



July Update

Dear Bethel friends and well-wishers,

In March, we had no idea that the Coronavirus would last this long or it would affect all areas of our lives! What we do, how we do things, where and when we go to the stores, how we worship, the way we celebrate birthdays and important events, and how we run our programs and services have changed. In spite of the challenges we face as a community center, we are able to offer hope and meaningfully help our community during this pandemic. The pictures show two excited brothers and their sister having their own bed, new sheets, pillows, and mattresses **for the first time!** Their mother said, ***“All the household items we have are used and having new things makes them feel special. They played and sat on their beds late into the night as they were too happy to sleep on the first night they received them. My children are making Thank you cards, and they kept on throwing them saying, ‘The cards we made are not good enough to tell how thankful we are.’”*** Chad and his family from De Soto, Kansas, not only donated to them but they even assembled the bed frames together for the family. We are very grateful to Chad and his family and all of you for partnering with us in offering hope and help during this difficult time.



Our refugee community is hit hard by Covid-19 as many of them are essential workers working at several places where social distancing is not possible. A Congolese father of nine children lost his job due to the pandemic. He came to us asking for help a few days ago. After receiving Covid-19 relief assistance and food from us he said to Mang, ***“I want you to meet my entire family because you helped me feed my family.”*** He was very pleased with our assistance and he repeated ***“Thank you, Thank you...”*** many times before his case-worker drove him off he and his five year-old son, “Lucky.”

With the financial donations we have received from generous individuals like you and other organizations, we are able to distribute more than 6,500 lbs. of food every week. We have also helped 20 refugee families sick with Covid-19 handle rent, utilities, and food. We have, in total, distributed more than 600 masks and taught our community how to make their own. Bethel is routinely training immigrant women how to sew. Our virtual summer youth enrichment program is active, and our senior citizens are receiving fresh produce and food weekly. We are meeting regularly via Zoom with refugee community leaders and pastors, the Health Department and Health Equity Task Force of Wyandotte County. **All we can say is thank you for enabling us to work with our community to alleviate their worries and difficulties.**

Our virtual summer program is in full swing, and our students enjoy learning about nutrition, healthy lifestyles, art, and science under the theme of **“iCan.”** In Nico’s class, our students are keeping a journal on what they learned each week in their class. Motivated by what he learned, Valia has been doing his own research about the weekly topics and is taking more notes. In the class, he talked about the different parts of the body and the bones that he found through his personal research. Our students enjoy and learn our summer program.



May God bless you and keep you healthy and safe this summer!

Rev. Mang & Nem Sonna, Bethel Neighborhood Center