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The Way Forward



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NOTE: For the latest information and stats, visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

— Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

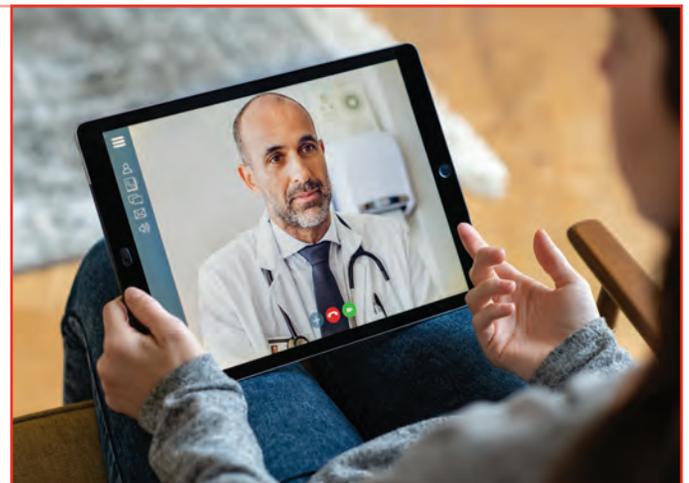


# ONLINE ARTICLES

### Add Telemedicine to Your List of Healthcare Options

By Shelley Cooper, Ed.D, MAT, BSBA  
Diversity Telehealth, LLC

Telemedicine is now covered by insurance plans as medical providers are using it more frequently to deliver healthcare during the pandemic. Visit [kcourhealthmatters.com](https://www.kcourhealthmatters.com) to learn more.



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# FAITH, HOPE LOVE and Togetherness

By Ruth Ramsey, Publisher  
CEO, Ramsey & Associates Design, Inc.

**F**aith, hope and love matter. These powerful words, when incorporated into our daily lives, create a pathway to display empathy as we and others tackle life's situations and circumstances. Lives infused with these qualities and beliefs turn valley experiences into mountainous triumphs, making it second nature to see our glass as half full — not half empty.

In this edition, we showcase the expressions of a few people whose lives and work demonstrate true faith, hope and love for their community and those they personally embrace. Read their heartfelt messages. Our medical writer, Tenille Lawson, (page 6) explains the signs of depression and alerts you to a few things to consider if you're thinking about taking an antidepressant.

As we prepare to say goodbye to 2020, my prayer for every family is to enjoy peace and hold onto your faith to conquer challenges that remain.

I extend condolences to every family who has lost a loved one. I pray for new opportunities for people who have lost jobs, and an overflow of support to house the homeless and feed families.

Special thanks to our readers, advertisers and contributors. You are invaluable and appreciated. Your support enables us to continue distributing important health information and resources so families can live their best lives.

**Our Health Matters™** extends heartfelt thoughts to everyone during the holidays ahead. I challenge you to have FAITH, hold onto HOPE and rest assured that you are not alone.

We are in this together. Wear your mask, wash your hands and social distance.

Be well, stay healthy.



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is published bi-monthly (6 issues)  
by Ramsey & Associates Design, Inc. All rights reserved.



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## WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Send us your suggestions for health topics you would like to see in *Our Health Matters*. Also share what you enjoy about the magazine.

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# Is Your Depression Pandemic Related?

If you are thinking about an antidepressant, here are a few things you should consider.

If you have had feelings of depression since the pandemic began, you are not alone. One study comparing the prevalence of depression symptoms in US adults before and during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that close to 25% of Americans are facing depression — a prevalence that is more than three times higher than before COVID-19 hit. Signs of depression include trouble concentrating, no appetite, and a loss of pleasure doing things you used to enjoy. The biggest issue for many people is that sadness does not go away, even when they try hard to think positive. When depression is severe, these low feelings stay consistent for more than two weeks with no relief.

A common method to treat major depression is with an antidepressant medication. They work by correcting a chemical imbalance in the brain, which improves your mood and helps you feel less gloomy. The three most common types of antidepressants are serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRIs), serotonin noradrenaline re-uptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs).

