool of social control

amongst Black people over

time in the United States.

The story profiles Frederick

Douglass's experiences while

enslaved, recounting moments

when he would have to fight

we catch COVID-19.

Acting Chief of Staff, San

Francisco Human Rights

Commission



Jewelia Haynes

because, I'm a woman." She perseveres though because she is able to make good money and take care of her family.

Jewelia Haynes, a 2018 graduate of the City Build Academy, is a member of the Operating Engineers Local 3. She faced several setbacks on the way to becoming a member of the union and credits her hard work, drive and motivation for her success. One year after passing the entrance exam, she left a job as an apprentice in the laborers union and completed her 8-week training in Rancho Murieta. She says with pride, "I'm an operator engineer and learned how to navigate and operate heavy equipment safely and smart.' She said the current foreman and journeyman who she works under are taking the time to teach her the trade. And, while she recognizes some men on the job don't want me there and I can feel the pressure; but I continue to focus on my task and learning."



Jenell Daniello

Jenell Daniello says, "I feel like my career is keeping me out of jail, because I'm making a sustainable income." Daniello says that she has an extensive criminal record and spent 6 months in jail for shoplifting but has turned her life around. She completed the EPA Environmental Technician and Job Readiness Training programs at YCD facilities last November.

She was hired for the Pier 70 project a month later and says, "EEC has been really supportive, and I feel they got my back. This career has changed my life for the better." She said while in the EPA program she completed a goals statement and set deadlines and has almost met all her goals. She said she's proud that now she is a productive member of society.

Dayunie Living is a wife and mother of two-year-old twins and says she got into the construction trades after spending six years in security and office jobs. Seeking



Dayunie Living

better pay she completed YCD's EPA program in November 2019. She said YCD helped her get into Local 67 by paying her union initiation fees. After completing the Fall Protection class in February, she was hired by EEC in February first on the 1800 Jerrold project. When it ended, she was transferred to Pier 70.

"I would encourage more women to get into the field because construction is not only a man's job. If you're willing to make the money, you can do it. I can now provide a sustainable life for my family."

In the future Living hopes to transition to the safety side of the industry as an inspector or project manager. She also wants to learn to speak Spanish so that she can communicate better with the many Hispanics on her job site.

Larita Shambray-Robinson has forged her own path into the construction trades. After



Larita Shambray-Robinson

receiving a Hazmat certification at YCD, she took her own money and invested in herself to acquire other certifications. She joined Local 67 and was told she needed further certifications. "I took my welfare money and invested into my certifications and made a sacrifice." She also took a forklift class on her own and got certified. From then on, she began construction work in 2017 and has worked on a variety of sites before being hired by EEC in February.

Shmbray-Robinson is a single mother of three young children- twin 12-year-old daughters and an eight-yearold son. She is also raising her 17-year old sister.

She says she eventually wants to be a Project Manager or Safety inspector. She said when faced with challenges what keeps her focused is remembering, " You are your brand, don't let anybody destroy it."

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> **Amelia Ashley-Ward Editor/Publisher**

1945-1997

Feeding The People and Fighting The Coronavirus



Brittni Chicuata

with plantation dogs for scraps of food and the way white slave owners would make enslaved children eat out of troughs filled with mush, like animals. Both starvation and forced overconsumption were reminders of dominance and power.

That antebellum history casts a dark shadow on contemporary food access challenges for many. In our City, the same maps that told lenders where they should not give bank loans to African Americans also guided where businesses opened, including grocery stores. This is in part why there are no grocery stores in Bayview Hunters Point. One of the few chains to be shuttered in 2019.

Healthy food consumption means healthy immune systems. The Black Panther Party understood this deeply, leading initiatives such as the Free Breakfast for Children Program and weekly grocery giveaways through their Survival Programs. The objective was simple and clear: help people meet their basic needs with dignity.

Shortly after the announcement of a shelter in place order in San Francisco, the Human Rights Commission assembled a community roundtable. An immediate community need we identified was food distribution, asking the question: how can we best meet the needs of individuals and families that experienced food insecurity before the coronavirus? With so many parents furloughed or fired, children forced to stay home from school, elders and other vulnerable populations more isolated than ever, the HRC created a program called City Suppers.

City Suppers provides daily support during this time. In a few weeks, our service capacity has ballooned to serving nearly 10,000 weekly meals at 18 public housing sites and two community centers. Additionally, we provide a stream of income to restaurants primarily neighborhood small businesses—that had to close their doors due to COVID-19. In short, we are both feeding the people and providing economic relief.

Initially, this work was meant to be a bridge to help sustain families during this public health emergency. But the response has been overwhelming and highlighted what many of us already knew: in San Francisco, making healthy food choices is not an option for everyone. There are far too many individuals and families that do not have access to quality, nutritious, affordable food in the communities they live in. Now, we are working to build a sustainable, ongoing, direct food system.

Like in so many other cities, to come to the neighborhood, hot meals to people across food insecurity is a parallel Duc Loi, opened in 2016, only the City that need a bit more challenge to COVID-19 in San Francisco. One outcome of years of disinvestment in healthy food options for communities of color is disproportionate rates of chronic illness. Although this too shall pass, we cannot work towards recovery using the same white supremacist tools of the past. The systems have failed our people for far too long, without consequence or intervention. The community has always been resilient, making a way out of no way, and taking care of our own in the face of discrimination, limited resources, and structural barriers. The San Francisco Human Rights Commission is here with you to fight racism and discrimination in all city and private business practices, and to ensure that you are able to meet your most basic needs with dignity and equal opportunity.

> Brittni Chicuata **Acting Chief of Staff** SF Human **Rights Commission**

Editor's Note: This Special Edition on African Americans and the Coronavirus is a collective effort by the Sun-Reporter, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission along with community partners Young Community Developers, Collective Impact and the Rafiki Coalition.

Shamann Walton

Sf Supervisor District 10

n light of new data about COVID-19 cases and deaths by zip code and race, it's become even more imperative that we do everything we can to stop the spread of the virus amongst communities of color and other vulnerable populations.

Current data indicates that only 6% of COVID-19 cases in San Francisco are Black people, as compared to 33% Latino and 14% Asian. But we also know that Black people make up only 5.2% of the City's population according to estimates from 2018). We also know that this means at least 46% of COVID-19 cases in San Francisco—and quite possibly more—are people of color.

The District 10 Supervisors Office pushed the Department of Public Health (SFDPH) and the **Emergency Operations Center** (EOC) to get real-time data on the



Shamann Walton

number of COVID-19 deaths by district/zip code and by race. As of this piece, the data shows that there have been 23 coronavirus deaths in San Francisco. We know that out of those 23 deaths, three are Black people, two Latinx, and 12 Asian. 17 out of 23 of the lives lost to coronavirus in San Francisco were people of color. This makes clear that people of color are disproportionately more likely to die a COVID-19 related death in San Francisco, since 74% of deaths have been people of color as compared to the 46% of cases in people of color.

Why is this important? This data suggests that people of color may not be quickly or effectively receiving the information and supports they need to protect themselves from the virus. We want to be proactive and get ahead of the spread in our communities in order to save lives. As the Supervisor of District 10, I know anecdotally that all three of the Black people who passed from coronavirus were residents of District 10. What is extremely troubling is that SFDPH has not provided the data on the number of total coronavirus-related deaths in District 10. We are working hard to

keep people from contracting the coronavirus and from spreading the virus, but we need to know the details of what we're up against.

Our office has demanded the following from SFDPH to save lives of people of color immediately:

- Pop-up testing sites throughout zip codes where the most cases of COVID-19 exist (by using current scientific data on the number of contacted cases). These sites should be asymptomatic testing sites in order to avoid the spread and increased cases.
- Additional Field Care Clinics in the areas with the highest number of COVID-19 cases, in order to provide necessary medical treatment and urgent care supports.
- The deployment of proper PPE for employees and members of communities in areas more vulnerable and susceptible to contracting the coronavirus.

Additional resources for outreach in areas that need a more concentrated and effective strategy to inform people about the latest health orders, and imperative updates in order to increase compliance in hot-spot areas.

- Immediately provide testing to our homeless population in congregate settings (SROs, shelters, navigation centers, encampments, etc.).
- Remove all homeless people—capable of caring for themselves—from the streets and into hotels right away.

