



Resilient Dreams, Responsive Actions, and Big Impacts as Doers in 2020



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Hope's dream could have been deferred this year. But, our collective tenacity kept us true to the "what" as we changed the "how." We reimagined what was possible, and strived harder to accomplish everything we set out to do at the beginning of the year.

Each of our programs had their own way of engaging with community in 2020. Whether it was through altering our approach or creating new approaches, our team had a fruitful year of power building, reflections, learning, growth, and collaboration.



Youth Learning & Leadership

Youth programming had a year of powerful work and inspiring accomplishments. With a shift to virtual, our team first ensured our youth participants had the laptops and equipment they needed to be successful. Our internships also became virtual employment opportunities, which upheld positive outcomes through virtual job training and skill-building workshops.

Our youth engagement focused largely on the current social issues being faced. They reflected on the ways they are impacted by COVID-19, and by the murder of George Floyd. Many of Hope's youth took to action through organizing a powerful sit-in at the state capitol in early June, capturing documentation footage, and later producing an impactful music video with a call to action to vote as a way of combatting racial injustices and police brutality.

Food, Land, & Community

The three Gardens remained safe community spaces where we were able to connect and grow. Our farm lead, along with community leaders, cultivated produce such as native corn, huitlacoche, greens, and plums. They harvested and packaged the produce for a weekly produce distribution in the Rose Garden.

We also began Womxn of Color healing gatherings in the Gardens, a quiet space, after experiencing extreme sensory stress from the June uprisings. In our Food and Photography program, six young folks spent time virtually exploring storytelling in our food systems, the importance of who tells our stories, and how our stories are told, all while learning skills in videography and photo editing with photographer and filmmaker Ryan Stopera.

ARC/TRCSTR

Transformational Creative Strategies Training (TRCSTR)—within the Art of Radical Collaboration (ARC) partnership between Hope Community and the Minneapolis Institute of Art—completed its pilot year in October. TRCSTR makes space for artists and organizers to develop skills, build an intergenerational network, keep each other accountable, and think critically about how and why we create and organize.

The training was held virtually, with a few in-person socially distant outdoor workshops, led by project leads and advisors on topics like the Healing Justice and Community Relationships. Cohort members, advisors and project leads enriched TRCSTR with an array of community connections and experiences. TRCSTR was an especially important space to connect in these unprecedented times of pandemic, uprisings, and movements to follow.

“We shouldn’t just be thinking about us, but thinking about the next people who are going to own and want to live in the neighborhood. There are so many families that can’t afford to rent in Minneapolis or stay in the neighborhood, so I think this is a great idea.”

—Fatima, Community Ownership program graduate



Community Ownership Project

This year, we launched the pilot cohort of our Community Ownership Project aimed to support residents and renters in the community who aspire to become owner-occupant landlords of small multi-family properties in Minneapolis.

We had 4 graduates of the training, who now are working toward buying duplexes. Our graduates are excited about the ownership opportunity, which one described as: “Community coming together...and creating legacies.” In an effort to bring communities together to create more legacies, we’ll apply learnings from our pilot cohort, work with local nonprofits who are interested in converting their small properties into community ownership, and offer additional training opportunities in 2021.

“I think this it’s a valuable project; it is communities making pathways for what it needs.”

—Aموke, TRCSTR program adviser

“This group made an impression on me about hope, loving without strings, community, and connections.”

—Simone, TRCSTR program adviser



Parks & Power

Parks and Power listened to community need and responded with organized efforts, such as supplying PPE in the parks, and lots of other work. They partnered with FOR US, a BIPOC femme/trans/women (FTW) sibling organization of Grease Rag Ride and Wrench, to talk about safer spaces in the parks for BIPOC FTW, how to commute by bike in the summer and winter, and a mini skill share reviewing the different parts of a bike.

Additionally, Parks and Power saw a gap in COVID testing in South Minneapolis, especially in Powderhorn and surrounding neighborhoods, and wanted to meet the widespread need for free, accessible and safe COVID testing in the parks. They joined an advocacy group with Family Tree Clinic, and successfully organized a free testing site across from Phelps park in September.

“Through this internship, I was able to become exposed to different opportunities and resources. I was able to gain more insight about technology and networking, helping me to begin to build my personal brand online and offline.”

—Weslyn, Youth Intern Virtual Participant

Emergency Responses

Supply Drop

Our Food, Land, and Community team led Hope staff in responding to community need following the depletion of resources during COVID and following the uprising, and organized a Supply Drop. With the help of other organizers at Hope, they coordinated volunteers, planned for masks and sanitization methods, and put out a call for fresh and healthy foods, halal foods, baby products, medicine, and other household items. The Supply Drop lasted for a little over a month, and with so many donations received from community members and farmers, it had a steady amount of food and other supplies for people to pick up.

We are so grateful to those who donated food and supplies, and to our wonderful volunteers who helped make this happen.

Rent Relief

The pandemic impacted the ability for renters across the nation to keep up with rent payments. Despite government subsidies, paying rent has been a challenge, and many renters, including some of our residents, began falling behind. We sought out emergency relief grants—from the Otto Bremer Trust and Patrick & Aimee Butler Family Foundation—and used those funds to eliminate any rental debt for residents at our properties as of the end of July 2020, so that each household could move forward with a balance starting at \$0. We are grateful to have been able to provide some relief, and will continue to look at ways we can support our residents heading into 2021.

-  Facebook: @HopeCommunityInc
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