## What should you expect during and after treatment?

Treating depression takes time. Unlike an aspirin that can stop a headache within a few hours, antidepressants often take at least one to two months before you feel the full results. Finding the right medication and the right dose may take more than one attempt, but eventually, taking an antidepressant should improve your mood and daily motivation.

Antidepressants can have side effects such as nausea, dry mouth, headache, sleeping problems, or restlessness, but most of these issues improve after you take the medication for a few weeks. People who take TCAs generally have side effects more often than people who take SSRIs or SNRIs.

It is also important to talk to your doctor about all your medi-

cations, including over-the-counter herbs and supplements to look at potential drug interactions. Maintaining a list of medi-



By Tenille L. Lawson  
PharmD, BCPS

**SIGNS OF DEPRESSION INCLUDE TROUBLE CONCENTRATING, NO APPETITE, AND A LOSS OF PLEASURE DOING THINGS YOU USED TO ENJOY.**

cations is important when you take antidepressants to make sure your medications can be safely taken together.

Finding joy can be difficult sometimes, especially when we look at the challenges of 2020. Everyone

handles sad days differently, but if those sad days turn into weeks, it may be time to talk to your doctor. If you decide an antidepressant could be helpful, remember to look at long-term benefits, consider side effects, and discuss potential drug interactions. •

For more information, visit <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Depression>.



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WHEN THEY ASK HOW THEY CAN HELP, THEY MEAN IT.

The warm sound of a recovery advocate's voice is often the first source of comfort for those seeking help in the Kansas City metro area. For 63 years, First Call has worked to ensure that every person who calls the 24/7 Crisis Call Line has his or her needs met. Providing information and referral sources has been central to the mission of First Call since day one.

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First Call provides clinical, educational and prevention services to individuals and families impacted by addiction, including reentry services for those who have been incarcerated.

Since the pandemic, substance use and mental health disorders has increased. Implementation of telehealth assessments allows First Call to continue providing assessments and one-on-one support to clients and their families.



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# Hope Never Gives Up

By Juan Rangel, Jr. BS, ME

Director of Community & Family Engagement  
SchoolSmartKC

I am the son of two Mexican immigrants who came to the United States in 1966, and so, as a first-generation American, my view of life—my lens—includes a world with opportunity and possibility in good and bad times. My family struggled to understand systems that were set up differently for people born and raised in this country, but my path was charted by my curiosity and the many who along that path took an interest in my future. So, my glass is always half full.

I **have FAITH** that we will once again be able to have conversations without our masks and be able to wrap our arms around each other to embrace as friends and family despite the color of our skin, religion, age, ability and sexual orientation.

I **HOPE** we never forget those who have passed during COVID-19. That we learn to embrace those who are different from ourselves. To find ways to have civil discourse during this transition.

I **LOVE** and appreciate those who ran towards the fire instead of running away. They had every reason not to show up, but they did. I think specifically of nurses, doctors, and other health workers who fought to keep people healthy; teachers and other school personnel who showed up to keep students learning; and peaceful protestors who spoke loudly for people whose voices couldn't be heard.

**A SPANISH PROVERB SAYS, "TELL ME WHO YOU ARE WITH AND I WILL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE."**

I believe we are stronger TOGETHER than we are separate. I know transition can be hard, but as I've shared with many, I am always willing to meet anybody halfway, and if you let me, I will go even further to try to understand.

A Spanish proverb says, "Tell me who you are with and I will tell you who you are." I am better because of the people who have been a part of my life's journey."

---

*Juan Manuel Rangel, Jr., is Director of Community & Family Engagement for SchoolSmartKC (schoolsmartkc.org). Rangel's professional experience spans nonprofit sectors, community engagement and multicultural education. He is responsible for helping families stay informed about school quality and empowering them to take action.*





# Holiday Scammers: Always Naughty, Never Nice

With more people shopping online comes more opportunities for scammers to hook shoppers: they set up fake websites and run online campaigns. The goal? To steal payment information, your identity, or to load malicious software on your device to steal usernames and passwords.

