2021 SPRING NEWSLETTER
LETTER FROM CEO
A reflection from our CEO.

PERFORMANCE UPDATES
How Miriam’s Kitchen has been effecting change during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TEAMING UP FOR HOUSING
Housing and Advocacy join forces to break through system-level barriers to housing.

KITCHEN & OUTREACH
Our Outreach and Kitchen teams have been working hard to provide meals and a safe haven for guests.

ADVOCACY
Miriam’s Kitchen and our partners are calling on Mayor Bowser to invest funds to end chronic homelessness.

2021 MISSION CRITICAL GALA
Let’s celebrate what we’ve achieved together over the past year!

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: GW LAW SCHOOL O’CONNOR INN
We appreciate your support!

HOW YOU CAN HELP
Learn how you can continue to support Miriam’s Kitchen.
DEAR MK COMMUNITY:

As I reflect on the first months of the pandemic, I recall our team’s three main objectives:

- maintain services for our guests
- maintain safety for all staff and guests
- and secure funding for the organization’s changing needs

I’m sincerely thankful for the entire Miriam’s Kitchen (MK) team, and each one of our many supporters like you who have expanded your professional work and shown personal sacrifice to ensure that MK attained these goals and cared for our guests. Through these challenging times, I have constantly been inspired by the dedication of our staff and volunteers, and by the resilience of our guests. Along with the rest of my team, I remain hopeful that better days are upon us as I witness so many of our front-line staff and guests receiving vaccines.

While I’m immensely proud of our victories, I know that there is still much work to be done as we all continue to pick up the pieces of the last year and build a new normal — for ourselves, for our program operations, and most importantly, for our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Let’s also remember that there is comfort in knowing that the pandemic may have bowed us, but it has not broken us.

As we reflect on our journey thus far, I invite you all to review this newsletter in celebration of the things that we’ve accomplished during this time despite our circumstances. I look forward to experiencing continued success with you all as we continue to realize our vision to end chronic homelessness.

Sincerely,

Scott B. Schenkelberg
President & CEO
Miriam’s Kitchen
SINCE MARCH 2020, YOUR SUPPORT HAS HELPED...

**Tackle food insecurity**
- 62,516 meals served in to-go containers
- 1,188 grocery store bags provided to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) residents

**Guests obtain safe, permanent housing**
- 93 guests moved into housing
- 209 guests assisted with stimulus checks
- 14 guests obtained social security (SSI-SSDI) through SOAR to increase their income

**Prevent the spread of COVID-19**
- 32 clients transferred to the Pandemic Emergency Program for Medically Vulnerable Individuals (PEP-V) or matched and in PEP-V
- 198 Social Services guests screened for COVID-19
- 5,339 COVID-19 screenings provided by Outreach

**Deliver guest-centered services**
- 4,719 general wellness checks for Outreach clients
- 178 guests connected to mental health services
- 152 guests connected to physical health services
- 64 phones purchased for guests to access critical care
- 52 art therapy telehealth sessions for PSH residents
TEAMING UP FOR HOUSING

Our Permanent Supportive Housing team and Advocacy team work together whenever there are systems issues that affect our clients moving into housing. These are sometimes small but important wins—like breaking through bureaucracies to get client paperwork approved—and sometimes larger system-level wins—like more vouchers allocated in the city budget! All of these wins create change for our clients and get us closer to ending chronic homelessness.

“For the last seven years, I have seen that every single voucher helps one more individual move from the shelter, the street, or an unstable or dangerous living situation. Without a permanent housing subsidy, the 216 individuals in our program would still be homeless today. Every voucher means everything to the person who receives it, and gets our community one person closer to ending chronic homelessness.”

-- Kiersten Quinsland, MK Director of Permanent Supportive Housing

Our Advocacy team has been proactive in listening to our frontline PSH workers about the on-the-ground issues we’re seeing daily that affect our clients. Things like credit-based denials for apartments, landlords charging exorbitant holding fees, or systems issues within the DC Housing Authority—the PSH team has relied on the Advocacy team to pass along these concerns and assist with concrete solutions.
Our Outreach team has worked tirelessly this winter, navigating road closures, political unrest, and bitterly cold temperatures to provide life-saving services to those in our coverage area, which comprises 33 square miles. In teams of two, we are out every weeknight from 1pm-9pm (or 3pm-11pm on nights when the Hypothermia Alert is called). During our evening work, we provide survival items like blankets, hand warmers, and food, and we call the Shelter Hotline, Emergency Services, or CRT (Community Response Team) when we encounter someone who is in crisis or demonstrates an inability to care for themselves.

We also step in to provide services and assistance during special circumstances: for example, in the week leading up to the Inauguration, we provided safety checks for unsheltered folks who were staying in the security perimeter near White House, and thanks to after-hours work by Lead Street Outreach Coordinator Andy Wassenich, Clinical Outreach Case Manager Keelyn Robey, and Outreach Case Manager Madeline White, we were able to provide a hotel room for 20 of those individuals who felt unsafe staying in their sleeping spot in the days leading up to the Inauguration.

In addition to our general outreach in our catchment area during both daytime and nighttime hours, we also provide intensive case management services to individuals on our caseload. Our case management work includes assisting our clients with housing, mental health, physical health, legal issues, and more; in the past year, we’ve also spent a lot of time getting folks into PEP-V, a hotel program providing refuge to unsheltered individuals who are at heightened risk of contracting COVID-19.

