Assistance Runs Nonstop at Community Partnership Schools
Partners Provide Food, Healthcare Necessities, Books and More

When school buildings suddenly shut down in March because of COVID-19, Florida’s Community Partnership Schools offered lifelines to families facing tremendous challenges.

Because the schools already had established partnerships with local organizations and businesses, they were able to step up and expand their usual services to help alleviate hunger, overcome barriers to learning like poor access to technology and lack of books, provide healthcare necessities and even help parents replace lost jobs.

Community needs did not stop with the end of the school year, and neither did the invaluable CPS activities. Annual programs intended to fill the summer gap when children lose access to free school lunch expanded into drive-up and delivered food distribution fueled by donations from local restaurants and nonprofits. Contributions of art supplies and activity books arrived in response to an ever-growing need for enriching at-home activities for students finding themselves confined to home.

(continued on p. 2)

Crystal Lake Elementary in Lakeland, in partnership with the United Way of Central Florida and Central Florida Health Care, Inc., hosted a free food drive twice a month. Polk County families lined up at the school car pickup line and each received a box of food.
**Nonstop** (continued from p. 1)

When schools reopened this fall, partners came through with backpacks, school supplies and uniforms. Healthcare partners provided masks and other necessities, as well as helpful advice for careful handling of potential virus cases. Here are just a few highlights:

1. **At Sulphur Springs K-8** (Hillsborough), partner Tampa YMCA’s Veggie Van mobile market delivered a full grocery bag of fresh produce, non-perishable family meal items and activity packets or books for students on a weekly basis at no cost. FBCH, One More Child and First Baptist Church Tampa donated 200 backpacks to students. The school also collaborated with Kforce, a local staffing agency, to help 15 family/community members obtain full-time jobs that allowed them to work from home.

2. In Elkton, **South Woods Elementary’s** (St. Johns) Food 4 Kids program transitioned from on-campus distribution to mobile disbursement, community wide, to students and families. Partnership with the St. Johns School District’s transportation allowed the program to serve up to 250 students per week, including sending buses to rural community sites. During a drive-thru event in August, 29,000 pounds of food along with school supplies went to 187 households in one day, thanks to partners Children’s Home Society of Florida and Flagler Hospital.

3. A generous donation from LOVITT Homes 4 Education to **Homestead Middle School** (Miami-Dade) provided two full sets of uniforms (polo, pants and belt) each to 50 students, helping them prepare to return to the classroom.

4. Gulfstream Academy K-8 and Gulfstream Early Learning Center in Hallandale Beach (Broward) secured a mobile school pantry, giving families access to vegetables, canned goods and other pantry items. Some items were brought to families through DoorDash. School partner Broward County Public Schools arranged for each family to receive a different book each month as well. Gulfstream also created a multilingual comprehensive resource guide that includes a list of local food distributions through Farm Share and Feeding South Florida. See the guide at [bit.ly/2JoX9Oh](http://bit.ly/2JoX9Oh).

5. Healthcare partner Orange Park Medical Center and community organizations Orange Park Mall, Staples, Advent Lutheran and The Springs Church donated school supplies, food and hygiene products to students at **Orange Park High School** (Clay). Here, CPS Director Lauren Pfannenstiel represents the new Hub for student supports.

6. The team at **Franklin Park Elementary School** in Ft. Myers (Lee) prepared produce boxes and shared them with families who picked up “Grab & Go” meals to ensure fresh produce in their homes, including drive-up events on campus with the Harry Chapin Food Bank. The school also was able to distribute books, art supplies, toys and games and activity books for summer academic enrichment thanks to generous in-kind contributions from the community.

Other Community Partnership Schools teamed up with partners and other organizations to help their communities as well, including but not limited to:

- **The Webster School** (St. Johns), which partnered with Hugs Across the County and EPIC Cure, to provide 370 weekend food bags during the fourth quarter (continued on p. 3)
Nonstop (continued from p. 2)

- Edward H. White Academy of Leadership (Duval) (photos below), where nearly 250 families were served at the July food giveaway alone thanks in part to Feeding Northeast Florida, Help Florida Kids and Rise Church

- Howard Bishop Middle School (Alachua), which became a grab-and-go site and served more than 22,000 meals to the community

- Manatee Elementary School (Manatee), which provided books for a summer reading program

- Gulfside Elementary School (Pasco), which donated 25 boxes of clothing to local entities serving its students and families through partnership with two local Wal-Marts

- OCPS ACE (Orange), which joined with New City Church to temporarily relocate their Lion’s Share Food Pantry and delivered food packages to the community

- Jones High School (Orange), which obtained donations from local community businesses and organizations to purchase 46 internet hotspot devices with service through the summer, allowing students to complete their studies at home

Healthcare Partners Contribute Guidance, Supplies

Healthcare partners have contributed invaluable guidance to Community Partnership Schools, such as protocols on how to address issues that come up with suspected and actual positive coronavirus cases, as well as physical items such as masks. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- The Orange Park High School (Clay) Athletic Director, CPS Director and CEO of Palms Medical Group coordinated to offer free sports physicals to approximately 50 local students ages 12 to 18.

- The Webster School (St. Johns), Flagler Health Plus provided a Wellness Kiosk in preparation for expanded on-site medical services. When fully implemented, the Wellness Kiosk will provide telehealth services to the students and families of the school.

- Tampa Family Health Centers partnered with Mort Elementary School (photo right) and Sulphur Springs K-8 (both Hillsborough), donating cloth reusable masks to both.

THANK YOU SENATOR SIMMONS

In 2017, (left to right) Sen. David Simmons met with Evans High graduate Timothy Only, UCF Center for Community Schools Director Amy Ellis and then Evans High Principal Jenny Gibson-Linkh at his office in Tallahassee.