Here are some tips from the Fraud Watch Network to help you stay safe:

- Shop safely online. Stick to known and trusted retailers.
- Avoid clicking on email or text links.
- Keep your operating and antivirus software updated.
- Use strong and unique passwords.
- And if a deal sounds too good to be true? It probably is.

Visit [www.aarp.org/frc](http://www.aarp.org/frc) for tips on online shopping and other scams.

**Watchdog Alerts / Tips & Resources / Free for Everyone**

# Real Faith in Action

By **Cornell Gorman**  
Co-Founder and Marketing Director  
G.I.F.T. (Generating Income For Tomorrow)

In so many ways, 2020 has been a disaster. A pandemic, deaths, disease and division have contaminated the foundational roots of our country's core. Or maybe our country's core was punctured and from it, greed, insensitivity and corruption reared their ugly heads. Whatever the case, millions of people in our nation now have to live their lives without a mother or father, a brother or aunt, a companion or friend.

Many people are feeling stressed, anxious, uncertain and afraid. For those of us who have a spiritual belief, we pray and wait for guidance for what our next moves should be.

As we're waiting on the Lord, we may be missing the fact that I believe the Lord is waiting on us. He's waiting for us to take hold of the power, the resources, the gifts, and the community He's already given to us. We are equipped with faith, hope, love and community.

**I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON, BUT I KNEW I WAS SUPPOSED TO PURSUE THE THING I WAS BEING CALLED TO DO.**

Earlier this year, I stepped out on faith and quit my job. I told my wife I believed the Lord wanted me to pursue my own business — that I was feeling called to do work that I had not been formally trained or educated to do. It was a big step. I had my faith and my existing talents and gifts.

My wife and I stood together in faith and I left the job. One week later, Covid-19 hit. I didn't know what was going on, but I knew I was supposed to pursue the thing I was being called to do. There was no unemployment or stimulus money. Then, I saw Christopher Stewart's (Co-Founder) post in a Facebook group with a compelling challenge that helped us envision the impact we could have if everyone in our group (15,000 people) donated \$10 a month to support black-



owned businesses in the urban core. From that reality “our faith took wings,” and the rest is history.

We were inspired to start the nonprofit organization, G.I.F.T. (Generating Income for Tomorrow) to support small businesses in Kansas City’s urban core.

I’m actively using all the gifts the Lord told me to sharpen:

- The faith that I was supposed to let my 9-5 go.
- The hope in knowing that if He takes care of the birds and trees, He will take care of me.
- The love and compassion I have for people and my city turned into a powerful nonprofit desperately needed in the urban core.
- And, the togetherness of working with like-minded individuals gifted in areas I’m not, to help build and pave the way for future generations.

---

*The G.I.F.T. Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit established to create generational wealth, while also reducing instances of poverty-related crime and violence in the community. Success will be defined by business growth, job creation, and positive impact on the community. To learn how you can support G.I.F.T., visit [kansascitygift.org](http://kansascitygift.org).*

“I’ll protect you, you protect me.”



**Wear a face covering when you go out around others.**

**Keep 6 feet away from others.**



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Office of Minority Health

[health.mo.gov/coronavirus](http://health.mo.gov/coronavirus)  
[cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus)



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# A Necessary Word

By Robert Lee Hill  
Community Consultant

**M**y friend Seymour has long been a conversation partner about life's manifold wonders and perplexities. Everyone should have a friend like Seymour.

It was no surprise then when Seymour dropped by recently and wanted to know if I had a "good word" for him on a gloomy day. He expressed what he said has been on the hearts and minds of several of his friends and what he thought the vast majority of the nation has been looking for these days.

I told Seymour that what he was requesting sounded a lot like ancient Biblical times when wandering Israelites, among countless others, asked long and hard: "Is there a word from the Lord?" And I said, "Yes, Seymour, there's a word."

