

# The Well

July 2020

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## YOUR GIFTS AT WORK!

Wilksburg Community Ministry remains open Monday through Friday, 9-1. We are open longer than that, of course, but those are our service hours, when our neighbors can come in to share what we have on offer. Only one household member can come in. We enforce the 6-8 foot distancing in the waiting line outside the pantry, and we insist that those waiting to enter the pantry wear their masks. Although our gross numbers are dropping from the high at the end of March, we expect that the households asking for assistance will stabilize at 150 a week, which is double what it was a year ago. We don't expect that number to drop much; even when folks can go back to work, the loss of income for several weeks will have hit them hard, and they will be struggling to keep food on the table, catch up on rent, and pay the regular bills.

Food Pantry Numbers				
	March	April	May	June
Number of Households Picking Up	560	582	458	@600
Total People being served	1234	1282	973	1300

We encourage families to eat fresh food whenever possible: 60% of what we distribute is fresh fruits and vegetables. We

also encourage cooking with lentils and beans, which combined in the right amounts can constitute a whole protein. If ready-made packages are not available, we assemble our own packets. We provide recipes and, when possible, meal kits that include everything needed to make the meal. This month we also started distributing spray bottles of household disinfectant.

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner Leviticus 19:10*

*The best of you are those who feed others. Musnad Ahmad 23408*

*For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Matthew 25:35*

The commandment to feed the hungry permeates all religions. As Christians, Jews, and Muslims, we are instructed to do so. This summer, WCM initiates two programs which we think will help our neighbors. The first includes a diversified and, we hope, sustainable source of fresh food. Community food banks and their network of pantries are designed around an emergency model to provide food in such one-off circumstances as a natural disaster (hurricane, flood), military disasters (9/11) and economic/medical disasters (pandemic). Initially these were considered as short-term challenges, not the long-term crises that they have become, and certainly not the life-long crisis that our neighbors face due to the income disparity endemic in our region. With our garden at Pitt and Rebecca and our burgeoning relationships with other gardeners, 412 Food Rescue, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods, we anticipate a

more balanced source of foods. The garden was funded by in part by grants from The Heinz Endowments, the Pittsburgh Foundation, and Neighborhood Allies.

The second is a sustained education program to encourage our neighbors to try different fresh foods. In February we started a meal kit program in which we offered our neighbors kits and recipes that included everything they needed to make a healthy, fresh food meal. The program was aborted during the crisis weeks of March-May. In June, the WCM intern (provided by CMU) and a local chef, Charles Kerber, have been developing recipes using the produce and other natural foods we have to offer interesting dishes that are easy to prepare and good to eat: Good and Good For You.

Chef Kerber is an honor graduate from the Pennsylvania Institute of Culinary Arts, and he holds a business degree from Point Park University; he is the former executive chef at Allegheny Harvard Yale Club and was the founding chef at Square Café in Regent Square. Grace Sells, a rising senior at Carnegie Mellon University, is an intern at WCM for the summer term, working remotely from California. She and Chef Chuck are developing recipes using items regularly available at the WCM pantry. Recipes, posted on the WCM social media pages as Meals on Monday, have included a Sweet Potato Hash and an Eggplant Salad. These are easy to make with minimal cooking, with the recipe! Grace and Chuck are also planning features of beans, greens and roots to highlight other dietary staples. We will be collecting these recipes to make a WCM cookbook at a future date.

You'll notice that the Covid numbers are going up. Why the jump in cases on 17 June? There is no explanation on the county's Covid website, but the date is two weeks after the 2 June primary. Although I had an absentee ballot, I thought I should go to see what the situation was in Wilksburg's one voting station. Constables outside the building didn't want to use their cell phones so just sent people upstairs when they arrived. By 10 in the a.m., the hallway in which residents lined up to vote was jammed with people. "Social distancing," the election monitor said, "means there are 10 voters at a time in the voting area." Social distancing only seemed to apply inside the voting area. The rest waited outside the room, jammed together 2-3 apart in the hallway. "I could reach across the hall and touch someone," a voter said. Another voter commented, "I'm 90 years old, and I've never seen anything like this in Wilksburg." A third complained, "It's chaos."

Neighborhood	# Cases	Percentage County Cases	# Deaths	Percentage County deaths
Allegheny County	2220		178	
Shadyside	112	5%	10	5%
Glen Hazel	79	3.5%	20	11%
Wilksburg	71	3.2%	7	4%
Richland	80	3.6	30	17%
Kennedy Twn.	60	2.7	20	11%

To the left is a chart showing the percentage of cases/deaths in Allegheny, with some of the areas highlighted by the county as denser than others. (Effective June 23, 2020 at noon. The county highlights neighborhoods that have a higher than normal rate of Covid cases and/or deaths. Neighborhoods with high density of first responders and care workers show high incidence of infection and/or death.

