



Episcopal  
Community  
Services

# An Inside Look

UPDATES FROM EPISCOPAL  
COMMUNITY SERVICES

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MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

# Thousands of people rely on the programs of Episcopal Community Services each year. During times of hardship, we continue to be of help to others.

May you and those you love be safe and well. With this newsletter, we share with you the ways in which we have continued to serve our community in recent months.

In this time of global health crisis and national distress, we are reminded that life can change in an instant. For any of us, unexpected events can pull the rug out from under us and destroy our sense of security. Those among us with fewer resources, less privilege, and greater roadblocks may need more support.

The strong relationships that our team of coaches have established with program participants provide the firm foundation for life transformation. We are able to report to you that our shift to coaching continues to bring positive change—even in these difficult times.

True transformation takes time, even without unplanned setbacks: the loss of a job, the illness of a family member, unforeseen financial woes. You know this to be true, too, if you have ever worked hard to earn a degree, raise a family, create a savings account, or ace a test.

In our 150th year, we are reminded of this and acknowledge that transformation is exactly what we are witnessing. The shift to individual coaching motivates us to continuously evolve to drive positive change.

We do not expect to have everything figured out nor to bring about instant success. However, the success we have had in building strong supports for our participants propels us. The progress they are making is rewarding to see, even though we cannot see what is in store for them next.

This work is done in community with you. We carry out our mission by working together—bringing opportunities to our neighbors across Philadelphia.

Thank you,



**Arley Styer, MSS, MLSP**  
Chief of Programs

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A LEGACY OF IMPACT

## We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, and others will stand on ours.

Let our shared legacy be that even in the darkest of days, Episcopal Community Services gave light to the darkness and answered with our full measure the call to service. There will always be fires and we will always respond.



**150**  
YEARS

#ECSPHILLY

### FOUNDATIONAL FUNDING

ECS, and other peer nonprofits on the frontline of the pandemic, was awarded a \$50,000 grant through the PHL COVID-19 Fund, a joint venture between the City of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Foundation, and United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey.



### VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERS

Though unable to meet face-to-face, volunteers are finding ways to support people in our programs. Dolphin Companions, who visit isolated seniors, transitioned to telephone check-ins. And workforce development volunteers conducted interview practice sessions via Zoom, proving that we are, indeed, #TogetherAlone.



# Commitment During Crisis

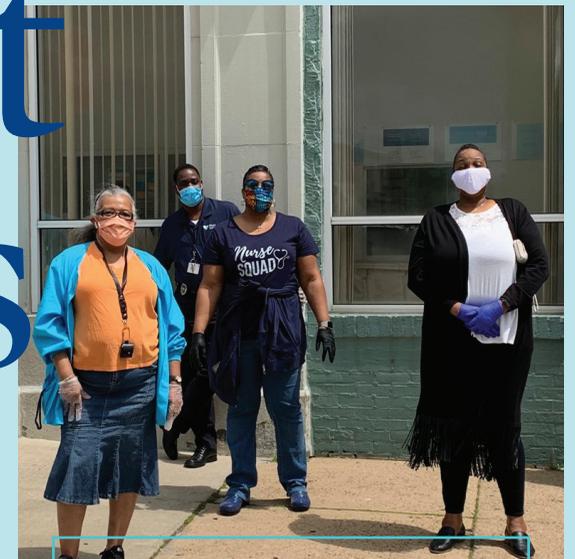
### ANONYMOUS ANGELS

Anonymous acts of kindness have blessed our community. Hundreds of facemasks have been sewed and donated by staff and volunteers to local hospitals and St. Barnabas Mission emergency shelter. Ten thousand dollars in gift cards have been bestowed to families experiencing food insecurity and financial hardship.



### DEDICATED DONORS

In the wake of a pandemic that has beset those near and far, longstanding and new donors have shown support to the ECS Fund. Their unrestricted gifts have allowed ECS to pivot its focus on the emergent needs of today and those to be revealed tomorrow.