Several words and phrases among a plethora of possibilities came to mind that might brighten an overcast spirit and warm a hesitant heart. Words like "love," "patience," "courage," "tenacity," "mercy," compassion," "peace." Certain phrases also came to mind: "caring community," "experiments in democracy," "the better angels of our nature," "to recognize our own tears in another person's eyes."

- Only one word, though, seemed right.
- It's a simple, necessary word. It is a word we need to model for our children and for the sake of their children.
- It's a word we need to intone for our neighbors, right next door and around the world.
- It's a word all of us need to hear.
- It's a short word which, when shared freely among teachable spirits and willing hearts, can make for a long revolution in values and enormous transformational change in the world.
- It's a word which, when held close during momentous times like these, can provide enough comfort to overcome any despair.
- And what is this simple, necessary word? The word is "hope."

Humble and fervent, constant and growing, undaunted and undeterred, hope is that quality of life that, according to the apostle Paul, ultimately makes us whole and brings us home: "For in hope we were saved." (Romans 8:24)

Seymour agreed that "hope" was and will remain a good word, not only for now, but far into the future.

**SEYMOUR AGREED THAT "HOPE" WAS AND WILL REMAIN A GOOD WORD, NOT ONLY FOR NOW, BUT FAR INTO THE FUTURE.**

*Dr. Robert Lee Hill is Minister Emeritus of Community Christian Church, where he served for more than 30 years. He is also Community Consultant with the Kauffman Foundation, with a focus on community engagement with public education. He is the author of ten books, most recently, ALL YOU NEED IS MORE LOVE.*

# Servant Leadership – Love, Hope and Mission

By **John W. Bluford, III, MBA, FACHE**  
President, Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute  
President Emeritus, Truman Medical Centers

**O**n several occasions, I have presented a message of leadership incorporating the themes of “Love, Hope and Mission.” My message to various audiences across the country encompassed traditional attributes of integrity, judgement, capability and humility as key elements of good servant leadership.

The essence of the message was that love and hope tied to mission are critical elements of successful leadership — that following leadership is more emotional than rational. I think that each of these concepts ring true today and are critically important in our society as our leadership will define our country’s culture. In turn, these same elements will define how we treat each other and how effective we will be as we address the menacing challenges of a pandemic, health disparities, social injustice, domestic terrorism, economic equity, the educational divide, climate change and the political discord before us.

**...LOVE AND HOPE TIED TO MISSION  
ARE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF  
SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP...**

The concept of hope is particularly important as it is inspirational in its core meaning. In general, people do not follow plans, they follow leaders, so a hopeful leader immersed in integrity that is committed to the input of a diverse audience with varying opinions and backgrounds is really the order of the day. It needs to be “one for all” and “all for one.” This scenario is where “hope” resides. Perhaps the only other element that exceeds hope is “The Truth”.



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*John W. Bluford, III, is President/Founder of the Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute (BHLI), a professional development program designed to cultivate undergraduate minority scholars for leadership roles in healthcare, [www.blufordinstitute.org](http://www.blufordinstitute.org)*





# A Reflection on Hope

**Melinda L. Estes, MD**  
**President and CEO Saint Luke's Health System**  
**Chair, American Hospital Association Board of Trustees**

It's easy to see where one might have lost hope in the expansive tragedy that's been 2020. Too often, the bad news has outweighed the good, leaving us feeling like the window of hope is quickly closing. But that's simply not true.

As a health care professional of more than 40 years, I can assure you there's always an opening for hope. Because, as clinicians and caregivers, hope is exactly where we live every day.

From heart transplants to stroke reversals to the labor and delivery room, we've been part of some of life's truly miraculous moments. It's what first called us to this field, and it's what keeps us still, as heartbreaking as it can be — especially in this battle against COVID-19 and all its ripple effects.



**HOPE IS WHAT DRIVES US  
 EVERY DAY, THROUGH SETBACKS  
 AND OBSTACLES.**

Hope is what drives us every day, through setbacks and obstacles. Through too many patients and not enough beds. Through tragedy and loss, and on to something better that we can build together on the other side.