To highlight people doing work that might interest supporters of the Wilksburg Community Ministry's mission, this month I invited Nico Slate to contribute a short article on race, pandemic, and the search for a just society. The incoming CMU History Department Head, Nico is the author of four books and is at work on three others: a study of seven survivors of the 1918 influenza pandemic, a memoir on race in Los Angeles after 1965, and a history of truth and power in the American civil rights movement. He is also director of [Social Change 101.org](http://SocialChange101.org), a free on-line resource for students of social change.



Again, thank you to our many volunteers who have helped keep the pantry going during this crisis.

Finally, please offer continuing prayers to our brothers and sisters at Sheraden United Methodist Church, whose church building was devastated by a fire last September.

*Ruth Kittner*

## ON THE SHELF

Ideally, these are the fresh items we have on hand most of the time.

Vegetable	Proteins	Fruit	Grains & Nuts	Pantry Essentials
Kale	Kidney beans	Orange	Toasted O's	Basil
Tomatoes	Black beans	Apples	Oatmeal	Rosemary
Potatoes	Red beans	Bananas	Flax seeds	Oregano
Onions	Chickpeas	Melons	Varieties of Nuts	Thyme
Sweet Potatoes	Garbanzo beans	Cantaloupe	Peanuts	Sage
Peppers	Fish	Dried fruit	Pepitas & Sunflower seeds	Bay leaves
Cabbage	Poultry	Grapes	Peanut butter	Salt
Spinach	Tofu	Fruit Juices	Granola	Sea salt
Mushrooms	Milk	Berries	Cream of Wheat	Baking powder
Green beans	Cheese	Watermelon (seasonal)	Rice Puffs	Baking soda
Broccoli	Yogurt		Steel cut oats	Flour (regular & AP)
Carrots	Eggs		Bulgar	
Celery	Plant Milk		Brown Rice	
Cauliflower			White Rice	
Leafy greens			Pastas	
Eggplant			Breads	

Periodically we have snack packages, bakery items from Market District, and left-over pizzas,



### Items always needed:

Tooth paste, individually packaged bars of soap, laundry soap, cleaning supplies (cleanser, disinfectant) and toiletries (including disposable razors)

Hearty canned soups, dried beans, rice, tea bags, instant coffee, ground coffee.

Dog and cat food for animals of all ages.



## THE MEANING OF SUGAR

Check your labels. Not all sugar is equal. Intrinsic sugars are those occurring naturally in the cellular structure of food and consumed as part of that structure. Think fruits and vegetables, apple sauce, fruit cup, etc. Added sugar provides the body with rapidly-absorbed, concentrated doses of fructose. It can also be added to foods during processing, to make them taste sweeter and as a preservative.

According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), there are about 25 grams (g) of carbs in total in a medium-sized apple, and around 19 g of that is sugar. Most of the sugar in an apple occurs naturally and this may have a different effect on the body than other sugars. Bananas are on the sweeter side compared with other fruit. One large banana has about 120 calories and 17 grams of sugars — that's more than double what 1 cup of strawberry slices contains, which has 53 calories and about 8 grams of sugars. This doesn't mean it's bad. It just means you should pay attention to what you eat.



Free sugar is an umbrella term that includes added sugar as well as sugar that occurs naturally in fruit drinks, honey, and syrup. Either naturally or unnaturally, the sugar in these foods is "freed" from fiber, making it concentrated and faster for the body to absorb. Free sugars (including added sugars) should be no more than 5-10% of your daily caloric intake. The FDA considers free sugar to be any one of the following six compounds: glucose, galactose, fructose, maltose (glucose-glucose), lactose (glucose-galactose), and sucrose (glucose-fructose).

As always, if you have questions about your sugar consumption, ask your doctor or dietitian about your needs.

## HOW DOES OUR GARDEN GROW?

Locally grown food helps us increase access and reliability in choices for pantry essentials like herbs, greens and root vegetables. We are collaborating with Hamnett



Community Garden,

where we have two beds. We are collaborating with other urban farmers and gardeners in our community, as well as planting our own food. We distributed part of our first crop of kale on June 23. Other crops are sprouting nicely and we anticipate bell peppers, more kale and collard greens, and a variety of squash soon. The varieties of vegetables, herbs and spices will make cooking more enjoyable and definitely more tasty!

← This summer squash offers many health benefits. The vegetable is high in vitamins A, B6, and C, folate, magnesium, fiber, riboflavin, phosphorus, and potassium. That's serious nutritional power. Yellow squash is also rich in manganese.

This lucky lady received our first harvest of kale. Kale is the most → nutritionally dense food on the planet. One cup of chopped kale provides 200% of an adult's daily value of vitamin A, 134% of daily value for vitamin C, and almost 700% of daily value for vitamin K! In addition, kale contains important minerals like manganese, potassium and copper in the proper amounts! Truly a super food!



