

# LESSONS LEARNED:

During the Coronavirus Pandemic

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VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA MICHIGAN

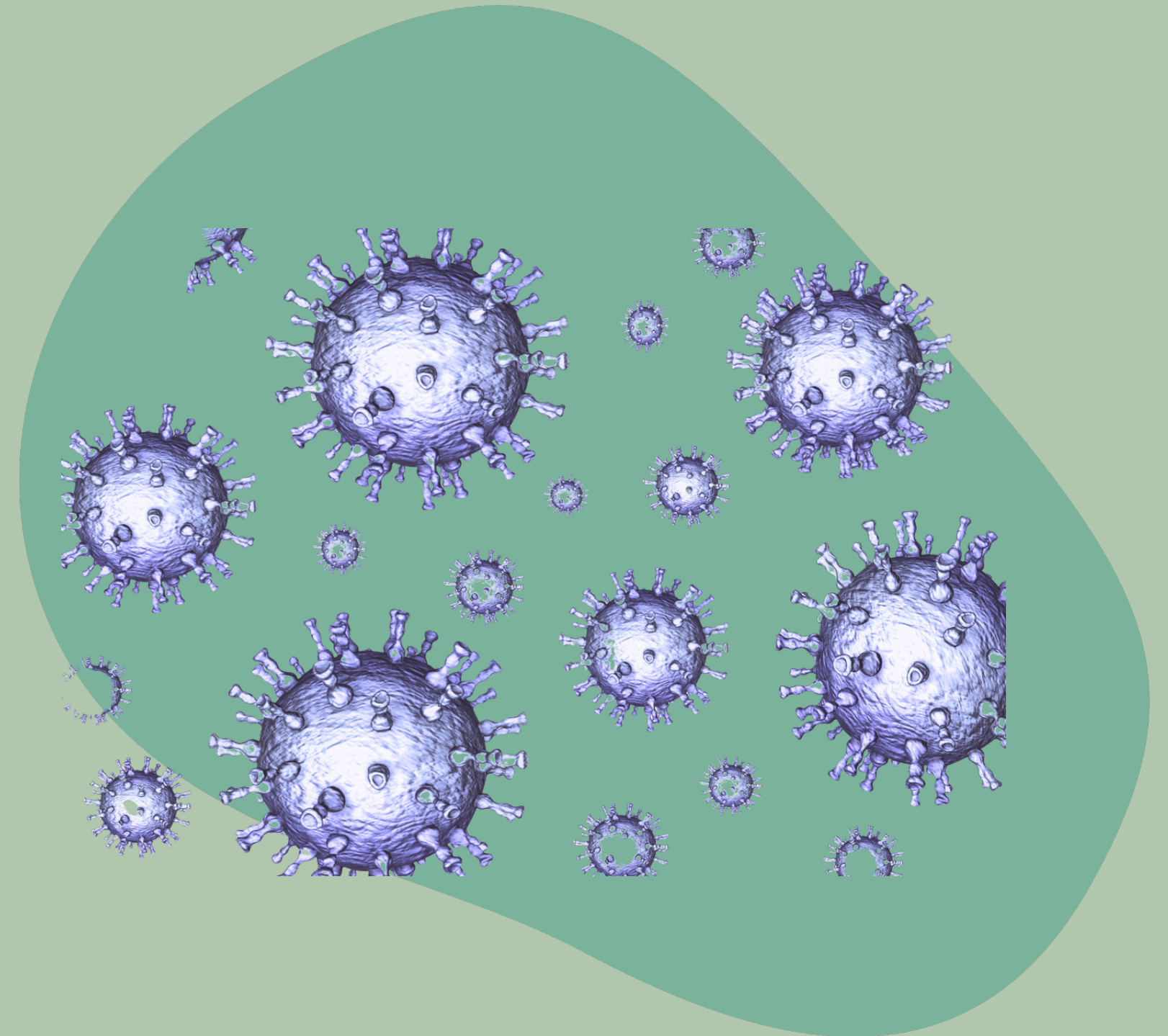


April 30, 2021

## The beginning of the Pandemic February 2020

We began preparing for the global Pandemic on February 28, 2020, after watching a few hours of CNN News. We felt we needed to get ready for what might be a long haul.

The administration instructed the team to place large quantity orders for masks, sanitizer, and basic cleaning supplies and the team placed orders with every supplier we had.



## LESSONS LEARNED

**We learned many lessons during this Pandemic,  
and we would like to share some of them with you today**

01

**We weren't prepared for social isolation.  
Service Coordinators called residents daily  
to check in.**

03

**Visitation was limited, and some  
residents relied on family members for  
assistance and support. How could we  
support this? To keep our residents and  
staff safe, early on, we limited visitation  
to only those essential for the resident's  
well-being.  
Currently, all visitors and staff are asked  
to complete a Wellness Screening Form.**

02

**COMMUNICATION was KEY. Our plan  
was to disseminate information  
without being overwhelming**

04

**Engage "Old school" methods to ensure  
safety and well-being while isolated, i.e.,  
Paper Flyers, Physical Check-Ins, and  
Phone Calls**

## LESSONS LEARNED

# How could we become prepared to handle the changes of the Pandemic in a short period of time

01

Creativity was needed to stay engaged but safe. So, staff created different methods, for example, hallway BINGO Crossword puzzles with prizes for completion and much more.

03

We are dealing with food scarcity and found the need to broaden our network to assist our residents. We created a Food Pantry, and we started a Neighbors Helping Neighbors through Amazon.

02

Continually replenishing PPE items and Cleaning Products. Providing Mask and gloves to residents and staff as needed

04

Staff being engaging and having the mindset of “All Hands-On Deck.”

**When you are faced with new challenges and the old ways won't work, you must try a new approach.**



**01 STOP**

**02 START**

**03 CHANGE**

**04 PIVOT**

The Pandemic was a wake-up



## LESSONS LEARNED



These times called for support of the residents but also support to the staff. So, we worked with the team to keep them engaged during a time of fear and uncertainty.

We allowed for flexible schedules and remote work when possible. But our team wanted to support our residents as we are often the only family they have.

This included going to a 6–7 days per week work schedule or split shifts to ensure our residents had someone to communicate with regularly.



## COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Many of our residents didn't necessarily have technology readily available, so we were not fully prepared for the digital divide.

The Pandemic was our wake-up call to get better engaged with technology for ourselves and our residents. As a result, some of our communities were provided tablets and laptops to help stay in touch with others and deal with social isolation.

Posting flyers that were both informational but not too overwhelming was important to bridge that gap and keep them informed of the many changes that were taking place.



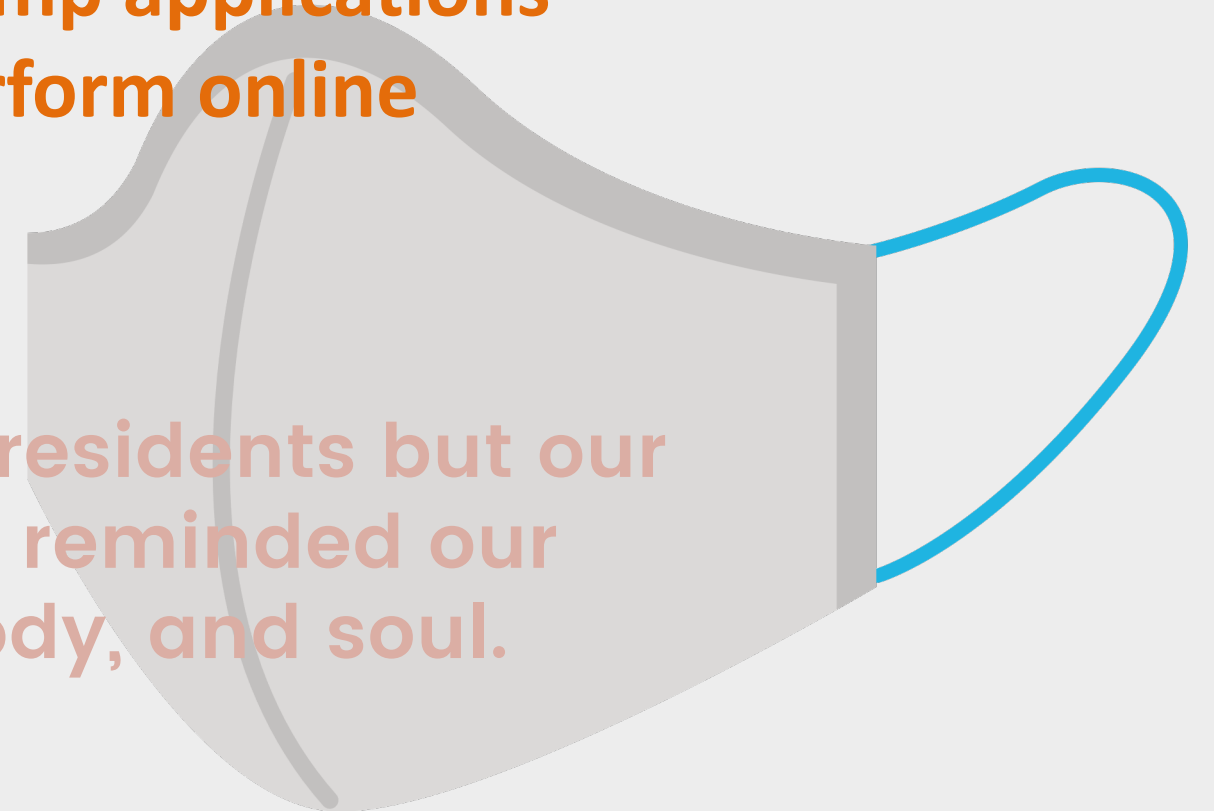
Wash  
YOUR  
Hands

## LESSONS LEARNED

### Efficiency was required for performing tasks.

- **Recertification was completed with packages being delivered to residents and intake being conducted by phone**
- **Maintenance worked on projects that they had deferred due to time constraints but still handled emergency work orders**
- **Service Coordinators assisted residents with food stamp applications via telephone or using a barrier between them to perform online inputting.**

There needed to be a concern not only for our residents but our staff as well. Burn-out could happen, so we reminded our team to practice self-care for the mind, body, and soul.





## LESSONS LEARNED

### WE HAD SOME CHALLENGES WITH MAINTENANCE THAT WE HAD TO OVERCOME

- RESIDENTS DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS CONSIDERED AN EMERGENCY, AND EARLY ON, WE WERE ONLY ADDRESSING EMERGENCY WORK ORDERS.
- Familiarity with staff meant not wanting to wear a mask when service requests were being responded to but was necessary to protect everyone when servicing a resident's home



## LESSONS LEARNED

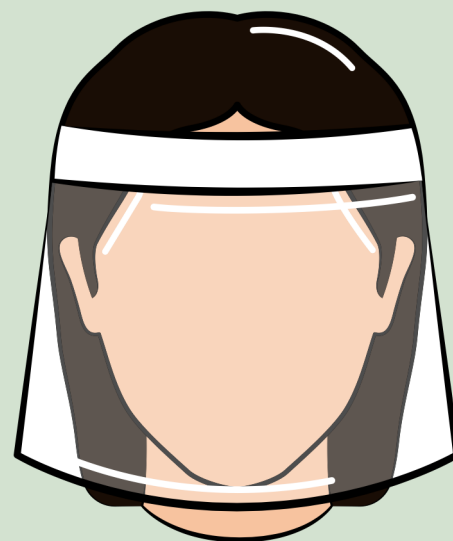
**STAYING STOCKED WITH PPE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES WAS NECESSARY BUT COULD BE CHALLENGING AT TIMES. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT MADE DONATIONS AND MANY DID.**



Masks



Face  
Shields



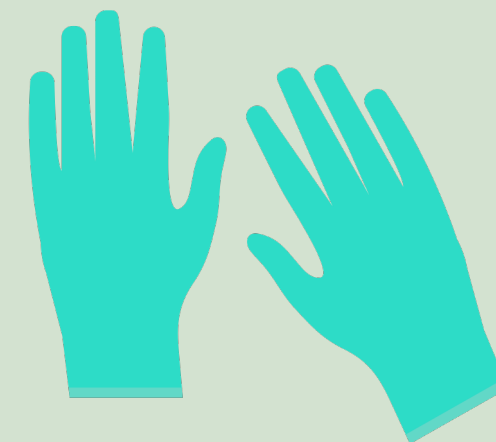
Hand  
Sanitizer



Disinfectant  
Products



Gloves



## LET US SHARE SOME FEEDBACK FROM OUR RESIDENTS AS WE PREPARE TO ENTER THE POST-COVID ERA. THEY SHARE HOW THEY FARED DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC

We asked our residents to respond to five (5) questions.

1. What was the experience like living in your building during the pandemic?
2. What was the biggest challenge?
3. What has given you the strength or ability to cope in these days?
4. As you look ahead to the future what makes you hopeful?
5. What did the Landlord do that was most impactful to you?

### **Resident 1**

1. I didn't have any issues, I pretty much stayed sheltered in, but I did appreciate my neighbors following the mask mandate. I did not have any concerns about contracting COVID-19. I just followed the directions from the authority, that's all I could do.
2. Being sheltered in alone
3. I kept busy, mostly on Zoom with my ministry and staying in touch with family and friends
4. I am hopeful that this pandemic will come to an end. And learn to live with the new normal.
5. I thought about it, we were in transition, former Community Administrator Ms. Wright had left, and the office was closed for a while. If there was an emergency, we had the ability to contact maintenance, I appreciate that. I appreciate the times they had companies come in and disinfect the building, that was a big one.

**S. Blackmon**

# LET US SHARE SOME FEEDBACK FROM OUR RESIDENTS AS WE PREPARE TO ENTER THE POST-COVID ERA. THEY SHARE HOW THEY FARED DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC

## Resident 2

1. You feel even though we have a lot of friends in this building that we always associated with prior to the pandemic, during the pandemic time it was like we were cut off from the world. It is very frustrating to not be able to see a neighbor, even though we can talk to them on the phone. We just have to pray that this will soon come to an end, or somehow be fixed
2. The biggest challenge for me is that I like to get out. I know 99% of the people in the building and am usually out and about. It's been a big challenge not being able to do that. I am able to go outside and sit, however it is not the same as being inside the building.
3. The strength is that even though I don't go to church, I pray a lot, and know that because there is a higher power (whatever you believe in), I know that they are in control. And I go to bed each night knowing and praying tomorrow will hopefully be a better day than yesterday.
4. Knowing from history that all of the "pandemics" have always been able to be worked out over time.
5. I am impressed with everything the staff has done to help throughout this! The one thing that has impressed me in the beginning of the pandemic and into the pandemic was we were not able to get out as much, and the building was able to provide us outside resources to help us out. The last thing I would like to mention is that I did contract COVID. Even though my symptoms were far less worse than a lot of other people in the world, I was thankful that the staff was able to help me out by getting mail, taking my trash, or providing moral support throughout my quarantine.

M. Cockream

# LET US SHARE SOME FEEDBACK FROM OUR RESIDENTS AS WE PREPARE TO ENTER THE POST-COVID ERA. THEY SHARE HOW THEY FARED DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC

## Resident 3

1. It was nerve wrecking. We were afraid to go out even in the building. It's been hard not seeing other people in the hallways and stuff.
2. Being couped up with no contact with other residents
3. The person I am. I have had to be strong my entire life and go thru things that are hard.
4. That the virus will end "someday"
5. It was handled very well, and I appreciate the outside group coming in to clean.

## Resident 4

1. Quiet. I have mostly just stayed in and away from other people.
2. Not going out to the stores or anywhere else. Worrying about my family and hoping they won't get sick
3. God and my faith
4. I am hopeful that this go away and everything will be ok.
5. Making sure I have what I need, providing us some food, and checking in on us. Just knowing someone is here if I need them



# Conquering COVID 19

- Take nothing for granted. We pray for those who lost their life to COVID-19
- You must be adaptable to the situation you presently find yourself in
- Learning how to deal with stress made us more resilient.
- Bring the resources to the residents which included COVID testing and Vaccine Clinics.
- We are developing some best practices from our experience. But unfortunately, this global Pandemic has shown that we were not ready for this, although we are prepared for other disasters.





# Volunteers of America®

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share with you why we are proud of VOAMI Residents and our Housing Team.

- Volunteers of America Michigan is the charity that always steps forward to help the most vulnerable. For almost 125 years, we have taken on the most difficult tasks to help the most underserved.
- Since 1896, we have supported and empowered America's most vulnerable groups, including veterans, at-risk youth, the frail elderly, homeless individuals and families, people with disabilities, and those recovering from addictions. Our work touches the mind, body, heart — and ultimately the spirit — of those we serve, integrating our deep compassion with highly effective programs and services.
- The name Volunteers of America was selected when the organization was founded almost 125 years ago. It signified that the organization was comprised of people voluntarily choosing to help others. In those days, a volunteer was anyone who was committed to a mission or cause. Since its earliest days, when Volunteers of America brought food, medicine and comfort to people not served by other charities, volunteering has been instrumental in every aspect of the organization's ministry of service.
- Today, our services are delivered through a partnership of professional staff, volunteers and other community supporters.