In times of crisis, we are the helpers people turn to. They come to us at their most vulnerable, in need of compassionate care and healing. And we are there without fail. It's a responsibility we're privileged to hold — especially in these times of true crisis—and each of us works unabashedly to be worthy of it.

Now, closing out the year with the promise of a vaccine on the way, my wish is that families can keep that hope with them through the coming winter months. Stay masked, stay home, stay safe. And if we do that, we have tremendous hope for a healthy and happy 2021 to come.

*Melinda L. Estes, MD, is President and CEO of Saint Luke's Health System in Kansas City, Missouri, a faith-based, not-for-profit that includes 18 hospitals and campuses, home care and hospice, behavioral health care, dozens of physician practices, a life care senior living community, and more. Dr. Estes is a board-certified neurologist and neuropathologist, and currently serves as the Chair of the American Hospital Association's Board of Trustees. She was recently named one of 2020's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives by Modern Healthcare.*

# Connecting With Community Matters

By Alexander Boland, Student



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**A**s a senior at Rockhurst University, I'm currently on track to receive my bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a focus in Marketing. During a worldwide pandemic, it has been a struggle for all students in school who are trying to find hope amidst changes that have brought division, when we need unity most. However, I want to tell a story about how being a servant leader in your community, organization, and society at large can show togetherness and ultimately guide everyone towards a better world.

With COVID-19 so widespread, it was nearly impossible for my fraternity brothers and me to come up with an idea about how we could make an impact in our community through service. Then one day my neighbor, Ruth, asked if I could help her rake the leaves in her yard. This was the perfect opportunity for my fraternity, Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE), to lend a helping hand. Even on such short notice, the turnout of 10 brothers was astounding. This small gesture to help a neighbor provided connectedness within our community.

**SERVANT LEADERSHIP MAY SOUND CONTRADICTIONARY, BUT IN ORDER TO LEAD, YOU FIRST MUST SERVE.**



Faith in my brothers coming together out of love, satisfies my hope that we can still make a difference, even during these difficult times.

Servant leadership may sound contradictory, but in order to lead, you first must serve. Go make a difference!

*Days before Alex became my new neighbor, he stopped by to introduce himself. His cheerful smile and level of respect lingered with me after the introduction. I felt the sincerity of his promise — that he and his roommates would not host wild, boisterous parties or damage the property. They have lived up to their words. As they complete their studies and pursue professional careers, I believe we will see the fruits of their labor in my neighborhood, our city and country. All we need now are more young people like Alex. There is HOPE. — Ruth*



# Rising Stronger— Together



By **Qiana Thomason**  
**President and CEO**  
**Health Forward Foundation**

**Health Forward**  
FOUNDATION

**2020** has been a year like no other. The COVID-19 pandemic, glaring health injustices for people of color, the economic downturn, racial unrest, and political polarization have all challenged our health, mental health and livelihood.

If there is a bright side to the challenges we face, it is the opportunity to emerge anew. In 2021 and beyond, we can use the urgency of the pandemic to do more than recover. We have an opportunity to work together to advance prosperity for all. To create conditions in which everyone thrives and has a fair and just opportunity for health and economic well-being.

We believe in the possibilities of a greater democracy where all have equal access to power, money, and the necessary resources to be healthy. What we need now is the unique strengths of every sector working together to redesign a system that applies a racial equity and a health justice lens to all decisions, policies and practices.

As we move forward, Health Forward is committed to exploring various paths at the nexus of health, economic well-being, and race equity. And while

**WE BELIEVE IN THE POSSIBILITIES OF A  
GREATER DEMOCRACY WHERE ALL HAVE  
EQUAL ACCESS TO POWER, MONEY, AND THE  
NECESSARY RESOURCES TO BE HEALTHY.**

philanthropy is uniquely positioned to lead, we cannot do this alone. We ask individuals, other organizations, businesses and government to join us in developing equitable, asset-building opportunities that produce health.

We are proud to be a part of this region. We have witnessed the resilience of our communities, and we know through shared commitments to equity, we will rise stronger together.