In addition to these demands, our office has authored a formal resolution (which includes these demands) at the SF Board of Supervisors, urging the sheriff to allow for virtual family visits in our county jails. We have also created a Family Relief Fund (in collaboration with Mayor London Breed and the Human

Rights Commission) to provide monetary resources for lowincome families who do not qualify for any relief from federal or state governments.

We want to maximize the impact of working collaboratively with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, Human Services Agency, Department of Public Health, and all City leadership to address these disparities and inequities. We cannot do this without all hands on deck.

Shamann Walton is a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, District 10.

Phelicia Jones

Community Activist

You can't lead the people if you don't love the people. You can't save the people if you don't serve the people." — Cornel West

I'm an activist; I'm not a politician. I was raised right here in Bayview Hunters Point and I've been giving back to Black community since I was 15. In addition to working for the San Francisco Sheriff's department to develop programming for inmates and post-incarcerated populations, I'm the Founder of Justice 4 Mario Woods, who was shot and killed by five San Francisco police officers in 2015. Being Black and being a Black woman, having two of my sisters murdered, and ending up in a state prison after losing my sisters because I didn't know how to deal with that—the fight means something to me. After I got out of prison I earned my Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis on Chemical Dependency. All



Phelicia Jones

these lessons I had to learn and challenges I had to deal with led me to care for my people.

When they first started announcing that Black people were dying from COVID-19 at disproportionate rates, everyone was talking about how we have compromising illnesses, but it's not just that. It's also the institutionalized racism, injustices, and inequities that fall onto our people. In this case, vital information isn't getting to our neighborhoods the way it should. One day I was passing through 3rd and Palou and I saw a brother with the window open. I asked him, "Where's your mask?" And he responded, "Do you have one for me?" And... Well, no. I didn't. That was deep.

I'm trying to shelter in place, too, but my people are dying. My people don't have masks; my people don't have information. I have to protect myself and I have to do what I need to do to help my people. After my interaction with that brother at 3rd and Palou, I called Chief Scott and said, "Chief, I'm over here in Bayview and I need some masks. Our people over here do not have masks, can you help me?" And he did; he gave me about 50. Next I went to Captain Dangerfield to ask for more—and got some more. As an SEIU 1021 Union member, I knew we had bandannas for rallies. I called Joseph Bryant, the union president, to get some bandannas, and he came through with about 300 bandannas. Mayor Breed had also given Director Davis some masks. I'm fortunate and grateful to be part of a team of folks who are all deeply committed to doing this work, including Director Davis, James Spingola of Collective Impact, and Vanessa Banks and Rodrigo Toquetao with Wealth and Disparities in the Black Community.

We've been distributing the masks and bandannas, along with information on how to stay safe, in different community locations: five or six different housing complexes, Super Save grocery store, putting info on cars, etc. We took some items to the Tenderloin to share with the brothers and sisters there, who were just flocking to the car, and so grateful. We passed out over 1,000 masks this past weekend, led by Director Davis. Just a team of three in the Bayview have hit about 1,000 people in three weeks' time. I've enlisted young men from the community, employing them to do the work, and paying them with gift cards. I'm also trying to get a food truck owner I know to help me do a fish fry in the next couple of weekswhile following social distancing guidelines—and use it as a chance to give out safety information for COVID. Hopefully we'll also be able to get masks and sanitizer to share with attendees.

We have to get creative in figuring out solutions. If you look at the different health crises that have struck, they've hit Black communities disproportionately. It hurts to see that we're still in the same relative situation since the AIDS epidemic hit. It's almost routine how the systems oppress us and deny us what we need—so we have to step in. If that means I go out there every Thursday and take these supplies and this information out there, then we

just got to keep going out there, keep being creative. And we have to share the information and resources in ways that people will really hear and receive them. How can we get it across to them?

Despite the challenging

circumstances, I'm glad we have the information to give! That's a big success. And it's rewarding to see people's faces light up when I pass out resources. Even though it's heartbreaking, it's a success. I fight for justice. I'm not anti-white or anti-Asian or anti-Latino; I'm pro-Black, and there's nothing wrong with that. I stand for what I believe in: justice and equity. And I'm committed to doing what I need to do to tackle the injustices my people face. Director Davis deserves recognition for all of the hard work she does at the forefront of these efforts, and for bringing so many of us together to help our communities.

Shakirah Simley

Director, Office of Racial Equality SF Human Rights Comission

coronavirus made its way to the States, our community knew what was to come. My family's personal experience is a snapshot of how this pandemic weaves a cruel course through Black America.

My mother is a frontline social worker outside of Atlanta. My uncle is a nurse practitioner in a nursing home in New York City, where "ground zero" has taken on a new, more deadly interpretation. My younger brother and sisters all lost their jobs in the service industry. My elderly uncle and grandfather are self-isolating and holding onto hope. We've mourned friends and family that are gone, too fast and too soon.

Our family text thread is filled with daily notes of encouragement, home remedies, and mask selfies, but there's an underlying pang of anxiety, fea,r and gloom. Our Black intuition told us long before the New York Times screamed in their headlines. We would be hit the hardest. We be knowin.

The coronavirus may not discriminate, but our society does.

In my non-pandemic day job, I'm proud to serve as the inaugural Director for the newly-created Office of Racial Equity, a division of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission. I'm honored to work with Director Sheryl Davis to identify and address the structural and systemic racial inequities that are prevalent within San Francisco city government, and within the City at large. In our city's disaster response, I am deployed as the Equity Officer at our emergency operations center. Being part of an incident command in a pandemic means that we develop strategies to ensure that communities affected by structural oppression are getting the information, resources, and services neededimmediately. Our team works every day to ensure that our folks do not fall through the cracks, and to prevent unnecessary transmission and deaths.

Since the initial days of the pandemic, the Human Rights Commission worked to ring the alarm on the scourge of anti-Asian racism and discrimination, stoked by early xenophobic and inaccurate rumors of the source of the virus. And since then, our agency has centered community voice and action on the ground—from supporting our community-based organizations providing critical support to our neighborhood folks making meals, delivering masks, packing grocery bags, and getting supplies for neighbors.

This pandemic has shown me that this work and our communitycentered approach is important, now more than ever.

In response to COVID-19,



our health officials have mainly focused on medically-vulnerable people: older adults and people with underlying health conditions. We need to expand upon what we mean by "vulnerable." Due to the social, economic, environmental, and political issues connected to systemic and institutional racism, and the interpersonal harm caused by implicit and explicit bias, we need to plan for broader community resilience and respond to race-based disparities.

Communities of color and lowincome communities also have high levels of distrust in systems, including health care, justice, and government, and rightfully so. This has an impact on our response to orders from these

authorities, and many of us are skeptical. Furthermore, there are several systemic barriers that make it harder Black and Brown communities to access adequate housing, parks, public transit, and nutritious food without coming together; these equity gaps make it impossible to socially distance or avoid congregating in the same ways that white and wealthier communities can.

Latinx and Black residents are more likely to work in essential jobs, such as janitors, home health aides, delivery people, grocery and farm workers and sanitation workers, all service industry positions with strong opportunities for exposure. Their lives matter; we need to ensure that "essential" does not mean disposable or expendable. Centering equity requires community champions guiding us on what's needed, how, and where, before more lives are lost.

Research also shows that Black people's pain levels and symptoms are minimized and often undertreated or untreated. We've already heard horror stories of COVID-19 positive grandmas, students, and frontline workers showing up and asking for care, only to be denied, often fatally.

These large scale problems also surface in daily difficulties that now mean life or death—from getting personal protection and hygienic supplies to accessing testing and treatment. Time will tell who gets to recover from the coronavirus.

These contributing factors also influence what we are seeing in the data, especially on a neighborhood or community level. Current maps of San Francisco that depict health disparities, income inequality and racial and ethnic inequities, neatly overlap with the early prevalence of COVID cases and high rates of virus transmission.

For decades, our community survived and rose up against slower disasters, such as urban renewal, the war on drugs, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We will get through this. However, the City must look at the hard truths and be unafraid and unapologetic in lifting up a community-led disaster response, and ensure that the community is not disproportionately burdened with solving this on their own. Our community needs to be prioritized by policymakers and decisionmakers in prevention, emergency relief, communication, care, and recovery strategies. We must continue to target resources, information, and care in a timely and equitable way. We need to uplift and empower trusted messengers to get key communication and

medical care to our folks. In the face of adversity, Black people are resilient, creative, and resourceful. While COVID-19 deepens existing inequality across the country, here in San Francisco, we will deepen our commitment to equity, empowering community, and undoing racism. We need to stay vigilant in our own backyard, and prevent adding salt to open wounds.