The UCF Center for Community Schools recently honored state Senator David Simmons virtually using Zoom and with a plaque to recognize his leadership as the longest-serving champion of community schools in Florida.

Simmons has been a member of the state Senate since 2010 and previously served as a state representative from 2000 to 2008.

Simmons plans to leave his senate position this fall. “He surely will be missed,” said center Director Amy Ellis.

Thank you, Sen. Simmons, from the entire Community Partnership Schools network!
**Schools Open New Facilities**


► On Sept. 13, **Wilkinson Junior High School** in Middleburg (Clay) held a soft-opening of its **Clothing Exchange and Laundry Center** for community members, complete with an attractive dressing room to try on clothes. Students at Wilkinson also are enjoying a new **shade structure** at the bus loop built by the Northeast Florida Builders Association, Clay Builders Council and Builders Care. The American Academy of Dermatology awarded the Community Partnership School a grant to build the shade structure.

**SPOTLIGHT: HUB, Clinic Design a ‘Game Changer’**

Gulfside Elementary School’s HUB and health center (Pasco) opened in August 2019 after a suite of four classrooms was converted into office, clinic and workroom space with a $100,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration and $200,000 in support from Pasco County Schools.

The space features its own exterior entrance, making it possible for providers, once screened for COVID-19, to enter and offer services during the pandemic. “It’s been a game changer,” said Community Partnership School Director Mary Brown.
Summer Academy Connects Statewide Coordinators

Community Partnership School coordinators from across the state gathered virtually this summer for a new Coordinator Summer Academy Series launched by the UCF Center for Community Schools. The series included five sessions (four webinars, one network call), with 20 to 25 coordinators participating each session.

“Coming from the flagship [CPS] school, it was very lonely at first ... to finally have a large group of people I can connect and share ideas and resources with has been a tremendous help,” said Expanded Learning Coordinator Aditta Riha at Evans High (Orange). The center plans to host the summer academy again next year.

Leaders Gather Virtually for Principal and Director Institute

The UCF Center for Community Schools held its annual Principal and Director Institute virtually on June 18 using Zoom. The gathering (pictured here) offered an opportunity for the Community Partnership School leaders to share their experiences, reflect and learn from one other. “As a practice-based center, their voices also inform our work,” said center Director Amy Ellis.

Topics discussed at this year’s institute included the value of both onboarding of the Community Partnership School™ model for new staff and teachers and of integrating the CPS staff into the school.

The group also discussed new pandemic-associated challenges and ways to address them. These included relying on robust CPS practices already in place and on healthcare partners for support and guidance.

CONGRATULATIONS MR. REED

The Brevard County School Board has named Christopher Reed, principal at Endeavour Elementary in Cocoa, the district’s 2021 Principal of the Year! Read about him in the Viera Voice, Aug. 12, 2020, edition at bit.ly/3mKWyZC.

“Christopher Reed worked diligently to renew Endeavour's status as a community school to provide health care and family supports services at the school.” — Viera Voice
RESEARCH NEWS

The UCF Center for Community Schools’ new Research Studies web page (bit.ly/3mLolur) includes scholarly articles and dissertations on Community Partnership Schools. Among these is an August 2020 article by center staff Jarrad Plante and Robert Palmer titled, “Supporting Teachers Where They Are: The Community Partnership Schools” Model” (bit.ly/3macNzp).

In addition, Plante was the guest editor for a recent journal issue on community schools published in the Peabody Journal of Education (Vol. 95, 2020), bringing together authors from around the world. Center Director Amy Ellis penned the issue’s introduction (bit.ly/2XJuOPqb).

NATIONAL TRENDS IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused enormous challenges for vulnerable neighborhoods, where the crisis has revealed inequities in distance-learning; job, home and food security; and healthcare.

“Nationally, community schools are clearly emerging as a solution to the distress,” said Donnie Hale, assistant director of the UCF Center for Community Schools and co-chair of a national Coalition for Community Schools committee focused on community school expansion and leader development.

For example, the National Education Association recently reported “How Community Schools Were Better Prepared for COVID-19 Crisis” (bit.ly/33OeERP). The article references community schools in Tampa, FL (home to two Community Partnership Schools); Durham, NC; and New York City.

In Wisconsin, a Milwaukee Public Schools board member said the school district’s community schools were exemplars in responding to the pandemic in a recent article on alternet.org (bit.ly/3mlMSxW).

A July 2020 brief, Community Schools: An Evidenced-based, Effective Strategy for Reopening New York Schools, “highlights how community schools have been stepping up amid COVID19” (bit.ly/3iVeZb).

The California School Boards Association reported this summer on “the well-documented benefits associated with community schools” in Community Schools: Addressing the Whole Child One Step At a Time (bit.ly/2EpkMHJ).

Moreover, the Washington, D.C.-based Learning Policy Institute, which houses the Coalition for Community Schools, includes “Priority 8: Establish Community Schools and Wraparound Supports” in its August 2020 framework for “Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond” (bit.ly/3mLO5Fu).

Another trend has been the development of pandemic pods, in which small groups of students learn together at home or another location. The New York Times first reported on this development in July 2020 (nyti.ms/33NNsmg), noting that “pods can be pricey” and “may worsen educational inequality.” The Washington Post reported on perceived pros and cons of pandemic pods in September 2020 (wapo.st/2FvYWu).

In North Carolina, Asheville.com News recently reported (bit.ly/2Es1AJm) that Asheville City Schools has the opportunity to support students through pods thanks to partnerships it has formed with community organizations — a situation that also points to community partnerships as a solution, Hale said.