*Qiana Thomason, a lifelong Kansas Citian, has dedicated her career to the improvement of health and wellness across the region, with a special focus on communities with significant health disparities and those living in marginalized conditions. Thomason serves as the President and CEO of Health Forward. By focusing on people most in need, Health Forward works through partnership and advocacy to transform communities so everyone has a fair and just opportunity for better health. Visit [healthforward.org](http://healthforward.org) to learn more.*



Kansas City

Boys Choir

# There is Hope for Tomorrow

By Ah'Lee Robinson

CEO and Founder, Musical Director

Kansas City Boys Choir and Kansas City Girls Choir

It was exactly 25 years ago this year — and I might add, an exciting time for everyone involved — in creating The Kansas City Boys Choir. Kansas City was an ideal place to experience what many cities had already had the pleasure of enjoying: a renowned boys choir. We envisioned this for our youth and city.

Today, we are shaping the singing talents of boys and girls. Choir participants are learning appropriate personal and social life-skills and developing positive character qualities. All of this, as we provide our city with second-to-none, choral music entertainment.

The Kansas City Boys Choir began with a foundation filled with lots of hope and love, as reflected in one of our signature songs, There is Hope for Tomorrow. Choir members embrace it as their “theme.”

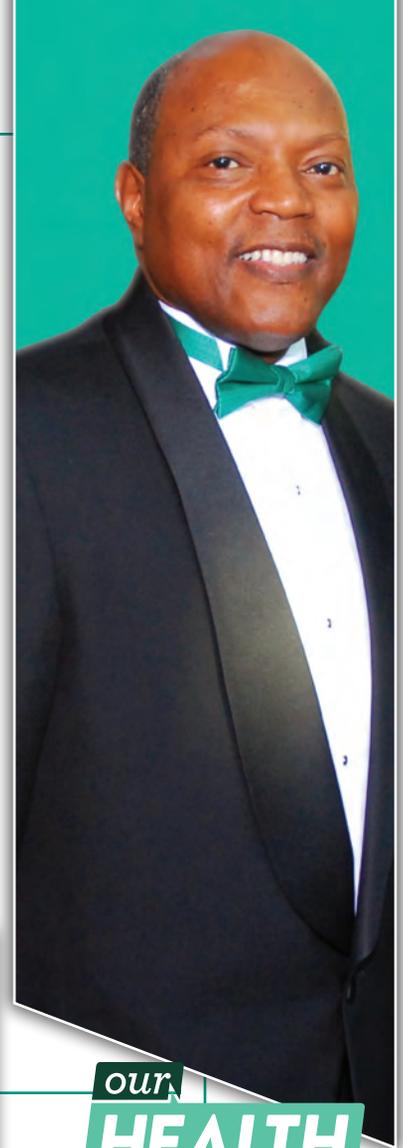
**OUR GREATEST JOY IS KNOWING  
WHATEVER WE DO TODAY TO SERVE  
OTHERS, SIGNALS “THERE IS HOPE  
FOR TOMORROW.”**

Our mission is to provide a forum to develop and enhance young minds while bridging racial, cultural and social divides through music, in a classical boys' choir tradition. Many choir members have developed lasting friendships. It's exciting to see the “brother bond” they have formed and to witness their transformation.

As the Kansas City Boys Choir continues to build on its legacy, we do so with the knowledge that we are paving paths to a better future for choir members and our city as a whole. Our greatest joy is knowing whatever we do today to serve others, signals “there is hope for tomorrow.”

*Ah'Lee E. Robinson, in addition to leading the organization, is a nationally recognized gospel recording artist. Robinson is a member of the American Choral Directors Association and Missouri Choral Directors Association. Other notable accomplishments include, licensed foster parent and volunteer with the Big Brother/Big Sisters Program, for the past 15 years.*

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Since 2010 Youth Ambassadors has been a valuable asset and community partner for youth and is recognized as a state-of-the-art, non-profit employment program for underserved youth.

