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# CALLED<sup>TO</sup>CARE

SPECIAL EDITION COVID-19 NEWSLETTER • 2020

## COVID-19 NBA RESPONSE GRANTS

**73**  
Grant  
Recipients

**\$666,100**

Total awarded  
Apr. - Sept. 2020

To offer a rapid and impactful response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the NBA Board of Trustees authorized grant funding to support Disciples-related ministries that are working locally in response to this crisis. With this funding, we seek to offer relief for ministries that have been detrimentally impacted and to support new projects created in service to those suffering because of the pandemic.

Learn more at: [nbacares.org/covid-19-grants](http://nbacares.org/covid-19-grants)



Mark D. Anderson at his home by the Peace Pole in his front yard: "May Peace Prevail on Earth".

## Imagining New Worlds

In this time of social distancing and devastating infectious virus, how do we build social aid and collaborative response? I find myself reflecting on this central question daily. We understand from health officials and experts in medicine that being apart is the best approach to reducing the spread of Coronavirus. And, simultaneously, we know that this kind of distancing is resulting in tremendous challenge and disruption in our lives. Employment insecurity, the inability to care for family and loved ones, effects on our own mental health and wellness are only a few of these factors that we now find ourselves facing.

As people of faith, and especially within crisis moments, we know there are many resources for us to turn towards – scripture, liturgy, worship, and, yes, especially now virtual communities – which can offer us meaningful ways to sustain us and offer strength. I would also remind and encourage us that even in devastation there is transformation; the ability to look beyond realities of sorrow and to envision new ways of life that can be about compassion,

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healing, and justice.

As part of NBA, I have deep appreciation and gratitude for each of our partner ministries — the nonprofits who, in a heartbeat, have creatively determined ways of providing ongoing care to the most vulnerable in our communities. I am also thankful for the leadership embodied with our staff and board of trustees. In the following pages, we have gathered a summary of the ways that NBA is responding in

this time of crisis. Beginning in April, we launched a response grants program with the goal of providing immediate financial support to health and social service ministries. We are staying in active contact with our partner organizations and leaders. Their stories of resilience, strength, and care offer a glimpse of the hope their work spreads. For our XPLORE program, we offer updates on the shift to a virtual year end of the program while seeking to sustain the pillars of values

that guide the work. And, finally, we are blessed to have mental health advocates who are working to offer resources, such as SoulCare, for nurturing mental health and wellness in these days that are incredibly unwell.

Please know that we are actively praying for you, our partners, and our world as together we navigate through these times.

Mark D. Anderson,  
President and CEO

## Our Newest Peer Learning & Wellness Group Goes Virtual

As NBA continues to connect and resource Disciples health and social service ministries, nine Latin@ Disciples pastors, community members, and leaders have been called together into our newest Peer Learning & Wellness Group.

This unique group is comprised of clergy who are serving Spanish speaking and/or multilingual Disciples churches. Many are bi-vocational, often serving in more than one multilinguistic (Spanish, Spanglish, English, and French) and multicultural community settings across the U.S. and Canada. They come from diverse cultural backgrounds and places of origin such as Venezuela,



*The 2020-2022 Multilingual Latin@ Pastors and Leaders group on a Zoom call.*

Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Bolivia. Rev. Bere Gil Soto and Rev. Héctor J. Hernández serve as the co-conveners for this Peer Learning & Wellness group.

On April 27, the group kicked off with an initial online

meeting. The first in-person gathering was planned for June, but was canceled due to COVID-19. In July, they developed a plan B, and chose to engage in a virtual culinary experience to learn how to cook Argentinian Empanadas from scratch.



## Caring for Mental Health During a Crisis

In an anticipation of heightened anxiety and worry during this time, our Mental Health & Wellness team hosted a series of SoulCare moments. Each week, beginning in April, members of the team led attendees in a series of exercises, creating space and time for pause. Each session has been recorded and shared on our YouTube page for easy viewing.

Additionally, the team held a webinar, in Spanish and English, where they explored the importance of spiritual care during crisis. Both the English and Spanish recordings can be



*SoulCare was first presented at the 2017 General Assembly. SoulCare focuses on taking a moment to pause and process.*

found on our YouTube page, [www.youtube.com/nbacaress](http://www.youtube.com/nbacaress).

The NBA Mental Health & Wellness team will continue to respond to the mental health needs of communities across the life of the church by creating a series of blogs and

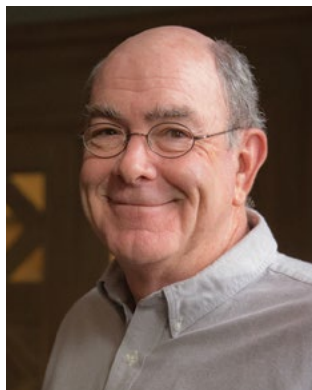
vlogs (video logs) throughout the summer and fall. These pieces will be created by mental health advocates and come with practical advice and solutions for those struggling with anxiety, depression or other mental health concerns due to the Coronavirus crisis.

## Sharing Stories of Resilience and Care

We are grateful for our NBA Board of Trustees, health and social service partners, and other Disciples ministries for sharing their stories of resilience and care. For the last few months, we have published reflections that highlight the good that is happening even in the midst of tremendous difficulty. This includes a word from Rev. Dean Bucalos on a letter-writing campaign for women who are incarcerated led by Mission Behind Bars and Beyond; advice from Rev. Dietra Wise Baker on how communities can prepare and

respond during crisis; and a message of encouragement from Scott E. Strissel with Christian Services for Children in Selma, Alabama (CSCA),

reflecting on how the ministry and community is coming together like never before to support foster children. Visit [nbacaress.org](http://nbacaress.org) to catch up!



*Rev. Dean Bucalos, J.D.,  
NBA Prison & Jail  
Ministries Mission  
Specialist*



*Scott E. Strissel,  
Executive Director at  
Christian Services for  
Children in Alabama*



*Rev. Dr. Dietra Wise  
Baker, NBA Advocacy  
& Activism Program  
Coordinator*

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NBA is a grateful recipient of Disciples Mission Fund support. Your contributions help make possible our efforts and response during this health pandemic. Thank you!

## Creating communities of compassion and care is needed now more than ever

You have heard that we are now living in a 'new normal,' and these times are 'uncertain, unprecedented, and trying.' We find ourselves sometimes numb to this language and we can easily forget about the many individuals, who daily leave the safety of their homes for the benefit and service to many.

When you give to NBA, we offer support and funding to Disciples ministries who, each day, are committed to providing compassion and care where needed most.

**Give online at [nbacares.org/donate](https://nbacares.org/donate), by mail, or call us at (314) 993-9000 ext. 5479.**



*Pictured, from left: NBA Incubate partner, New Communion's Executive Director, Rev. David Harrison Jr., delivers masks; NBA Incubate partner, UrbanMission Community Partners offers curbside food pickups; NBA Mental Health Initiative Manager, Rev. Angela Whitenhill Shields offers a resource during a webinar on mental health during crisis. Your gift supports all of these efforts! Thank you.*