As we move towards recovery, our fight will not just be against a virus; it's a fight against oppression. We must recognize that a "new normal" in an unjust society was never "normal" for so many in our community. We must flatten the curve, equalize opportunity, and radically imagine and build something more just and hopeful. Through these dark days, I am inspired by writer and activist Arundhati Roy's piece, "The Pandemic Is A Portal." She writes:

"Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.

We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."

> I'm ready, and I hope you are too.

The Sun-Reporter

EDITORIAL

We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us.

Preedom's Journal. March 16, 1827.

COMMENTARY: Who Gets The **Ventilators?**

By Julianne Malveaux, NNPA Newswire Contributor

seeing its world recede. We are being vanquished both by a virus and by the ignorance of the "Commander in Chief." We now know that there are not enough tests to detect the coronavirus, nor enough ventilators to treat all of those who are ill. Medical professionals are talking openly about the choices they will make and the fact that some people will be judged more likely to survive than others.

Through which lens will over a homeless person? A



Julianne Malveaux

these medical professionals decide who gets a ventilator? Will age be the only lens, advantaging a 30-year-old over an 80-year-old? Will there be other filters? Will a man with children get preference over a single woman? An author

white person over a person of color? Medical professionals are being asked to choose and to judge. How will their conscious or unconscious bias play a role in their judgments?

The National Academy of Medicine describes itself as

organization that works outside of government to provide unbiased and authoritative advice to decision-makers and the public" On its website, it acknowledges "evidence of racial and ethnic disparities in health care." Will this evidence influence the distribution of ventilators?

People will need these ventilators to breathe. They may need them for weeks, not days. Some will survive, and some won't. The survival rate is a function of the bizarre avoidance our socalled leaders make decisions about this pandemic. But who will be saved? An innocent infant or the despot who lives in the house that enslaved people built?

Dr. Dorothy Irene Height was 98 when she died in 2010. She was productive until her final days. In her own words, she was "dressed and in her right mind" until the end. Would the doctor choosing who got a ventilator see the history contained in that precious black body? Or would he make choices based on stereotypes? I know that by Black 92-year-old mama, disabled by a stroke, still gives her children strength and love, smiles, and sharp reprimands (yes, the lady "an independent, nonprofit hit me when I used profanity

in her presence. Whose life an incarcerated person with would I trade that for?)

We must not forget the many ways that Black bodies were used for medical experiments, from the use of Black women's genitalia to develop gynecology through the Tuskegee syphilis studies that lasted from 1932 through 1972. Black people's lives have too often been white people's experiments. It is not paranoid, but merely will get the ventilators, and whose needs will be sidelined. Now the words "Black Lives Matter" take on a more pointed meaning.

This coronavirus illustrates our nation's faultlines by class race and gender. The coronavirus also refutes the notion of our nation's exceptionalism. The United States just ain't all that, despite our "greatest" rhetoric. We are stumbling compared to other countries - Italy, China, Spain - who have attempted, generously, to show us the way forward.

One of the populations I've heard very little about is incarcerated people. How do you socially distance when you are confined, with another person, in a small cell? Given our collective disdain for the incarcerated, will

coronavirus have a chance?

Incarcerated people aren't the only people at risk. All marginalized people are, in one way or another, at risk. Ventilators cost between \$25,000 and \$50,000 and even more when there is competition to obtain them. Will hospitals with limited resources be able to obtain ventilators? Those who are income-challenged are more cautious, to wonder who likely to go to hospitals that are under-resourced. Lowerincome people are at greater risk and have less access to quality health care.

> The coronavirus will hit princes and paupers, members of Congress and members of the clergy, computer whizzes and those who don't have computers. We may all be at risk from the coronavirus, but class, race, and gender will likely determine who has the best chance at recovery. We can't call ourselves "great" unless we are fair. Will everyone have a chance to recover from this virus?

> Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist. Her latest project MALVEAUX! On UDCTV is available on youtube.com. For booking, wholesale inquiries or for more info visit www. juliannemalveaux.com

COMMENTARY:

Dear Black People: Coronavirus Will Kill You

By Nsenga K. Burton, Ph.D., NNPA Newswire Culture and Entertainment Editor

oronavirus or Covid-19 or "rona" as some are calling it will kill you. You may have seen some of the conspiracy theories, myths or outright lies floating around the internet stating that black folks cannot get coronavirus. You may have the false belief that those with "melanin poppin'" cannot get this deadly virus or if they get it, will not die from it. Stop the madness.

Actor Idris Elba, NBA stars on multiple teams and black folks in your everyday life have it. You may have heard the sad case of retired nurse Pat Frieson, 61, who became the first casualty of the virus in Illinois. What looked like an asthma attack has now been classified as coronavirus. Frieson has a sister in the same hospital also suffering from the same symptoms and now fighting for her

sister are black.

Ives Green. a 58-year-old runner, and award-winning Special Olympics athlete, became the first person in Louisiana to die from coronavirus. He lived in a facility for people with developmental disabilities and had limited exposure to people from outside of the facility. His family is still trying to figure out how someone seemingly in great health, contracted coronavirus. Mr. Green is black.

You may have heard of Dr. James Pruden, 71, an emergency room doctor in Paterson, NJ, who is now in critical condition after testing positive for coronavirus. He is a trained first responder who is in charge of the hospital's emergency preparedness unit and lead the hospital through the swine flu outbreak in 2009. Dr. Pruden is now fighting for his life and he is black.

Melanin is not Vibranium and

why some black people, who are often disproportionately impacted by medical conditions for a myriad of reasons, believe they are immune to coronavirus is beyond me? For those who think Idris Elba isn't "black, black,' the British-born brother's parents are from Sierra-Leone and Ghana meaning he is African in addition to being a black Brit which makes him unequivocably "black, black."

For the record, people in 19 African countries have tested positive for coronavirus and for sure they are "black black."

To make it plain, I'm not talking about skin color, I'm talking about identity. If you are African living anywhere in the world including the continent, black American, mixed race, biracial, Hotep, Greek, GDI, hood, bougie, religious, atheist or any category of black, there isn't a magical pill or pigment that's going to stop you

life. Ms. Frieson and her America isn't Wakanda even from getting coronavirus if restaurants are still delivering are black Chinese people in the Marvel Universe, so you come in contact with and responsible gym owners too but that's another someone who has it.

> Even if you don't think you have it, you very well could have it and knowingly or unknowingly spread the virus that may not be fatal to you but could be fatal to others. It is called being asymptomatic. Merriam-Webster's dictionary uses asymptomatic in the following sentence to give people a better understanding of the meaning of the word:

> "Those measures could work slowing the spread of the virus, which is also believed to be spread by asymptomatic people."

> My point is coronavirus will kill you and other black people so wash your hands and stay away from others outside of your home as much as possible, especially older folks. Listen to those in power you can trust. If restaurants, gymnasiums and other businesses are closed. stay away from them. Some

are posting at-home workouts for their clientele on the web. I've also heard folks saying only two percent of the U.S. population will get it. For the geniuses out there, that amounts to 6 million people which is not a small number.

As for all of the conspiracy theories, the rapid spread of coronavirus happens when your President hires a science denier as head of Health and Human Services who promptly cuts the CDC's budget on managing infectious diseases by 80 percent and is still trying to make more cuts to said budget.

Oh, and suppressing important information and holding press conferences about coronavirus that are evasive and filled with misinformation and flat out lies. Just because your xenophobic President calls it the Chinese virus, doesn't mean it only impacts the Chinese. Oh, and there

article (see Jamaica).

If you haven't before, now is the time to practice self-care. There is no conspiracy and black people can and are dying from this virus. Coronavirus is real and those of us who have been historically denied competent and compassionate healthcare should be the most vigilant in adhering to guidelines and mandates to prevent the spread of the deadly virus, especially to our most vulnerable populations.