Youth Ambassadors' year-round educational employment programs provide youth ages 14 to 18 years with 21st Century life and job skills such as anger management, crisis and conflict resolution, goal-setting, personal resilience, smart choices and healthy relationships. Youth Ambassadors serves approximately 250 youth 14 to 18 years of age throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area. Core program areas include:

- 1. EMPLOYMENT.** Youth are provided with a job during out-of-school time when they are most vulnerable to negative influences.
- 2. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.** Youth receive mental health services through small group therapy with a licensed clinical child psychologist and trauma-informed yoga sessions.
- 3. LIFE SKILLS.** Teens EARN while they LEARN by completing work assignments that resemble a classroom environment. Youth gain real-world life and job skills while learning to apply social-emotional learning concepts.
- 4. CREATIVE EXPRESSION.** Through creative writing and art expression, Youth Ambassadors learn to advocate for themselves in healthy, positive ways.
- 5. MENTORS.** Positive adult mentors provide the social-emotional support and positive experiences to increase resiliency in our teens.



A collaborative mural project completed by a small group of Ambassadors at The Landing Mall (63rd and Troost) with oversight of artist, Chico Sierra.



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For More Information, visit [www.youthambassadorskc.org](http://www.youthambassadorskc.org)  
5809 Michigan Avenue | Kansas City, MO 64130 | 816-793-3833

# We're Better Together

By Donna Young  
Executive Director  
Community Health Council of Wyandotte



**H**ave you ever had that feeling of overwhelming warmth and belonging as you stand back and observe all those you love interacting during a family gathering? So much love, it almost hurts? Perhaps we can all recall these experiences in our lives, even if they may be few and far between.

Maybe I am romanticizing the moment after months of social distancing. Either way, the reality is that this holiday season is dramatically different than those of years past. There is a real need to heed the directives and advice of health officials and medical experts. There is a real need to recognize the pain of tens of millions of people making less than a living wage, many of whom have been pushed further into poverty during the pandemic. There is a real need to dismantle systemic racism, this nation's most significant public health crisis.

**TRADITIONS AND  
TOGETHERNESS ARE INTEGRAL  
TO OUR WELL-BEING.**

Holiday celebrations, though chaotic, act as grounding and centering experiences as we reconnect with ourselves and those closest to us. Traditions and togetherness are integral to our well-being. We must celebrate with safety and caution in mind, because — let's face it — this year has been anything but normal.

As 2020 closes, my hope is that we might intentionally pause amidst the chaos and practice the art of reflection. Work to untangle experiences and observations from the past year, consider the many interpretations that exist, and be hopeful in the possibilities a new year brings. While none of the issues spotlighted in 2020 will be resolved right away, we can create meaning in how we step forward with hope for a better future. Let us make this our “better together” tradition.

*Donna leverages her leadership experience to improve health outcomes, reduce health disparities and uphold beliefs that an individual's life expectancy, health, and overall wellness should not be determined by their zip code. [www.wycohealth.com](http://www.wycohealth.com)*



**SAMUEL U. RODGERS**  
HEALTH CENTER



# There is Hope

**By Faisal Khan, MBBS, MPH**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center**

**H**ope is what sustains us all through tough times. This has been a difficult year. The pandemic has inflicted unfathomable grief across the world. Yet, the indomitable human spirit endures. We have learned to value each other like never before. We have realized the pricelessness of a hug or a handshake. There is hope. An effective, affordable and easily accessible vaccine against Covid-19 will soon be a reality. The disease will be vanquished. Let us focus on building a better 'normal'.  
Yes, there is hope.