← These herbs (basil, dill, rosemary, oregano, parsley) will

help to flavor some of the new recipes we are sharing with our neighbors. They are nutritionally friendly: basil, for example, is virtually calorie-free and, in addition to antioxidant vitamins and phenolics, is a rich source of vitamin K, zinc, calcium, magnesium, potassium and dietary fiber. It adds a lot of flavor and is good for you too.

The weeds are growing too, and next year we hope to plant clover in the pathways for the pollinators. We also have the material to place



*1 Bell peppers are very high in vitamin C, with a single one providing up to 169% of the RDI. Other vitamins and minerals in bell peppers include vitamin K1, vitamin E, vitamin A, folate, and potassium.*





## BLACK LIVES MATTER RALLY



On Juneteenth, approximately 200 people gathered at the Busway entrance on South and Hay Street. The march started at the Kelly school and proceeded up Wood Street to the gathering point, where there were some speeches and inspirational messages. One speaker talked about losing her son to violence; another talked about fear and injustice. The event was well covered on the media, including from helicopters. The crowd started off small, but grew quickly. The family to the left were intent on teaching their youngsters about the First Amendment.



In case you were wondering, **Juneteenth** commemorates the day that the Union army general Gordon Granger announced the freedom of slaves in Texas. The Emancipation Proclamation, declared on September 19, 1863, had officially freed slaves in the Confederacy, but the enforcement of the proclamation in Texas, at the furthest reaches of the Confederacy, had been slow and inconsistent. The institution of slavery was still legal and existed in the Union border states after June 19, 1865. Slavery in the United States did not officially end until the ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution on December 6, 1865; Mississippi did not ratify until 1996, due to clerical error. Juneteenth is recognized as a state holiday or special day of observance in 47 of the 50 U.S. states. Only North Dakota, South Dakota and Hawaii do not recognize it as a special day of observance or a holiday. Pennsylvania recognized Juneteenth as a holiday in 2019.

## COVID BY THE NUMBERS: WILKINSBURG ISN'T FLATTENING THE CURVE

The number of COVID cases in Wilkinsburg continues to climb. It seems like a small climb, but Wilkinsburg's curve isn't flattening. The number of current cases reflects those who, obviously, currently have the disease but does not include those who have recovered. The 66 people with Covid on June 12 may not be the same individuals in the 70 current Covid cases on June 17. Almost 4% of the Covid deaths in Allegheny County are in Wilkinsburg.

There are two websites to go to if you are interested in learning more about Allegheny County Covid19:

<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health->

[Department/Resources/COVID-19/COVID-19.aspx](https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/Resources/COVID-19/COVID-19.aspx)

and

<https://patch.com/pennsylvania/pittsburgh/allegheny-county-coronavirus-cases-community-updated-numbers>

	31 May	5 June	17 June	22 June	26 June	29 June
<b>Wilkinsburg</b>						
Current Cases	65	66	70	71	72	74
Per 10,000 pop	40	41.4	44	44	45	46
Tests	429	489	672	714	758	812
Per 10,000	269	307	422	448	476	510
Deaths	7	7	7	7	7	7
<b>Edgewood</b>						
Current Cases	5	4	4	4	4	4
Per 10,000 pop	12.8	12.8	12.8	12.8	12.8	12.8
Tests	91	97	101	103	110	126
Per 10,000	292	319	324	330	355	390
<b>Swissvale</b>						
Current Cases	9	9	9	9	10	10
Per 10,000 pop	10	10	10	10	11	11
Tests	200	220	264	287	313	350
Per 10,000	223	225	294	319	348	390

## WHEN ANTIRACISM IS PERSONAL



2 Nico, with Peter and their mom.

*Editor's Note: As an historian, Nico Slate understands the value of prospect of learning lessons from the past that could be applied to today's world problems. Personal experience led him to develop a strong curiosity about how race works in the United States. For Nico, antiracism in the United States is personal and professional.*

I am a historian at CMU who studies the struggle against racism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression. Much of my work focuses on the history of nonviolent resistance, particularly in the Indian independence movement and the American civil rights movement. While many people are aware that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. learned from Mahatma Gandhi, it is less well known that there were many people in India and the United States who worked together to connect struggles for freedom. I study those interconnected struggles because I believe our world needs to learn from those who crossed the borders of race and nation in pursuit of justice.

I also study this history because it helps me understand my own past. When I was fourteen, my brother, whose father was from Nigeria, was attacked by a group of white men in a club in Los Angeles. Peter lost his right eye, and later died in a car accident that I believe he would have avoided if he had both of his eyes. My brother's life and death inspired me to study the history of antiracism.

While our country remains very far from achieving the full promise of our democracy, I find inspiration in the struggles of the past, as well as in the courage of all those who are fighting for justice today

## WAYS TO GIVE

**Network for Good:** The link also is available on the WCM website. Network for Good is an easy way to send regular support to Wilksburg Community Ministry. Please note that NFG deducts a 5% fee for processing your gift. Gifts are sent to us on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month *after* you make your gift.

### Easiest Way to Give:

Mail a check to us at 702 Wood Street,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

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**Monthly Gifts:** You can set up your bank account to send WCM a monthly gift. It's easy. Most checking accounts offer this service as part of their bill payment option. Add WCM to your automatic payment options, and enter the address: 702 Wood Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221. Select an amount and monthly. Your bank will send us a check every month in the amount you request. This saves *you* postage and the post office still gets the business.

**RMD Charitable Giving:** If your retirement finances consist of an individual retirement account (IRA), then starting at age 72 you are required to take minimum distributions from your IRA. Because of the coronavirus, the government is allowing people of any age to tap their IRA funds this way; this provision will probably change later in this year, but the increase to 72 will probably remain. You may want to consider making an IRA Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD) to benefit WCM. As always, please consult your financial advisors!

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**August 19: Pittsburgh Gives Critical Needs Alert.** This event was postponed from early May until mid-August. Sponsored by the Pittsburgh Foundation, it offers a match for all gifts made through the program. The Aug. 19 [#ONEDAY](#) Critical Needs Alert will help our entire community to get behind the 190+ nonprofits in Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties that provide basic needs to vulnerable populations, including senior citizens, health care and child care centers, people facing income losses, and those worried about food and housing during the crisis. Thank you for joining with us to benefit our neighbors in need.

You can make a donation *on the day* of the event, or *in advance*, by going to the [Pittsburgh Gives/ \(https://www.pittsburghgives.org/\)](https://www.pittsburghgives.org/) and following the instructions as a donor. Donations are eligible for the Foundation match (single donations up to \$999.99). Donations above that amount are still eligible for the match, but only up to the threshold.

**October 11-17: Crop Walk “Week?”** Whatever it’s called, because of the pandemic, there will be a modified *virtual* CROP walk the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of October. this year's walk will be virtual. People may walk in small groups (less than 10) or individually, using social distancing guidelines, masks, etc., as recommended by CDC. Walkers will have choices about when and where to walk, with whom, and how far, and the emphasis will be more on using social media posts to highlight participants, Church World Service, and WCM. WCM will receive 25% of proceeds. There is time for you to sign up: for yourself, your family, or to organize a Congregational Walk: [Crop Walk Pittsburgh \(https://www.crophungerwalk.org/pittsburghpa/\)](https://www.crophungerwalk.org/pittsburghpa/)

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The relationship of income, food insecurity, and health creates vulnerability for our neighbors. More than one quarter of Wilkinsburg families live below the poverty level. Wilkinsburg families generally have a lower median income than families in Allegheny County or Pennsylvania. The median household income in Wilkinsburg is about half of the median income of Pennsylvania families generally. The median income for white families in Wilkinsburg is, respectively, two and three times the income of mixed race and Black families. One quarter of Wilkinsburg male residents live at or below poverty level; most of the poor males are children or young adults, and another large group are seniors. Among poor females, the numbers are amplified: 6 out of 10 females qualify as “poor” and the numbers cross all age groups.

Income disparity has ramifications for food and health. Wilkinsburg residents and Allegheny County residents pay about the same dollar amount per month on food they buy from grocery stores, *however*, Wilkinsburg residents spend 25% of their income on grocery store food purchases, while other Allegheny County residents spend closer to 18%. Wilkinsburg residents eat out at half the rate of other Allegheny County residents, they buy fewer prepared meals, and they spend less on take out; when they do buy take out, it is likely to be pizza. The 25% that Wilkinsburg residents pay for their food covers most of their food; the 18% that Allegheny County residents pay covers only groceries: they spend another 10-15% of their income on take out and dine in meals. The impact of income disparity trickles down into food insecurity and healthy eating.

Income inequality has long-term health effects. Wilkinsburg residents suffer a higher percentage of diagnosed diabetes (sugar, they call it): almost 13 percent have diagnosed diabetes and 4.4 percent are insulin dependent; Allegheny County residents overall are 9% and 2.8% respectively. There are comparable numbers in coronary disease, thyroid disease, and respiratory diseases, especially asthma and COPD.

*He [Christ] told them this parable. "Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it? When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing. When he comes home, he calls together his friends, his family and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance."* — Luke 15:3–7

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## **Wilkinsburg Community Ministry**

## **Churches United - Serving Together**

*Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, a non-profit organization supported by area residents and congregations, responds to persistent needs of people of all faiths, addressing the human service crises in our community.*



### **Wilkinsburg Community Ministry**

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