This article was written by Nsenga K Burton, Ph.D., founder & editor-in-chief of The Burton Wire. An expert in intersectionality and media industries, Dr. Burton is also a professor of film and television at Emory University and coeditor of the book, Black Women's Mental Health: Balancing Strength and Vulnerability. Follow her on Twitter @Ntellectual

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parents and grandparents used. They didn't call it meditation or grounding; they called it prayer,

or didn't name it at all and just did it while they were singing or humming, or quietly while they did their chores, cooking, sewing, or gardening. I call all of that the art of active meditation, so that while we breathe and focus our attention on our task, it allows our minds and spirits to relax.

I'm inviting you to do the same, to add grounding to your selfcare toolkit. So in these moments when the kids are getting on your last nerve or you feel anxious or lonely, I invite you to take a time out, to be still and take a breath. You can hide out in the bathroom

if you live with folks, or just stop wherever you are and breathe deeply, remembering you are not alone; you are surrounded by Spirit and Ancestors.

Toolkit Item One: Breathing and Meditation

If you can light a candle and sit for ten or fifteen minutes, even better. As you sit, remember to relax your body, relax your mind, maybe even tell yourself, "I am releasing and letting go, I am open to the divine flow." Allowing your body and mind to relax and soften, just focusing on your breath, and as things come into your mind, allow them to float away. Giving yourself this gift of peace, allowing your mind to be free of all the rest of daily stresses. Remembering to do this

just for a few minutes lets our mind and body reset. By keeping our stress in check, we can boost our immune system and help let go of the feelings of hopelessness, isolation, anxiety, loneliness, anger, or frustration.

Toolkit Item 2: Setting Positive Environment

I want to share with you a quick air purifying/respiratory steam that you can do in your home to cleanse the space and also aid in rejuvenating our lungs.

> In a pot of water, bring to a boil:

Citrus (lemons, limes & oranges)

Ginger

- Cinnamon
- Menthol crystals (optional)
- Eucalyptus, rosemary, or lavender (I used essential oils but if you it fresh that'll work as well)
- Bay leaves
- And LOTS of #LOVE

(Don't worry about not having all the ingredients. Use what you have at home.)

Once the boil starts to produce steam, turn off the fire, isolate the steam with a towel over your head, and breathe in! It's very soothing to your lungs and your home

will smell AMAZING!!

Toolkit Item 3: Asking for Help

At Rafiki we deeply acknowledge that "it's ok to not be ok," and that to ask for help if these tools are not working is important. Our mental health is just as important as our physical health. During this crisis of COVID-19, Rafiki team members are doing wellness calls, providing resources around food banks, and helping with unemployment applications, testing resources, respite care, etc, or just talking with our community members for a bit. We also have a few phone or video appointment openings with Dr. Danielle Drake, an expressive arts trained therapist,

who uses culture and creativity in her work with our community. For information please contact us at 415-615-9945.

***Rafiki Coalition is a holistic community wellness organization in San Francisco's Bayview Hunter's Point dedicated to eliminating health disparities in Black/African American and marginalized communities. We offer culturally resonant exercise classes, nutrition workshops, health education forums, health screenings and complementary medicine services. We also manage an 11-bed transitional housing facility for homeless **HIV-positive persons. For more** information please contact us at 415-615-9945, or maxine@ rafikicoalition.org.













Supporting Our LGBTQI Community

By Tuquan Harrison LGBTQI Policy Advisor, San Francisco Human Rights

Commission

ince the 1970s, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (SFHRC) has advocated for full freedom, justice, and equality for all members of the LGBTQI community in San Francisco. The Commission has supported the LGBTQI fights against discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation; advocated for the civil rights of community members living with HIV/AIDS; and educated the public on a range of issues affecting the most vulnerable.

Given this history, it comes at no surprise that the SFHRC is a leader in the current citywide effort supporting the LGBTQI community during the COVID-19 pandemic. As was the case with many past public health crises, the LGBTQI community is disproportionately impacted and at heightened risk of contracting COVID-19 as a result of many factors, including:



Tuquan Harrison

or health insurance

LGBTQI people make up 30% of the homeless population in San Francisco; LGBTQI Youth makeup close to 40% of the homeless population

LGBTQI tobacco use is 50% higher than the general population

Higher rates HIV/AIDS and cancer

Additionally, LGBTQI senior populations are highly vulnerable because LGBTQI seniors are:

More likely to live in isolation

More likely to live with preexisting health conditions

Less likely to receive support from health and Lack of access to healthcare aging population service

providers for meals and health wellness programs

When we view the current situation through the lens of intersectionality, the compounding factors of race, socioeconomic status, immigration status, engagement with the criminal justice system, and living with disabilities exacerbate the impacts of the coronavirus crisis for already-vulnerable members of the community.

SFHRC Director Sheryl Davis and LGBTQI Policy Advisor Tuquan Harrison have been working to ensure LGBTQI peopleincluding people of color and the trans and gender variant community—are supported. Advisor Harrison launched a survey to solicit feedback from community organizations, programs, and initiatives serving the LGBTQI community; the survey asks about current needs and existing gaps in services, and also provides information on how to support other efforts put in place in response to the pandemic. Additionally, SFHRC in partnership with the Emergency Operation Center's Equity Team created a citywide LGBTQI resource page to help streamline current services and support for the San Francisco LGBTQI community.

SFHRC has also granted \$80,000 dollars in funding to support cash grants for groceries, mutual aid, and rental assistance to trans and gender variant organizations in San Francisco. Advisor Harrison saw the importance of partnering with SFHRC grantees to provide essential services.

From SFHRC Partner Aria Sa'id, Executive Director of the Transgender District:

The Transgender District, in the southeastern Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco, is the first legally recognized culture district of its kind in the world. The mission of the Transgender District is to create an urban environment that fosters the rich history, culture, legacy, and empowerment of transgender people and its deep roots in the Tenderloin. The Transgender District aims to stabilize and economically empower the transgender community through ownership of homes, businesses, historic and cultural sites, and safe community spaces."

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, The Transgender District aims to provide cash grants, mutual aid, and eviction prevention funding to transgender people experiencing catastrophic loss of income and lack of access to monetary resources for groceries, supplies, and medications. We also aim to support housing stability and other consequences of local and federal shelter in place mandates. Transgender people are severely impacted by economic depression. In light of this fact, our goal is to ensure that these communities receive financial support to sustain themselves during a

time of uncertainty. In partnership with SFHRC. The Transgender District will provide cash grants and eviction prevention funds to transgender residents of San Francisco, while also prioritizing transgender residents of the cultural district which holds the densest transgender population in San Francisco, and those who experience high rates of housing instability and houselessness, and who live significantly below the local and federal poverty line.

Note Of Thanks For Consideration - Not An Article. From SFHRC Partner Janetta Johnson, Executive of the Transgender Gendervariant and Intersex Justice Project (TGIJP):

TGI Justice Project expresses immense gratitude for the initial rapid response to the pandemic from the San Francisco Human Rights Commission Director, Sheryl Davis, and her staff. We are grateful for the rapid response from Director Davis and our team's support in placing our marginally housed trans clients into hotels.

The pandemic has heightened the pre-existing vulnerability of houseless street-based sex workers who rely on sex work to pay rent or motel bills during these very difficult times.

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission is committed to supporting efforts aimed at enhancing the well-being and livelihood of the LGBTQI community, promoting equity, and advancing racial, economic, and gender justice. We will continue to make sure we support the LGBTQI community in San Francisco.

Patience And Persistence In The Crisis

By Anthony Wager, Member of the Sutter Health **Board of Directors**

uring my 46 years as a healthcare executive, I've never witnessed a health/ economic crisis such as the one our country currently faces with the COVID-19 pandemic.

From my experience, these are some thoughts I would like to share with our community. First of all, I'm acutely aware of the physical, mental and financial pressures caused by this pandemic.

It remains uncertain when we here in the Bay Area will be relieved from the "shelter in place" and the mask-wearing orders. Although these orders are a major inconvenience, they are absolutely necessary for our community to eventually return to a more "normal" way of life. In that regard we must be patient. We should all be so



Anthony Wagner

proud of Mayor London Breed who was the first national leader that had the foresight to mandate a "shelter in place" order for San Francisco, two days before Governor Gavin Newsom issued his "shelter in place" order for the State of California.

Although we should continue to comply with these orders, we must also be persistent.

Persistent in agitating for health equity. It is no secret to us that our community has continued to have lower health statistics than Asians, Whites, or Latinos. This virus has ripped the bandaid off of this scab of inequities for all to see as epidemiological data is daily reported. Another health inequity that has been exposed is the underfunded and inadequate system of care in the majority of our skilled nursing facilities and nursing homes in the United States. I contend that in a country as wealthy as ours these two inequities should not be allowed to continue. The entire system of long-term care must be rethought and redesigned.