### PARADING PARTNERS

On May 4, cars with passengers from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Homeless Health Initiative paraded the streets surrounding St. Barnabas Mission emergency shelter. The group, made up of physician, dentist, and medical students, visit St. Barnabas monthly to provide screenings and care to promote healthy kids and families.



### SHOUT OUTS

Do you know of anybody sprinkling kindness during this time of crisis? Give your appreciation by shouting them out on social media using the hashtag **#ecsphilly**. We'll share your uplifting posts to spread the gratitude.

### DEVOTED DIOCESE

We are seeing—and feeling—the #DioPALove. Clergy and congregants across this Diocese are stepping up in big ways. Food pantries, mask-making, street outreach, elderly check-ins, and more are bringing the Gospel out into the world.

# MINDSET OVER MATTER

OUR FIRST MINDSET PARTICIPANT MET THEIR FIRST-YEAR GOAL OF PUTTING \$450 INTO A SAVINGS ACCOUNT, TO BE MET WITH A 2-TO-1 SAVINGS MATCH FROM ECS.



**Everybody dreams of a good future. You do. We do. And the people in our programs are no different.**

Episcopal Community Services has created the first program in Philadelphia solely focused on coaching families as they achieve life-changing goals. Participants move from a life where they are simply surviving to one where they are thriving.

This program, MindSet, is focused on coaching, training, and advancing in critical areas of life. Instead of one immediate need, MindSet looks at the whole person—all aspects of their life and the things that could get in the way of economic independence. MindSet is everything-focused.

“Individuals in this program want the same things we all do,” said Evan Colgan-Davis, opportunity development coach. “That is to live a life that has value and meaning. To have the independence to make choices in their own life. To be treated with respect. And to show up and provide for their families.”

MindSet helps our neighbors improve their lives. It is tailored to help participants address real barriers they encounter in a city that has a high poverty rate, rising housing costs, and pays lower wages.

Rather than traditional case management, MindSet coaches people one-on-one as they make progress in their life over the course of five years. This practice, Mobility Mentoring®, uses a tool called the Bridge to Prosperity that walks people through envisioning and accomplishing their goals. And progress is rewarded and recognized to beget continued success.

Goals are not prescribed, instead, participants are empowered to look within themselves to identify their strengths, define their personal vision of success, and determine what it will take to get there.

**Moving from one distinct stage of your life to another takes time.**

“With anything you put a lot of your focus on, something else will get less attention,” said Arley Styer, MSS, MLSP, chief of programs.

“Some examples include your career plan requiring education, and the fact that you may have to work less hours or take a job with flexible hours and less pay to attend classes. Or if you are a parent and manage to work and go to school, then you will have less time with your children, and less time to take care of yourself.”

Some changes in life are planned for. Earning a college degree, for example. Others are unexpected. Like your landlord raising rent or having an unplanned child. And other

factors are impossible to even anticipate. Like a scary diagnosis. Life’s path is rarely, if ever, a straight line.

Systems and policies interfere, too. A scenario we see often is when a pay increase equates to abruptly becoming ineligible for public assistance. Policy can punish promotion.

ECS’ advocacy platform works on a systems level to address the barriers families encounter that make their journeys to economic independence harder.

“The child care benefit is what allowed them to work in the first place,” Styer went on to say. “But as soon as they make progress to becoming more independent—while not making enough to actually be independent—they are no longer eligible for child care. This is a disincentive for people to accept raises or even increase their hours at work.”

A lot of what we do in MindSet is meant to keep emphasizing the possibilities the future holds, celebrating their progress, and encouraging the grit and resilience we see in people every day.

This community—which includes you—is strong, and we go further when we work together. ♥

**“[Individuals in this program want] to live a life that has value and meaning. To have the independence to make choices in their own life. To be treated with respect. And to show up and provide for their families.”**



# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FUTURE.



# Progress is Not Paused



MindSet pairs one-on-one coaching with group trainings to help people set goals, develop skills, and achieve financial independence.

