



As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, the importance of community has been made abundantly clear. As long-standing issues of equity in education, criminal justice and policing, housing, and employment are laid bare, this event continues to exacerbate racial, class, gender, and other disparities.

Amidst the loss and tragedy that is playing out globally, people are stepping in where those in power have failed, with connection, resources, support, and supplies.

And in the face of this crisis, our work continues. Our children and the communities they live in are still the priority. And taking care of ourselves, one another, and our families, friends, and neighbors to the best of our abilities is paramount.

In coordination with our statewide partners and others nationally, we're working to adapt our processes to online models wherever possible, and acknowledging that while some skills and connections may be lost in the digital translation, there may still be ways we can be of service that deserve to be explored. We're developing workshops and trainings to offer virtually, taking the time to ensure we remain as true to the core values of the restorative processes we offer as possible. We appreciate your patience as we navigate the uncertainty to determine what will work best for our youth, their families, and their communities.

We remain on a work from home basis, and we acknowledge our privilege in being among the small percentage of Black people and people of color, particularly in Baltimore, who are able to do so. We don't adhere to a heavy-handed, productivity-obsessed approach to working from home, as we have a collective understanding as a staff that the work will be done and that we sometimes need space and time to take care of ourselves.

That said, we've remained busy in recent weeks: Priya has been volunteering and distributing food and learning packets, and coordinating with our DJS facilitators as we support the rightful calls for the release of children in youth prisons; Jade has been managing our case database and caseloads for conferencing referrals that are still coming in; Larell has been resolving family conflicts restoratively, working with our board, and speaking to classes about our work via Zoom; Maisie has been coordinating the Annie E. Casey Foundation's youth advisory council; Barb has been planning with our school partners for the eventual reopening of school, as well as developing trainings; Liz has been working out financial matters and keeping the nuts and bolts of the organization in line; And Kasai has been submitting grant proposals and reports and fielding our communications. And we carry this work into our daily lives. Some of us are

parents of young children. And some of us are in school, or are caring for older family members.

This pandemic is undoubtedly a trauma, being experienced at an individual and collective level. Most of us are either confined to our homes, be it alone or with family or friends, or working in jobs deemed essential. A good number of people have no shelter or are unable to practice social/ physical distancing in facilities. We are all facing a raft of stressors that is changing day to day life in profound ways. Living with and through trauma creates a heightened internal need for safety, and while that may mean different things to different people, the uncertainty of this collective moment is creating a more shared meaning of what it means to be and feel safe. We are as committed to helping build a meaningful and lasting vision of community as ever.

As other states close their schools until the fall, and Maryland's remain closed until at least May 15th, we will move accordingly depending on how things develop. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our mission, and stay tuned via social media and this mailing list for updates regarding workshops, trainings, and our next steps.

- The staff, volunteers, and board of RRB