I can't begin to address all of the reasons for those two problems. At the heart of ethnic healthcare disparities is racism. I am under no illusion that measuring health inequities will by itself eliminate the negative consequences derived from racism. Racism in healthcare and our larger society has a long history and the two-tier system cannot be undone overnight. However, the development of quantitative measures and data applied to health equity presents the opportunity to make some of the most significant steps forward in health equity since 1964. That was the year the Civil Rights Act passed and the Federal government used the threat of withholding funding to desegregate hospitals. However, since then, we've been hampered by the inability to quantify and address the more subtle and nuanced racial biases in healthcare that lead to stark differences in outcomes.

One of the many challenges provider organizations, like the ones in which I spent my professional career, face is addressing the fine nuances of racism and recognizing the many forms it takes. There are at least three forms of racism that contribute to healthcare disparities.

First, there is external/societal racism. Second, there is racism internal to our organizations; such as unconscious bias, arising from our backgrounds and experiences. Third is systemic or institutional racism, baked into our traditions and actions by historical practice, this is often the most apparent. This an area that I, along with several healthcare and community individuals, worked on with the Disparities in Healthcare for African American Americans in San Francisco Project several years ago.

With the advent of this pandemic, we could be at a turning point in history where we can make traction in bringing these health disparities into the light of day and the national discourse. So, as we patiently comply with the Governor's and Mayor's orders, we must be persistent in our advocacy in righting these wrongs.

So what can we do? We can arm ourselves with current facts

about the latest COVID-19 information by tuning in to the Mayor's and Governor's daily briefings. Our local Department of Health has a wealth of factual information. I would suggest you skip the President's briefings because they are usually devoid of facts. I also suggest you avoid getting your information from the internet because it usually is not factual, and many times is downright dangerous and full of conspiracy theories.

In summary, patiently comply with the "shelter in place" and mask- wearing orders. Persistently advocate with our national, state, and local elected officials to address the healthcare disparities, and vote. It was pointed out to me by the late, Naomi Gray, that a brief letter or note to your elected official was a powerful method of communicating. I close by asking you to be patient, persistent, and safe.

Pray And Vote

By Dr. Amos Brown

merica faces two existential dangers today. One of them infects the human body. The other infects the body politic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound consequences for the entire nation. The infection threatens millions of lives. Every day, we watch the news and see and hear those who fancy themselves as leaders call for prayer for God to cure the virus.

Prayer is appropriate. Prayer is powerful. But prayer alone will not solve the public health crisis we face. Only action by a united nation will.

The administration in Washington also has had profound consequences for the entire nation. The political disaster that has

befallen us threatens millions of terms. It is only the latest example Americans, especially people of color and the marginalized. Every day, we see and hear young people yearn for a radical change in November, hoping that it will cure the nation of the failure of leadership and character in the White House.

Hope is needed. Hope is powerful. But hope alone will not solve the political disaster that has befallen our nation. Only action by a united electorate will.

Yet I fear we are in danger of losing both battles because of pervasive apathy and cynicism.

Our country is in the grips of nationalism driven by a president who has led an assault on the poor and on the black and brown people of this country. The past few weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that in the starkest of how our nation is regressing toward a time that we cannot and must not relive.

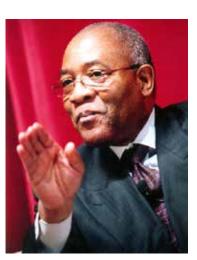
That will happen without the change in leadership that young people hope for - yet I am gravely concerned that too many of them will sit on the sidelines this fall rather than unite behind a candidate that can succeed at the polls and defeat this racist regime.

I came of age as a black man in Mississippi in an era of legalized segregation and lynchings. In 1955, I was 14 years old -the same age as Emmet Till, a black teenager who was beaten, mutilated, shot, and dumped in the Tallahatchie River by two white men who were promptly acquitted. Just a few weeks before Till's murder, on May 7, Rev. George Washington Lee was killed by three shotgun blasts because he dared, as a black man, to register to vote in Belzoni.

When black leaders like Rev. Lee were sacrificing their lives to secure their right to vote, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. observed that many blacks who could vote safely were not going to the polls. He warned them that "In the past, apathy was a moral failure. Today, it is a form of moral and political suicide."

His words ring true today.

Young people born during the past three decades have enjoyed a great privilege. They have grown up in an era with strong civil rights protections enshrined in the law. They have no memories of the decades of struggle that preceded the first civil rights laws, of the long fights in the courts and in society in the years that followed. They have not seen and cannot



Rev. Amos Brown

truly imagine what we once were, and could become again.

Some may believe their vote doesn't matter. Others insist that it must be their candidate who wins the Democratic nomination or they will refuse to unite with the rest of the party to defeat Trump.

Either path is as fatal as the virus we are now fighting.

Four more years of the present administration will not cure the country's ills, or clear the path for a radical change in the nation's direction. On the contrary, we would see the nationalism and racism of today entrenched, along with a reactionary Supreme Court and conservative federal judiciary that would remain in place for two generations. We would continue our decline back toward the kind of nation where I grew up, and where no one should ever again have to live.

We cannot pray to be saved from that fate or hope that things will change. We all must unite at the voting booth in November – every age, color and faith - to cure our nation before the infection of the body politic becomes fatal.

The Rev. Amos Brown is President of the San Francisco NAACP and Pastor of the Third Baptist Church in the city's Fillmore District.

Partnership Providing **Tools For The Ground**

By Derick Brown, Senior Community Advisor SFPD

n response to the current conditions, **Director Sheryl Davis** of the San Francisco **Human Rights Commission** began a weekly virtual convening with citywide community partners, stakeholders, and faithbased leaders to gain insight into the most prevalent issues being faced on the ground. Director Davis established this vital and timely virtual space in partnership with the San Francisco Police Department, Emergency Operations Center, San



Derick Brown

Francisco Department of Public Health, San Francisco Sheriff's Department, other City departments, and citywide community based organizations.

most updated COVID-19 information and access to a centralized location of resources continued to be an issue that arose. In discussions with various San Francisco communities in the Western Addition, Bayview, and the Mission, among others, we repeatedly heard an ask from community members for coronavirus outreach materials that resonated with their communities. They also stressed the importance of additional strategies for staying connected across the community, to both help

During these weekly push out messaging and check-ins, the need for the instill a sense of ownership and validation among community members.

There is a clear disconnect within communities of color relative to the need to cease group gatherings, the importance of social distancing, and the severity of the risks that arise from not following shelter in place and other safety guidelines. Many of our people have expressed that these restrictions feel like an attempt to further oppress them and, in turn, they have not been responsive to the traditional

mainstream messaging.

For these reasons, we have been working on a community-led approach to increase support in spreading the message around safety, health risks, and general awareness, and to decrease physical engagement in groups whenever possible. Out of these conversations, we created a communityled COVID-19 Toolkit and Resource Guide that will be updated weekly to reflect the most current information and incorporate any newly released resources.

This toolkit and resource guide provides the most up to date COVID-19 resources

and information for community leaders citywide to share with their networks. Among these resources are graphics and collateral that were created by San Francisco's youth from community organizations and nonprofits including Project Level, SOMCAN, and others. Everything in the toolkit and resource guide is available for the public in communities across the City to access freely and share via email, text, and/or social media. Help spread the word to increase physical distancing and, ultimately, to save lives.

Breed Continued from page 1

Health Dr. Grant Colfax and six other Bay Area counties announced Wednesday the extension of the stay-at-home orders through May 31. While social distancing and masks will continue to be required, there will be some easing of restrictions including for construction and certain other loosen restrictions on some lower-risk outdoor activities.

"The sacrifices of San Franciscans are making it possible to flatten the curve of coronavirus cases in our community. The extended health order recognizes our progress, while also keeping us on course," said Mayor Breed. "The small changes to lower-risk activities are the result of the outstanding job by our residents of abiding by the rules and precautions that have helped keep our community safe. I know this is hard for everyone, but we have to keep our focus on protecting public health every step of the way. Our focus now must be on continuing to strengthen our system and track progress as we plan for the future steps can take if we continue to see improvements."

The Mayor too, is complying with the stay-at-home orders. "I'm on the phone all day. I have phone meetings; I'm on Zoom. I do media interviews." She has participated in business forums and met and Fridays she goes to the with the faith community from home. She is also busy raising donations for Give2SF COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. The three priority areas for the fund are food security, access to housing, and support for workers and small businesses.

On Mondays, Wednesdays

to hold press conferences. Through it all she tries to stay healthy. "I try to get up in the morning and do

Emergency Operations Center

a little exercise, drink a lot of water, and stay home as much as possible. "

Davis Continued from page 1

Black people will experience the worst outcomes; we must fight the temptation to tolerate these disparities as the norm. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope." Dr. King reminded us also that we must deal creatively with our "shattered dreams and blasted hope," with failures that push us to bitterness, as the bitterness can impact our physical health and well-being. We can expect disappointment; we can even plan for it-but we must remain hopeful.

Academic and medical research suggests hope is critical for mitigating barriers to employment, future success, mental wellness, and improved health outcomes. Additional studies highlight the positive impact that music, meditation (or prayer, as the old folks called it), and community have on overall health and wellbeing. There is something to be said for the generations before us, who knew to couple hope with collaboration. Our ancestors did not need studies and research to tell them the importance of hope, song, and community. They had a "spiritual" knowing. Many of the songs connected to slavery and the civil rights movement represent the notion of moving beyond hope. Song lyrics like, "Meeting tonight, meeting tonight, meeting at the old camp ground" served as a rallying cry to the community to come together, plan, and heal. Fannie Lou Hamer was known for singing songs of inspiration; while she was singing about heaven, she was registering Black people to vote here on earth. Hamer represented faith in action, and I believe when she sang, "Have you got good religion?" she was challenging us to demonstrate good religion through action.

During this challenging time, we must do as Hamer sang; we must come together and shine our lights to support our communities, share information and resources, encourage social distancing, and work to minimize the harm this pandemic is having on low-income communities of color and the lingering impacts that will come as a result of the initial harm.

In his poem "Hope," Langston Hughes talks about being lonely and not knowing why, but imagines one day in the future when he won't be lonely. We cannot do our current work alone; much like a choir, we must join together, work together, and sing together. In the fight for civil rights people literally locked arms as they stood against oppression; the planning and organizing that led to sit-ins, marches, and silent protests were not the work of one person, but many. In joining together in this work, we can get more done and avoid the isolation of loneliness that Hughes longed to escape.

And if hope is the motivator, collaboration is the action. The action of hope is wanting something to happen; we must move beyond the hoping and into

the doing. Yes, we should use this time to feed each other, check in on each other, make sure basic needs are met. We must also use this time to encourage each other and continue to fight the disparities that plague our communities. We must see the possibility, talent, and hope in our community and help foster our successes. Dr. King offered a strategy to begin to develop our youth when he said, "A child must learn early to believe that she is somebody worthwhile, and that she can do many praiseworthy things." Let's take this time to do more than hope for better outcomes – let's work toward them, by staying home, by calling family and friends to make sure they are taking care of themselves. Let's make sure our youth are spending time learning and playing, and let's continue to encourage our

In this spirit of community and collaboration, the Human Rights Commission launched Community Roundtable weekly meetings. The

youth and each other.

Roundtable is a dynamic group of community stakeholders who elevate concerns about the city's response relative to low-income communities and communities of color. We've co-created a space for community-informed action, guided by what the community tells us they need, remaining solution-focused and flexible in these rapidly changing times. Overall, the Roundtable seeks to address issues of equity and to minimize the negative impact of the pandemic on people who were already experiencing health and economic disparities before the onset of COVID-19.

As we continue to work toward decreasing the disproportionate impact on communities of color, it is important that we communicate the why behind these instructions in dynamic ways for people not typically reached by our messaging. This includes partnering with community leaders who can help us reach diverse constituents. We must also communicate to our leaders how a lack of resources

and access to reliable internet networks, technology devices, games, literacy activities, food, other resources, and safe spaces can make it difficult to comply with social distancing and public engagement orders, while in other communities, privilege might play a role. A long-broken system has contributed to a sense of hopelessness and unrealized dreams for some; left unchecked, can have long-lasting and disproportionate impact.

In another of my favorite Langston Hughes poems, Dreams, Hughes encourages us to hope and supposes that without hope we are like 'a broken-winged bird, that cannot fly.' We must not be broken by the inequities of life; instead, we must come together to address challenges of today that were planted in yesterday's seeds of injustice, in order to change tomorrow's outcomes.

Kellv Continued from page 1

Convention Center. With inperson conferences canceled due to the Shelter-In-Place Health Order, the facility now houses San Francisco's **Emergency Operation Center** (EOC) consisting of hundreds of City employees providing essential government services.

These services are helping San Franciscans find food, City Administrator Kelly customer service call center. the services, support and event of a major disaster. deliver City services.

childcare, pertinent health information, small business assistance and more. City Administrator Kelly's primary role is to assist with logistics purchasing supplies, leasing of real estate, and securing of scarce resources. Importantly, Ms. Kelly has guided the City around bad actors while Ms. Kelly administers to procuring scarce resources,

helped establish the Logistics branch at the EOC to ensure that the City has a coordinated logistics chain for EOC staff and City departments.

up-to-date on the essential to provide. Two resources keep residents updated is the These resources are constantly updated and monitored to ensure clarity and concise guidance to residents.

As coronavirus continues It is vital that residents stay to disproportion at ely impact African-Americans, services the City continues low-income residents, undocumented people and individuals with underlying health conditions, City helping avoid fake bidders on City's website, sf.gov, and Administrator Kelly is working efficiently be made available and technology equipment City contracts. Concurrently, SF311, the City's primary on the front lines to deliver to the community in the for essential employees to

solutions that San Franciscans need. Part of that leadership is leveraging private resources to assist in the effort.

The City Administrator oversees the City's online donation program, Give2SF. The Give2SF Fund provides an opportunity for monetary and in-kind donations which can rapidly and

The Fund has received approximately \$10.5 million in contributions and pledges to provide food security and access to housing for San Franciscans. In addition to monetary donations, the City is receiving sealed personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline health workers, cleaning supplies,

Spingola Continued from page 1

another way to get rid of Black people and are taking it personally instead of taking the situation seriously. Because of the justifiable skepticism that lots of Black people hold toward government and authority, they're feeling like the hype around COVID-19 is not serious—like it's just like when development came in: trying to wipe out Black folks. So they're continuing to drink out of the same bottle or pass the same joint, and we're trying to remind them, "You're going back to a house where your grandmother or

your kids or other loved ones community roundtables. And are there. You have to not just protect you but everyone around you." I want to get that message out.

When I was growing up, my mom would say, "Ain't no secrets in the projects," speaking to how fast information can spread around the whole community. In this case, dealing with trying to keep folks informed and safe in light of COVID-19, it's positive. We've been going door-to-door and sharing information and resources any way we can: through word of mouth, fliers, posters, mailers, social media,

that causes a chain reaction, with people passing the information along, paying it forward, and expanding our reach and impact.

There are some serious challenges in trying to get this work done, though. Our neighborhoods don't have the same level of access to materials and resources that some other neighborhoods have. People are trying to help their families but out of work and out of money. How can I support young people in this position to not feel like a burden to their families? It's sad to think about all that I

can't make happen in a day, having to turn people away. We're making our own hand sanitizer now, and I've given directly out of my pocket, but I can't do it all. I've been working with SF New Deal to bring lunches to the community, but I ran out of food today. And even though the City is paying for the food now, I'm not sure if they're gonna keep paying for it. Families are starting to depend on these hot lunches and it supports 30-odd restaurants across 20-odd sites. How will we sustain it? Will I have to cook myself? Can we find some food trucks to pay to

bring the food in? We need more support to avoid putting young people in desperate circumstances or forcing them to turn to desperate measures.

I'm grateful for the successes we've had so far, though. We got a temporary emergency hospital set up. We've given away 200 chromebooks and tablets, even to some youth who might otherwise never have a computer. We're teaching 3rd graders to 24-year-olds to get onto a computer and be able to keep up with their learning. The Ella Hill Hutch Community Center has always been the City Hall of the Western Addition; now it's become that kind of goto place for all low-income, young people, and families in need across the City, for African American, Latinx, Asian, white, and homeless populations—a central hub for people who don't have or can't access resources. It's been great to see the smiles on young people's faces who walk out of here with a computer and a sense that, "This is great not just for me, but my little brother, my cousin, my momma can use it." We really don't know what's gonna happen, but being able to supply that little small piece is a gift.

Brookter Continued from page 1

unable to get themselves to work and essential appointments and providing delivery services to help them receive what they need.

Processes and systems we already had in place like remote communication channels, solid working relationships, and payroll processes—have allowed us to adapt quickly. We've been working hard for a long

time to cultivate a healthy community ecosystem, and what's happening now is shining a light on the good work that's already been going on. Long-existing silos are getting broken down; we're having crucial conversations with city departments and other organizations to make sure our populations have holistic support at this time. We've even been able to continue to employ folks, with new fellows being onboarded as recently as last week.

As a community leader, I felt overwhelmed at times by the uncertainty we're all experiencing. I'm the type of individual who leads by example; the challenging piece is the unknown. Knowing that I'm making a decision at 11:53AM can possibly change at noon, and navigating all the unknowns while also managing the teams fears, questions, and anxieties. I'm constantly asking myself if I'm making the right decision. During the day, it's very reactive because

there are constant requests coming in. But at 6 or 7pm, when the calls are done, then the anxiety sets in. What's coming tomorrow? What's going to happen after all of this?

I'm grateful to be able to come together with my 99-person team weekly, to be able to connect with them and show them my humanity. And since being in a leadership position is usually go-go-go-go, I'm also grateful for the time to slow down, to consider how

I've led and how I want to lead. I believe times of crisis reveal YCD is steadfast in our the leadership in us.

To assist you with navigating the current times, we have compiled a short list of resources. We hope you find these useful and encourage you to share them with others who might benefit from this information.

https://sf.gov/topics/ coronavirus-covid-19

https://www.sfusd.edu https://www.cdc.gov

commitment to our community even in times of challenges and rapid change. Now is the time to lean on one another for support and resources while we navigate

these difficult circumstances together. On behalf of YCD, it is an honor to serve the residents of San Francisco. We look forward to announcing new ways we will be providing our programs and services in the days to come.

Coronavirus and Human Value

By Angela Glover Blackwell and Michael McAfee

udging by the Twitter rage and stinging jabs from latenight comics, people were appalled by suggestions that grandparents should let themselves die of Covid-19 to save the economy. The outrage was predictable because the face of the old and frail, as put out by the media, was elderly and White. The proposal, however, should not have been a surprise. The call to sacrifice old people on the altar of prosperity is an expression of something deeply rooted and destructive in American culture: the belief in a hierarchy of human value.

The mindset goes back to the nation's origins, built from stolen land and human bondage. How else to justify genocide and slavery than by relegating Native and African people to the bottom of a pecking order that placed White people on top? America has never reckoned with these sins or the foundational belief that certain groups have little or no worth. They can be shunted aside, exploited, killed, or



Angela Glover Blackwell

allowed to die in order to enrich those who matter more.

People of color have always known where society places us on the value ladder, no matter how much we contribute, earn, or achieve. In recent decades the nation has witnessed many White people being pushed to the bottom too, by an economy that places a premium on the wealth of a privileged few and disregards low-income people and working people. As long as the Dow climbed, inequality was allowed to skyrocket. Despair was left to fester even as it has been killing working-class White Americans, as surely as the novel coronavirus, left unchecked, will kill their grandparents. The staggering increase in drug- and alcoholrelated deaths and suicides to come to grips with racism among White adults without a college education is an example of what happens when whole populations are devalued.

Other examples may have been hidden in plain sight, but COVID-19 lays them bare. It also illustrates how devaluing some groups ultimately hurts all. Years of research have shown that Black people have much higher rates of chronic illness, yet the government has never seriously tackled racial disparities in lung disease, asthma, heart disease, cancer, hypertension, obesity, and diabetes — the very conditions that can make this virus so deadly. Hundreds of communities on tribal lands and the Southern border lack access to clean water no matter how often they are commanded to wash their hands. Shelter in place, another common-sense order to slow viral spread, is infinitely more complicated for the roughly half-million people experiencing homelessness.

Gail Christopher, a philanthropic leader and executive director of the National Collaborative for Health Equity, has been pushing the nation for years

by acknowledging, and jettisoning, the hierarchy of human value. In thousands of personal ways, that may be starting to happen as we collectively face a virus that attacks without regard for the size of someone's investment portfolio, even as it is more deadly for some. People are staying home not just out of fear and self-protection but so medical workers can adequately care for the sickest of the sick, and the nation can reduce suffering and deaths. Early signs offer hope it is working. Will the resolve to social distance for the good of self and others continue now that the data reveal that people of color, especially African Americans, are being hit hardest?

The right thing to do in this moment is for government at all levels, especially the federal, to demonstrate that all people matter and prioritize those in greatest need — Black people, Native Americans, Latinos, vulnerable immigrants, elders, people with disabilities, and people struggling with poverty, homelessness, incarceration, and marginalization. Only by making sure they are free from the virus will everyone be safe.

which now affects nearly opportunity for critical selfreflection and communal with toilet paper and masks, true for all essentials, and not only during a pandemic. We are fooling ourselves if we think the nation can recover and heal without reimagining and rebuilding the systems and institutions the virus has revealed to be inadequate and broken. To recover, the nation must build a high-quality health-care system available and affordable to all. We must make sure everyone has access to clean water, safe housing, and jobs that bring financial security. We must create an economy that shares prosperity broadly, rather than

The good news is that the nation does not have to start from scratch to figure out how to do this. Dedicated, caring advocates for the most vulnerable have been developing and refining an equitable policy agenda for decades, one that honors the dignity and recognizes the

funneling the rewards to a few.

This extended lockdown, universal access to health care and childcare, guaranteed the entire country, is a rare jobs that offer living wages and paid sick leave, a fair criminal justice system, and a sharing. As we've learned high-quality education system that prepares all children and hoarding makes it difficult young adults for the future. It for others to survive. This is also includes political reforms that invigorate our democracy, freeing it from corporate and wealthy influence and enabling people to hold elected officials accountable for serving the public interest.

> As many of us sit at home, reflecting on what matters, let us first resolve to fight to get rid of the notion that some lives matter more than others. And let's learn from the starkest example of our mutuality and connection that any of us have seen in our lifetimes. If there's a silver lining in this crisis, it's the opportunity to transcend the categories that have divided us, including age, race, gender, class, income, ability, and political party, and to see the value in everybody.

Angela Glover Blackwell is the Founder in Residence at PolicyLink and host of the podcast Radical Imagination. Michael McAfee is the President and potential of all. It includes CEO of PolicyLink.

San Francisco And Bay Area **Extend Stay Home Order** Through End Of May

Extension Of The Health Order Is Designed To Maintain Progress On Slowing The Spread Of The Coronavirus. The Modified Order Will Loosen Restrictions On Some Lower-Risk Activities.

ayor London Breed and Director of Health Dr. Grant Colfax today announced that San Francisco and six other Bay Area jurisdictions will extend the Stav Home Orders through the end of May in order to maintain progress on slowing the spread of the coronavirus. The new Stay Home Order will go into effect at 11:59 pm on May 3, 2020.

In recognition of the gains made to date, the new orders will include minor modifications, while keeping social distancing, face covering, and other safety measures in place. While mass gatherings and crowded occasions are still months away from being permitted, the new regional Stay Home orders will allow some lowerrisk outdoor activities and jobs to resume once the new Order goes into effect.

"The sacrifices of San Franciscans are making it possible to flatten the curve of coronavirus cases in our community. The extended health order recognizes our progress, while also keeping us on course," said Mayor

Breed. "The small changes to loosen restrictions on some lower-risk activities are the result of the outstanding job by our residents of abiding by the rules and precautions that have helped keep our community safe. I know this is hard for everyone, but we have to keep our focus on protecting public health every step of the way. Our focus now must be on continuing to strengthen our system and track progress as we plan for the future steps can take if we continue to see improvements."

Under the extended Stay Home Order, all construction will be allowed to resume as long as specific safety measures are in place. Certain businesses that operate primarily outdoors, such as plant nurseries, car washes, and flea markets, may reopen under San Francisco's Order. Any employee of a business allowed to operate under the order can also access childcare programs that are allowed to operate. Some outdoor recreational facilities, like skate parks and golf courses, may reopen. The full text of the new order and answers to frequently asked questions will be posted at SF.gov.

