PUBLIC POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Census

Michelle and Amy have continued working with community partners on the Census, sharing news and infographics on Facebook. The “Marin Census Action Team” is meeting online, and will continue meeting through the extended census deadline of October 31, 2020. Many “Action Team” staff will continue working through October, November or December, but additional grant funding is not available for those who have received grants; however, participants will try to continue sharing information and social media outreach. (First 5 Marin will continue sharing infographics on Facebook.)

As of June 3rd, the Marin County response rate was 68.4% (compared to our 2010 final rate of 72.10%). There are areas of lower response, and these are receiving targeted attention: the Canal response rate is at 50.7% and the West Marin rate is only at 22.8% (and even lower in specific communities, e.g. 12% in Bolinas).

There are several new outreach efforts being pursued during COVID conditions, including community-based “caravans” (or parades) that have been successful elsewhere (with social media promotions and prizes). There are also three teams focused on phone banking— with staff from the Marin County Free Library, Canal Alliance and the County of Marin. (They are looking for more volunteers!)

First 5 Marin’s Facebook and Email Outreach during COVID-19 – Michelle continues posting and distributing video storytimes for young children in English and Spanish, as well as games, scavenger hunts, music videos, sing-a-longs, art, exercise and other activities. We are sharing this in emails three to five times each week and posting the best examples throughout each day on First 5 Marin’s Facebook page. See examples at: www.Facebook.com/First5Marin.

During the recent focus on Black Lives Matter, we have been sharing stories with anti-racism messages, and stories that celebrate diversity and friendship. We have also curated suggestions for parent discussions with young children as well as anti-racism/pro-diversity curriculum, projects and activities for preschool and child care providers. The response to all of this has been extremely positive!

[In addition to First 5 Marin’s page on Facebook, Michelle is also maintaining regular posts for:

Healthy Smiles Marin (oral health)
Healthy Kids from Day 1 (fitness and nutrition)
Making Ends Meet in Marin (cost of living, affordable housing, fair wages)
Marin Breastfeeding Coalition
Marin Communications Forum
Marin HEAL (healthy eating, active living)
Marin Latino Health Policy Partnership (Latino health and wellness)
Race Counts Marin
Voces de Marin (Latino issues, immigration, public charge)

**Marin Communications Forum**

All forums remain on hold. Postponed sessions will be reconsidered for 2021. Our June 1st forum with Common Sense Media (about Internet Safety) was also postponed, but we spent the week if June 1st sharing their articles and blogs about online privacy for children, social media, games and apps. We will look forward to rescheduling this session; it’s especially important content with all the focus being directed to remote learning.

We have a forum tentatively scheduled for August 31 on “Social-Emotional Development,” which could have been (and still could be) an opportunity for at least a soft launch of the “Help Me Grow Marin” program. We have begun discussing options for a virtual presentation, and will explore those options as well as any possibility of a socially-distanced in-person event. (We will likely bump this event to the beginning of September, to avoid any conflict with back-to-school dates.)

For October, we are still planning on a forum about “Restorative Justice,” in partnership with the Marin County Public Defender and YMCA. We are reconnecting with those partners, and will also consider video, streaming or in-person options. In light of recent events, this topic is extremely timely and deserves a quality presentation.

Oral Health – The Marin Oral Health Advisory Committee continues meeting, with a focus on issues related to dental care under COVID restrictions and concerns. We have also developed “oral health kits” for distribution at schools and preschools.

Michelle continues working as chair of the Communications Group for the Marin Oral Health Project. The group developed infographics and other messaging for the months of May and June aimed at pregnant women and children ages 0 to 5. These are being posted on the “Healthy Smiles Marin” Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/Healthy-Smiles-Marin-372662556785470/ (and shared on First 5 Marin’s page). In addition, the group developed messaging specific to the COVID-19 situation, including the infographics above about emergency dental care.

For more oral health information, see: http://marinoralhealth.org/
Public Charge

Amy and Michelle are staying connected with the Public Charge Coordinating Committee on outreach and education. Community providers report continued confusion and fear about accepting benefits, including COVid-19 benefits and the need for constant reassurance that accepting those benefits will not compromise people’s status. Another concern is the delay in the Supreme Court’s ruling on DACA. It was expected this month as the Court generally adjourns after June. There is no indication at this point when that ruling might happen.

[NOTE: On April 24th, the Supreme Court denied a request from New York to block the public charge rule during the COVID-19 pandemic.] For more information and the latest news regarding the public charge issue, please visit: https://www.marinhhs.org/public-charge

HELP ME GROW

Susanne and Maritza have been working very hard, providing guidance, referrals, screenings, and even trainings, with Marin Child Care Council, for childcare providers in these very challenging times (see list below). We are working with Good Stuff partners on our HMG Marin website and hope to have it ready for launch at the end of the month or beginning of July. We have been time-studying for MAA and look forward to receiving some reimbursement in the next fiscal year. And we have applied for a small grant from MHSA-PEI funds. There is a hold on those at the moment, however, due to the revenue situation at the County. We will see what happens. In the meantime, Susanne is also working on referrals protocols for provider partners and physicians and we hope to have those ready for your review soon. What we do know is that there is a huge need for support for families who have questions or concerns about their children at this time, as well as for early care providers and others working with families.

Upcoming Workshops

HMG and MC3 will put on some workshops to support providers as they look to re-open, or have already been open (family child care). We are going to do a series of 5 workshops.
The first one on teaching social distancing to children was last night from 6:30 to 8:30. There were 70 people on the call and folks from Monterey, Humboldt and Los Angeles area were on the call. We have scheduled them for the next several Tuesday evenings and registration is through the registry so folks can get continuing education hours.

5/26 Social Distancing: What does it look like in Early Childhood settings and How to teach the children
6/2: Risk Management: Policies and Procedures
6/9: Think about the Parents: How to keep communication clear
6/16: What to prepare for the children. What strategies do you already use, how to incorporate strategies to promote safety, security and emotional regulation
6/23: Q&A with a licensing analyst and check in on how is it going? What is working? What do you need help with?

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Amy continues to spend most of her time on zoom calls with the EOC, HEAL Task Force COVID Response, child care and summer camp reopening logistics, and First 5 Association meetings.

Preparations for the annual audit are underway, and work has begun in preparation for funded partner contract renewals in July.

Amy is working on gathering and organizing instructions for payroll, state compliance, and other required reports, important documents, email and phone contacts, listing all software and service contracts, etc. for the new ED. The bulk of July will be spent on the transition process.

Meetings

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