

COMMUNITY CARE & RESPONSES



The way people interact with each other has changed drastically since the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Chicago and case numbers began to grow. Residents in Little Village shared that they began to limit the amount of people they interacted with in order to curb the spread of the virus. Community members remain mindful of the virus' potential effects to themselves, the people who they live with, and the larger neighborhood.

Community members mentioned that they have not seen extended family in order to keep themselves and their immediate families safe as they prioritize wearing masks, getting tested regularly, and follow the social distancing mandates. Many people have found other ways to stay connected with those outside their homes. They have built community and maintained relationships via virtual platforms such as Zoom, Netflix Parties, FaceTime, discord/online gaming, phone calls and text messages as this allowed everyone to stay connected with the outside world.

Residents also relied on social media to receive information about mutual aid efforts in the community and identified organizations like LVEJO and Enlace Chicago who provide general information such as the opening of more accessible food banks, financial support, and educational workshops.

ARTivism

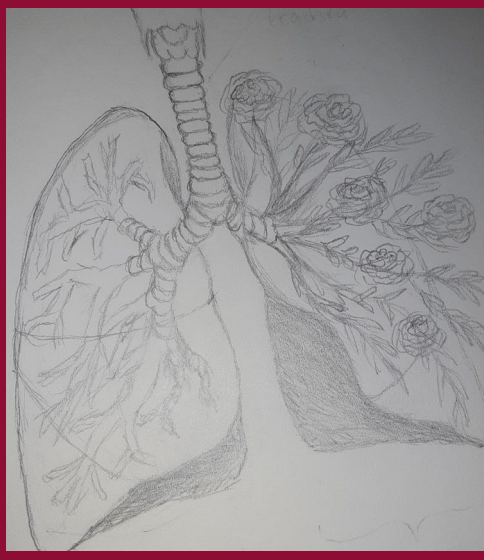
Local artists from Little Village have created art posters and shared them on social media. This art is also displayed in common areas in the Little Village neighborhood for the residents to engage local politics, immigration, environmental racism, and other social issues. Through this work, Little Village is ensuring that the community engages with and has access to art and encourages community education. One example of this is the decorated 'book boxes' that offer free books for residents located in various spaces throughout the community. Together, local artists and residents are actively advocating for themselves and their community by strategically using social media to encourage people to speak against injustices that their community is facing.

"... And [we're] making sure that people have basic needs. At the moment I'm working with a team providing water pitchers to folks who are impacted by lead service lines whose water might be contaminated...now with COVID knowing that folks don't have access to that is really messed up. I think specifically now with where we are at everybody should have the means to have water for proper hygiene to wash your hands. To know that some folks don't have access to that is scary...We're literally trying to keep people alive to continue whatever fight we need to continue to combat climate change."

- Nancy Meza



Community poster about Environmental Racism.
Credit: Samantha Martinez, 2021



Lung sketch with cempazúchil flowers on one side.
Credit: Nancy Morales, 2021



"Protect Little Village" mask poster.
Credit: Samantha Martinez, 2021



Mural on W. 63rd St. & S. Karlov Ave.
Credit: Yesenia Garcia, 2021



Community Pantry on South Drake, accessible "Love Fridge."
Credit: The Love Fridge Chicago, 2021

Community & Family

FAMILY SAFETY

As the pandemic progressed, everyone was encouraged to take precautionary measures and stay home when possible. This required people to limit the amount of social interactions with friends and to only go outside of the home when necessary. As families living in the same space relied on each other in new ways, community members also showed that caring for one another can be displayed in multiple ways. During this increased time spent at home, people have explored new and old hobbies such as cooking in innovative ways or engaging in art-making.



Spiritual bath that helps with breathing and relaxation.
Credit: Mechya Jamison, 2021



Harrison Park displaying messages for the community.
Credit: Yazmin Jimenez, 2021

"When the lockdown happened, it was kind of tough on us cause we were so used to seeing them and... we really miss our other [extended] family. We know it was probably for the best if we didn't see them for a while because we wanna make sure that everyone's safe. ... "one of my siblings has asthma so we usually try to keep her from not going outside or if we absolutely have [to] then we make sure that we're all wearing our masks."

