The Covid-19 crisis

The Covid-19 crisis has put An-Nisa at the forefront of relief efforts in the Greater Houston community. Our staff and team of over 150 volunteers have been working tirelessly to ensure that high-risk members of our community such as the elderly and those with pre-existing illnesses have groceries, medication, and any other necessary supplies needed to get through the pandemic.

How are we helping?

Ramadan Food Drive: With Ramadan right around the corner – An-Nisa wanted our community to make sure no one is left hungry. An-Nisa collected funds and is now able to distribute essential groceries for over 350+ families in refugee and marginalized communities.

Iftar Sponsorships for Marginalized Communities:

For families in refugee or marginalized communities, their iftar often comes from the masjid they attend. One of the many unfortunate circumstances of Covid-19 is that receiving iftar from the masjid is no longer an option. An-Nisa will organize and distribute the iftar to our community members that are in these situations, but we need your help to ensure no member of our community is left hungry or unable to feed their family.

Volunteer Team:

An-Nisa has created a community-wide volunteer pool. We currently have about 160 volunteers around the Houston area who are constantly working to get the elderly, the sick, and the high-risk community members food, meds and other necessities.

Nightly “Let’s Talk” Discussions:

An-Nisa has launched the Let’s Talk program every day at 7 PM on Facebook Live with audiences of 1,000+ each day. Every night, a different speaker joins for a discussion session on anything and everything to help keep us healthy & productive during the quarantine.

Grocery Packets:

The Grocery Packet program will ensure essential groceries are available to high-risk families, even in the event of store closures. This collection is being initiated as a contingency plan to minimize spread of the virus by having one-to-one drop offs when mass or cluster deliveries are not possible.

Virtual Educational Assistance:
In order to ensure no child is left behind with their studies during school closures, we have begun helping refugee and low-income communities navigate the online school platform for their children. Our education professionals are teaching them how to teach their kids from home and keep up with their coursework. Computers were also purchased for students who need to do schooling online but did not have a proper computer available to them.

**Tele-Counseling:**

Mental health professionals from Sakina Center have introduced weekly tele-counseling sessions with clients to help them work through the pandemic. They have given clients crisis-related coping skills for grief and loss, as well as psychoeducation as needed.

**Unemployment Assistance:**

Our caseworkers are working with community members who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. We have resources available for community members to fill out their unemployment applications as quickly and efficiently as possible. We are currently assisting about 100 individuals with unemployment.

**Elderly Wellbeing Circle:**

This program will allow up to 3 volunteers to be paired with a senior to check-in with them, give them any support they may need, and let them know that they are not isolated and alone during this time. We are planning to expand our circle to 2,000 elderly individuals with the help of our 60 volunteers.

**Covid-19 Government Payments:**

We have two tax specialists who are available to assist community members in filing their taxes if they haven’t done so already in order to receive Covid-19 Government Assistance. We are currently assisting 25 people with their taxes.

**Essential Supplies:**

An-Nisa has reached out to various vendors and donors who have provided us with essential supplies such as masks, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, etc. for the community members who are not able to find/purchase these supplies.

**Call Center:**

A call center has been set-up to get in contact with families in the community, to make sure they are safe and provide them with information about the Coronavirus, as well as assessing their needs if they’re unable to provide for themselves due to health and/or finances.
Awareness:

Flyers have been made in 6 different languages (Burmese, Spanish, Somali, Urdu, Arabic, and English) to share around our community to ensure that everyone is aware of prevention tips (ex: washing your hands) to protect them from being exposed to the virus.

High-Risk Individual Assistance:

We have sent out a call for action for members of the community to assist with delivery of food, medicine and supplies, and other help that high-risk individuals (elderly, pregnant, those with pre-existing illnesses, etc.) may need during this crisis. 206 people have since been assisted.

Food & Medicine:

We have ordered essential foods such as rice, oil, flour, lentils, salt, and sugar to fill the supplemental needs of any family needing assistance. Medicine to treat symptoms has been ordered such as Tylenol, cough medicine, and allergy medications.

Resource Guide:

A resource guide has been created to ensure that our helpline operators and our community members have all of the information needed to answer questions related to Covid-19. Information on the guide is from the CDC, medical professionals, or other reliable medical sources. You can access it here: https://tinyurl.com/covid19publicresourcguide

As we continue to navigate through this crisis, An-Nisa plans to add and expand programs as needed. We would like to thank the entire community for the support they have shown us during this uncertain time.