**We are currently accepting applications for MindSet's next cohort beginning in October.**

If you are interested in joining this transformational program, take our eligibility quiz and apply at [ecsphilly.org/mindset](https://ecsphilly.org/mindset).

In navigating this pandemic—devastating for many—new needs arise and the recalibration of goals is necessary for people in our programs.

ECS pivoted to meet unique demands in new ways. Through technology and direct phone conversations, our coaches continue coaching.

How has COVID-19 affected coaching people who seek economic independence for themselves and their families? Well, it depends on how stable their ground is.

For David in our workforce development program, his goal was to secure a full-time job with benefits. In a dismal job market, there are few well-paying jobs. Instead of practicing his interviewing skills, he now focuses on updating his resume and participates in free online workshops.

Johana, whose kids are enrolled in afterschool programming, was furloughed. She received a stimulus check, but worries for how long that money will last. Though under a lot of pressure, she makes sure her school-aged children remain engaged in their virtual classrooms.

Like you, everybody is adjusting. But the how varies for each person.

Are they housed? Employed? Healthy? Are their kids safely supervised while still learning? Are parents handling stress well? What about internet connectivity, not to mention the tools and skills to access it? Today's priorities may be completely different from yesterday's.

This community—which includes you—is strong, and we are adapting to this new normal in creative ways, with technology on our side.

While we practice physical distancing, we are as close as ever, as one community that continues to make progress and lasting impact. ♥

# Impact Has No Age Restriction



No good deed is ever too small. And no do-gooder ever too young.

Some of our most dedicated volunteers hail from middle and high schools along the Main Line. They volunteer with ECS monthly by way of the Impact Center, a conveying hub of service-learning opportunities for students.

“Not often enough are young people given the respect or recognized agency as changemakers,” said Maria Stroup, founder. “We unleash their potential to create change.”

Nestled in Haverford, PA, the Impact Center is operated by a small, but mighty, team of educators who believe in the power of young people.

For 20 years, Stroup worked for the Shipley School, finding ways for student life to become more engaged in the community. It was there

that she starting volunteering with St. Barnabas Mission, our emergency shelter for families.

The Impact Center visits the shelter every month to throw social events that build community amongst residents, staff, and supporters. The purpose of these visits is not so students can check off volunteerism on college applications.

Mutually beneficial experiences take place. Just as ECS participants benefit from the engaging activities, Impact Center volunteers benefit from a deepened sense of citizenship.

Self-reflection and sensitivity trainings are practiced before and after service activities. Group leaders ask questions to unpack privilege and any misconceptions or microaggressions.

By turning passion into action, the Impact Center helps change the narrative on stigmatic issues like homelessness, widens young perspectives, and promotes empathy.

We are so very grateful for their support. ♥

# TAKE ACTION TODAY.



Two key issues are at the forefront of our advocacy strategy: fighting for a living wage and combating the impact of the benefits cliff.

These policies affect upward economic mobility and are also being challenged by parishes across the Diocese. An advocacy kit has been created by our Inclusion and Advocacy department and piloted by several places of worship, including St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Chestnut Hill, St. Mary’s Hamilton Village, and Trinity Episcopal Church, Solebury. Congregants are informed of the unjust policies and instructed on how to let their voices be heard.

If you and your parish or organization would like to take action, contact The Rev. David R. Anderson, Chaplain, at [danderson@ecsphilly.org](mailto:danderson@ecsphilly.org).



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# Forum on Justice & Opportunity

We look forward to brighter days ahead  
and to spending them with you.

The Forum on Justice & Opportunity is shapeshifting into an immersive, online experience. We are busy planning to ensure the same inspiring content you have come to expect, but for now, please mark your calendar.

Sign up for updates about the Forum at [ecsp Philly.org/forum](https://ecsp Philly.org/forum).

During the week of  
Monday, October 26,  
there will be multiple  
opportunities for you  
to join us from your  
home. Stay tuned!

**WHERE + WHEN**

#FORUM2020