-Ariana Esparza

"I've also learned a lot about cooking and learned a lot about other styles of making foods. We've gotten really experimental in my house... I did experiment making donuts, and different Disney foods."

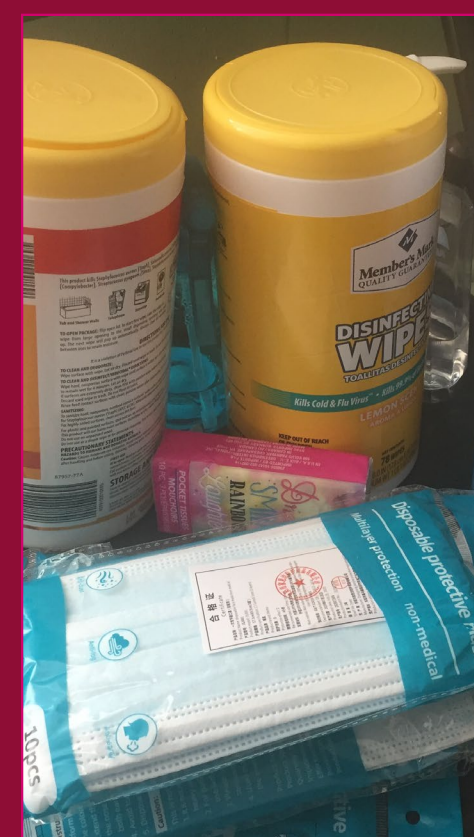
- Silvia Morales

COMMUNITY ADAPTATION

The stay-at-home order was experienced differently by community members as not everyone was able to work from home. For essential workers, their work required that they show up to work in-person amidst the fears of a growing pandemic. These workers had to be careful when outside their home and had to wear masks at work in order to keep themselves and their families safe. While some residents were provided PPE at work, there were others who did not have access to those supplies in the beginning of the pandemic. Stores in the neighborhood also adjusted and quickly began requiring that customers wear masks while shopping by displaying signs with this requirement inside and outside their shops.



Little Village business displaying mask mandate.
Credit: Nancy Morales, 2021



COVID-19 cleaning supplies and PPE.
Credit: Ashley Cruz, 2021

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Some community members shared that they gave money to extended family members who were struggling financially due to the pandemic as unemployment rates rose and families needed access to essential supplies. A community member shared that she was sending money to her family in Puerto Rico to make sure they were able to meet their financial needs. Families have had to support one another in new ways; for example, residents have purchased and delivered groceries for those who are at a higher risk of getting sick. Dropping off food and supplies for loved ones and utilizing social media to share community resources has become a common practice.

"My uncle and my cousins, they live in Puerto Rico and they all also got sick with COVID-19. So I had to make sure to keep communicating with them through What's App, through text messages and sending money to them to make sure that they were doing okay."

- Iliana Figueroa

"Before the pandemic, my uncle wasn't really able to find steady employment and so now it's just like that much worse. And he also has diabetes and so he's also having to deal with a chronic health condition plus when he got COVID like that complicated things"

-Iliana Figueroa



Mass produced essentials lead to overproduction of plastic items.
Credit: Yazmin Jimenez, 2021



Credit: Nancy Morales, 2021

COVID-19 Regulations

CDC Guidelines

In order to prevent getting COVID-19, everyone was encouraged by the CDC to wear masks, frequently wash hands, and socially distance from others in all spaces such as the grocery store and their workplace.

Testing Centers

For some, getting tested for COVID-19 became a work requirement, and it was suggested that those who come into contact with someone who contracted COVID-19 be tested as well. At the beginning of the pandemic, getting tested was costly for some as testing centers were limited and more efficient ways to be tested were being developed.