Consistent with the plan to reintroduce lower-risk

outdoor activity, Mayor Breed

on Monday announced the closure of JFK Drive through Golden Gate Park and John Shelley Drive in McLaren Park. These closures will last for the duration of the Stay Home Order, to allow San Franciscans who choose to leave their homes more room to exercise while staying 6 feet from others and following other precautions. "For this next phase to be successful, it is essential that

all San Franciscans and Bay Area residents continue to stay home as much as possible, practice social distancing, wear face coverings when around other people, wash hands frequently, and stay vigilant in fighting the spread of the coronavirus," said Dr.



Malik Seneferu

Colfax. "We will be watching the data very carefully, and do not want to see an erosion of our progress that could reverse everyone's hard work and sacrifice." The Bay Area regional

approach aligns with Governor Newsom's ongoing statewide Stay Home Order, and the framework he has laid out for the state's recovery. As the Health Officers evaluate when and how to loosen restrictions in the coming weeks and months, the key indicators that San Francisco and its regional partners will be watching include:

Whether the number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 is flat or decreasing;

Whether we have sufficient

hospital capacity to meet the needs of our residents;

Whether there is an adequate supply of personal protective equipment for all health care workers;

Whether we are meeting the need for testing, especially for persons in vulnerable populations or those in high-risk settings or occupations; and

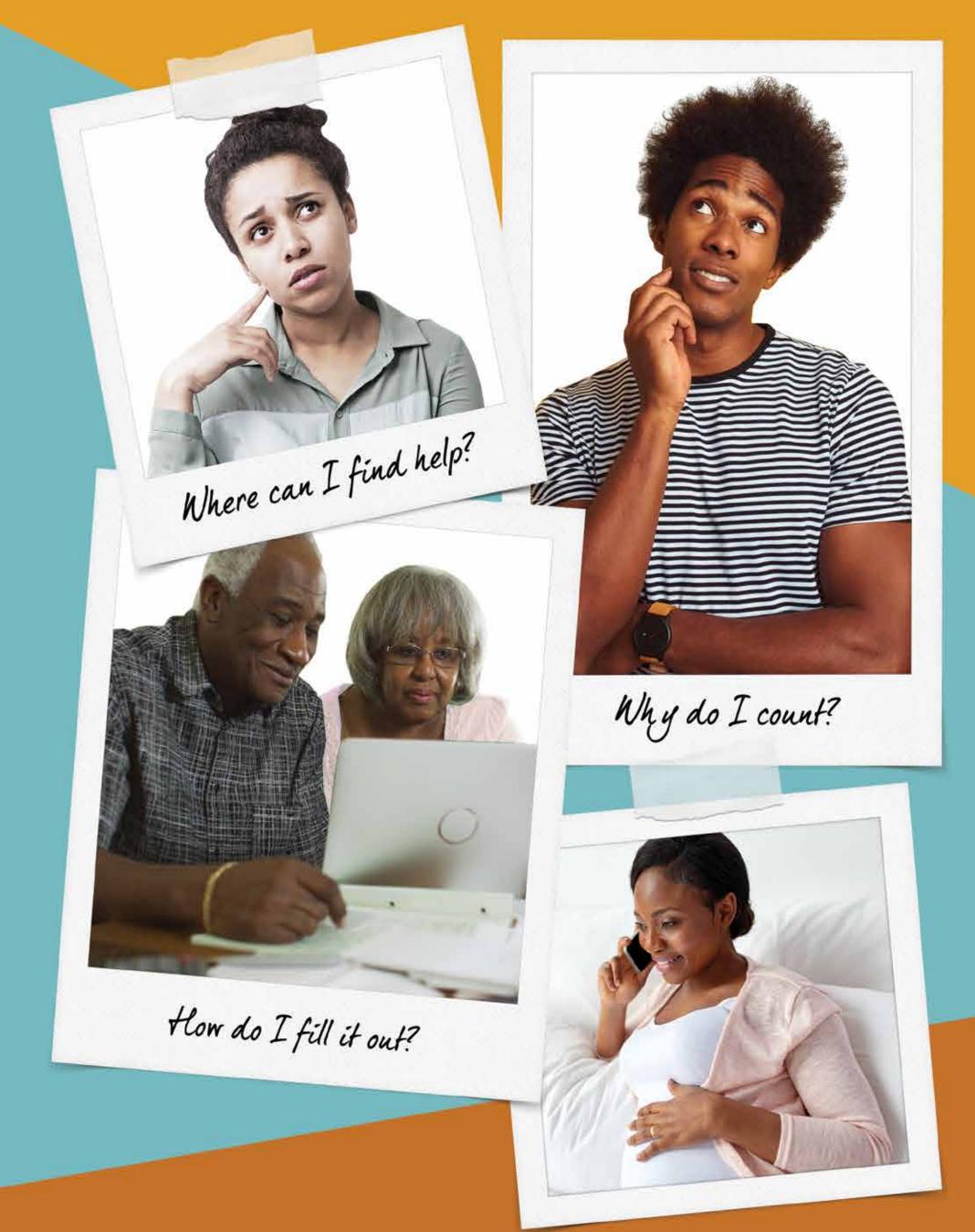
Whether we have the capacity to investigate all COVID-19 cases and trace all of their contacts, isolating those who test positive and quarantining the people who may have been exposed.

"The new order allows us to carefully monitor our progress while building the essential public health infrastructure that will support our gradual reopening and make recovery possible," said Dr. Tomás Aragón, Health Officer for the City and County of San Francisco.

During the month of May, the Health Department and partner agencies will continue to build up the infrastructure required for further reopening. That will include testing, contact tracing, outbreak response, and support services, including multi-lingual outreach and information. Importantly, the consistent practice of social distancing and face covering by members of the public will be essential to the success of the next phase.

As San Francisco embarks on this next phase, the coronavirus is still circulating in the community, and there is still no vaccine to protect against it. Therefore, everyone must continue to practice precautions, and the City will continue to prioritize vulnerable populations in its response. People who are over 60, or have underlying health conditions, and those who live in congregate settings will remain at high risk for the coronavirus even as the city and region start to reopen.

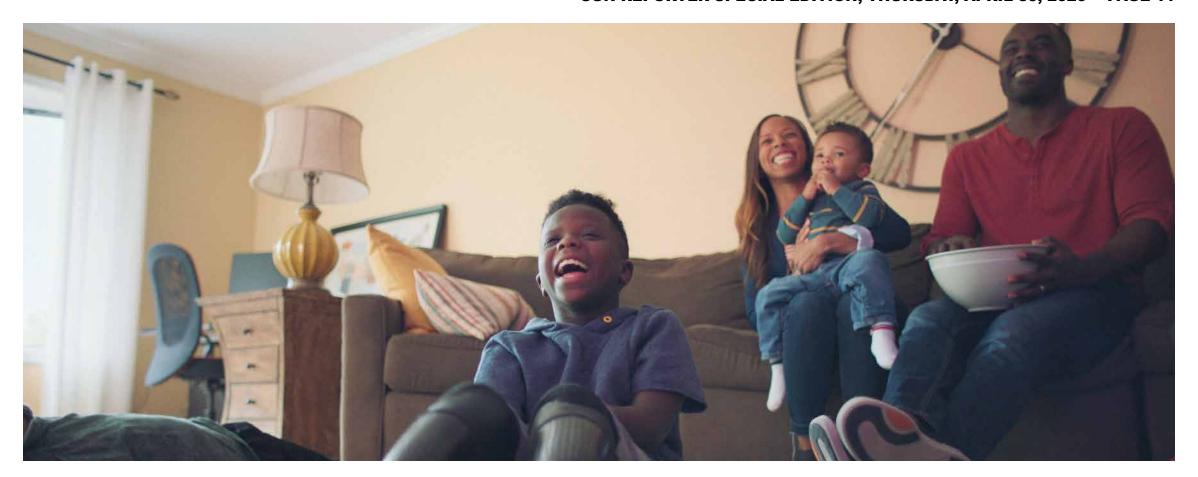
Have Questions About the Census?



Don't Hesitate to Ask Online or By Phone!

Your right to know is just as important as your right to count. Take advantage of the Census hotline's callback option by calling **844-330-2020** to get your questions answered. Then, complete the Census by phone or online at **MY2020CENSUS.GOV**.











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