So far this fiscal year, our team has housed 21 individuals and has provided 140 connections to physical health services and 45 connections to mental health services. Senior SOAR Specialist Juanita Driver has secured SSI/SSDI benefits for four individuals this fiscal year using the SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) method. In addition, we work hard to form working relationships with community partners.

Miriam’s Kitchen has launched a new initiative called #FreshTakeFridays where we partner with local, minority- or women-owned businesses to provide a special dining experience for our guests.

Please contact development@miriamskitchen.org to sponsor a #FreshTakeFriday dinner that creates a trifecta of wins—supporting small businesses, enabling guests to enjoy meals from popular restaurants, and providing the kitchen team with a much-needed break.

Visit our blog at miriamskitchen.org/mk-in-the-news for updates.
As leaders of The Way Home Campaign, MK and our partners are calling on Mayor Bowser to invest $100 million to end chronic homelessness. Even before the pandemic, DC led the nation in homelessness per capita. With national research showing that COVID-19 could increase homelessness by 40% in DC, now is the time to significantly scale up our investments to end homelessness, not to cut vital programs.

This year we are calling on Mayor Bowser to:
- End chronic homelessness for 2,760 individuals and 430 families through housing solutions like Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
- Invest in homeless prevention and street outreach
- Address DC’s low-income housing and eviction crisis by investing in widescale rent and utility relief, the Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP), Public Housing Repairs, and the Housing Production Trust Fund

“DC has an opportunity to end homelessness, and this opportunity should not be wasted. If the District can fund the creation of streetcars and millions of dollars on police, we absolutely can invest in housing. Housing is a human right.”
-- Andrew Anderson, MK Advocacy Fellow

“Forcing residents of encampments to move is not only insensitive, it’s inhumane and puts them at greater risk of catching COVID-19. Instead the DC government should connect residents to services to help with their health and well-being.”
-- Wesley Thomas, Speaker’s Bureau Member

“Every time I leave my apartment up in Van Ness, I’m faced with the fact that we - DC, the capital of the United States of America - are not doing nearly enough to end homelessness.”
-- Rhonda Whitaker, MK Advocate

Photo: Wesley Thomas, Speaker’s Bureau Member (top), Rhonda Whitaker, MK Advocate (bottom).
Join us for a FREE virtual celebration of our guests, partners, and people who make ending chronic and veteran homelessness possible.

HONOREES

- Dignity Award: Rhonda Whitaker, MK Advocate
- Change Award: Commissioner Geoffrey Starks, Federal Communications Commission
- Change Award: Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)
- Belonging Award: A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation

Please register for this free event and our special silent auction here: miriamskitchen.org/missioncritical21

For information on sponsorship opportunities, silent auction donations, and access to our VIP Pre-Event Reception, please contact: developmentteam@miriamskitchen.org

EXCLUSIVE APPEARANCES & SPECIAL GUESTS

- Tom Sietsema, renowned Washington Post Food Critic
- Exclusive performances by the musicians from The Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra
- Poetic Performance by The Poet Life
We are so thankful for our neighbors at GW Law School, just steps away from MK headquarters, for being incredible partners and providing #MoreThanAMeal for our guests.

This past Martin Luther King Day, GW Law Professor and Inns of Court Advisor Dawn Nunziato lit a spark that encouraged her first-year property students to unite in the spirit of service.

When asked why they wanted to support, the students of O’Connor Inn said they “wanted to support a food justice organization because of the devastating increase in food insecurity that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused. The fresh meals, access to social services, and advocacy for permanent supportive housing that Miriam’s Kitchen provides are essential to helping our neighbors through this public health crisis.”

GW Law has been conducting all classes online for the last year, so “partnering with MK has been a meaningful way for students to connect with one another and with the local community, despite being physically distant.”

O’Connor students are excited to be fundraising toward a goal of $1,000 and look forward to partnering with MK in person once it is safe to do so.

To learn more about how to create your own fundraiser, contact Kimberly Heller at Kimberly.Heller@miriamskitchen.org
HOW YOU CAN HELP

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT
Did you know many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match any charitable contributions or volunteer hours made by their employees? To find out if your company has a matching gift policy, please visit: https://doublethedonation.com/miriamskitchen

WAYS TO GIVE
COVID-19 continues to put enormous financial pressure on all nonprofits. If you are in a financial position to give, here are a few ways you can help support your favorite nonprofit.

- Write a check or donate online to provide immediate assistance to the organizations you love.
- Donate a gift of appreciated stock to avoid capital gains tax.
- If you are 70 1/2 or over, you can make a gift to Miriam’s Kitchen directly from your IRA--satisfying part or all of your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year--with no tax due on the distribution.
- Make it Monthly and help organizations meet their most urgent needs.
- Host a personal fundraiser to maximize your impact and invite your network to support your favorite organizations. For more details, contact kimberly.heller@miriamskitchen.org

LEGACY GIVING
Do you imagine a brighter, more equitable future where every person has a safe place to call home? Here are a couple of examples of how you can help people experiencing homelessness for years to come.

- Name MK as a beneficiary of your retirement plan, donor-advised fund, insurance policy, bank account, IRA, etc.
- Make a gift to MK in your will or trust.

For your quick reference, our legal name is: Miriam’s Kitchen
Tax ID Number: 52-1331552
Incorporated in: 2401 Virginia Avenue, Washington, DC 20037

If you have already included Miriam’s Kitchen in your plans, it would be our honor to personally thank you. Please contact Mei Powers (mei@miriamskitchen.org or 202-452-8926x228) for questions or additional information.
ENDING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS.