

HEALTH AND HOPE FOR
ALL ST. LOUIS CHILDREN

DF DEACONESS
FOUNDATION

INVEST

IN ENDEAVORS THAT
IMPROVE THE HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING
OF CHILDREN

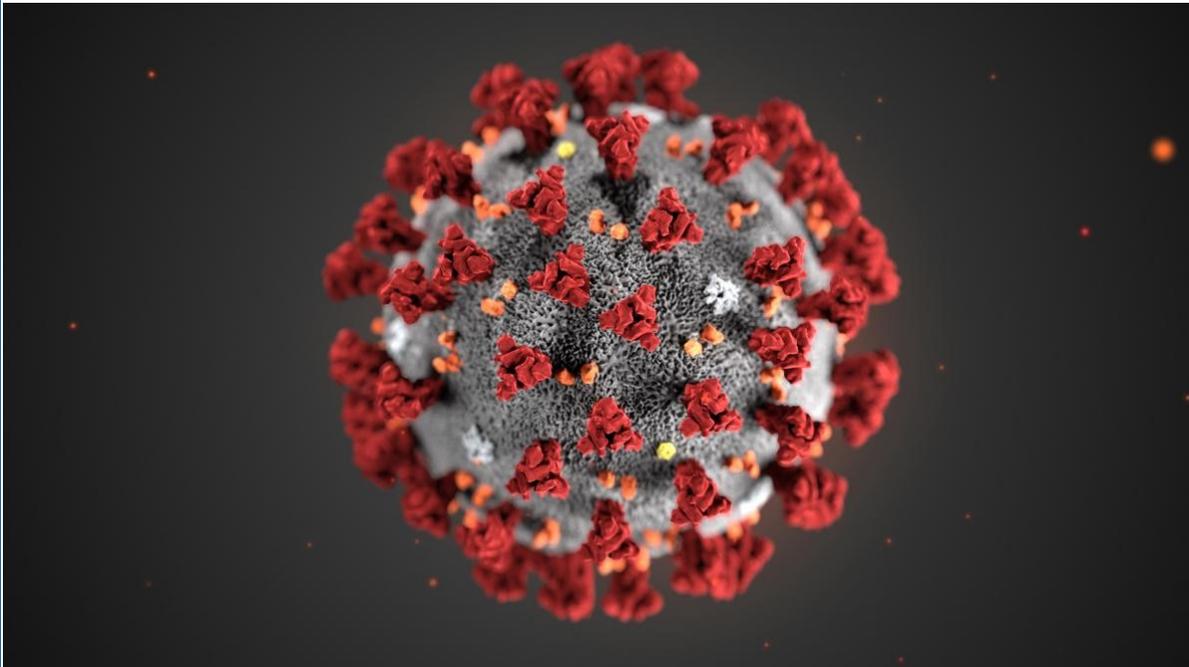
ENGAGE

THE ST. LOUIS REGION
TO COME TOGETHER
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ADVOCATE

FOR CHANGE
IN OUR COMMUNITY

March 16, 2020



Deaconess Community,

On March 2nd, I shared a message, entitled [Coronavirus: Precautions for the Deaconess Community](#), informing you of the steps we've taken to keep our community healthy to be sure that our children are well. It focused primarily on the operations of [Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being](#). The pandemic and public health responses have progressed in ways which impact all areas of our philanthropic child advocacy work. So, please accept this message as (a) an update on initial precautions at Deaconess Center, (b) delineation of our actions across Deaconess Foundation business lines and (c) an invitation to join our Partners in proactive advocacy.

Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being

In light of yesterday's [direction from the Centers for Disease Control](#) and [public officials in the St. Louis region](#), Deaconess Center's ***physical space will close to the public*** at close of business today until May 11, 2020. We do not presume to speak for, make decisions for or cancel events on behalf of the collectives which leverage the space to build power for kids and families. So, today we are reaching out to each group with space booked in the Center during this period to offer virtual organizing alternatives using our platforms.

The Center is movement infrastructure and a supportive space for regional organization. Our Partners are leading important work regarding Census awareness, voter engagement and policy change in this critical year. This health crisis illustrates the importance of their organizing work. So, we will evolve the "Center" to support that work.

Deaconess Foundation

After today, Deaconess Foundation ***offices will be closed until further notice*** so our team can remain as healthy as possible and not put others at risk. We will work remotely over this period and remain in contact with our key Partners. Please see the list below for effective means to contact team members during this period.

In the area of ***Partnership and Capacity Building***, we continue to consult with Funded Partners regarding how to navigate this crisis. We have cancelled this week's scheduled capacity building training on *Facilitative Leadership* with the [Interaction Institute for Social Change](#). In order to support operational adjustments among our closest Funded Partners, we are moving emergency support grants to our [Just for Kids Anchor Institutions](#) and current [Ecosystem Leadership Partners](#). Their work - organizing parents, advocating for health care, mobilizing people of faith, filing impact litigation and sustaining the safety net for children - will be critical to the preservation of human rights and dignity through this crisis.

We are monitoring local emergency responses to COVID-19 and recognizing the crucial point at which we find ourselves for U.S. Census work, we are specifically reviewing guidance for funders from the [Democracy Funders Collaborative](#) Census Subgroup.

As it related to our ***Finance and Investments***, we are being patient with the markets and reviewing additional supports for sustainability. In past crises, market fluctuations led to reductions in grantmaking in the sector. Leaning into our long-term investment horizon, we will deliver on our funding commitments to the field and seek opportunities to support emergency efforts aligned with our strategy. The organizations we support will feel the financial impacts more than foundations. So, our continued funding must be reliable.

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy published valuable guidance for funders and nonprofits in a piece entitled, [Coronavirus, Boom and Bust Election Funding and an Impending Recession](#).

Partnership in Advocacy

On March 11th, Missouri's legislative leaders [asked community groups not to visit the capitol](#). So, the April 8th Deaconess delegation for Missouri Child Advocacy Day has been cancelled. The statewide planning committee is coordinating efforts for a virtual engagement. We are, though, working to amplify the voices of our Partners calling for elected officials to center the needs of our marginalized neighbors and families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Friday, March 13th, we joined 18 local advocacy groups making [Public Health Policy Recommendations for Missouri's COVID-19 Response](#). We are pleased the calls and petition have gained traction and the attention of [local media](#). Make no mistake. While schools, large convenings and even restaurants are closed, democracy must remain open for business. So, please stay vigilant with elected officials making policy without public contact or input.

Speak up. Please [sign the online petition](#) to let leaders know how you want this crisis managed.

Thank you for your partnership and care as we find our way forward, together. Social isolation is the hallmark of the day. Yet, 'together' is the way we will come through this whole.

For our children,

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson
President & CEO
Deaconess Foundation

WHERE TO TURN – Deaconess Contacts in Tele-Work Period

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Stay Connected!