*Faisal Khan is a Public Health Physician and Infectious Disease Epidemiologist with 25 years of experience in the design, management, and evaluation of public health programs and the delivery of high-quality primary care services to underserved communities. [www.SamRodgers.org](http://www.SamRodgers.org)*



# Hope Moves Us in the Right Direction

By **Crystal Y. Lumpkins, PhD, MA**

**Associate Professor**

**Resident Research Director**

**University of Kansas Medical Center**

**Family Medicine & Community Health Research Division**



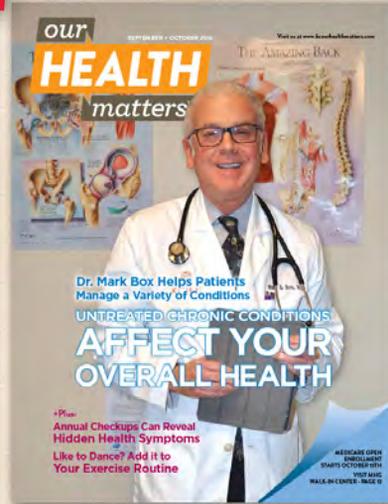
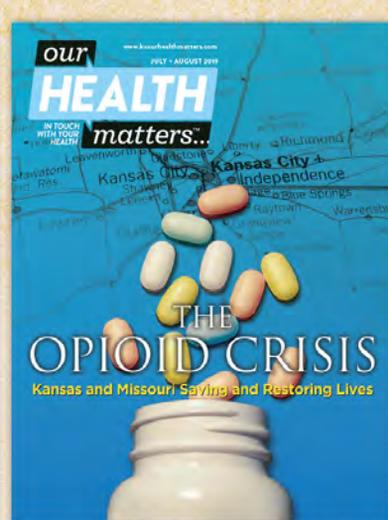
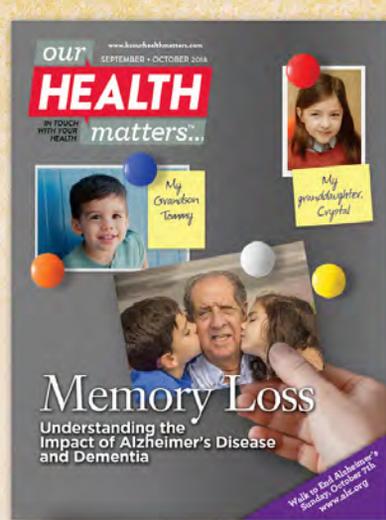
I am acutely aware and constantly reminded of how the unfolding events and impact of the pandemic and other societal issues have directly and indirectly shaped the “new normal”. We are on the cusp of a vaccine for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) and the promise of a solution to an unending story of pain and loss but also of triumph and breakthrough. As a social scientist in population health, I am witnessing in real time how diverse teams of scientists are rolling up their proverbial sleeves and coming together to fight systemic racism and persisting health disparities. It is in this spirit also that I have seen and am encouraged that these actions can pave the way for innovative solutions to what seems to be an impossible situation.

These collaborations and collective energies also remind me of the spiritual spaces and places of my life outside of work; where the pandemic and the “isms” are being tackled by a cadre of spiritual warriors who have called for a time of

**WHEN WE HAVE HOPE, WE HAVE CAUSE TO MOVE, TO ACT.**

reconciliation, healing, hope and love. I believe that both of these worlds (science and spiritual) while disparate for some, have certainly been parallel in my life. In my case, they have collided but are coalescing into a path to move forward. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” Hebrews 11:1. When we have hope, we have cause to move, to act. I believe that collectively, love will move both science and the spiritual warriors in the right direction.

*Dr. Crystal Lumpkins’ current and primary research interest is in cancer communication, specifically breast and colorectal cancer risk and prevention communication targeted to minority and underserved populations. Her research focus investigates the impact of religion and spirituality on health behavior outcomes. She is following community-based participatory research principles and approaches to engage Kansas and Missouri communities in the research process to address health disparities. To learn more about Dr. Lumpkins’ extraordinary career, visit [crystallumpkins.com](http://crystallumpkins.com).*



# 2021

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

### WHAT'S NEXT IN 2021

As 2021 approaches, *Our Health Matters* is committed to providing vital health information and resources that benefit your mind, body and spirit. We'll keep you informed about the distribution and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines and support you throughout your journey to improve health outcomes.

### TOPICS TO WATCH FOR

Understanding vaccines: past, present and future.

Beyond Covid-19: impacts on health, economy, education.

Who's on your medical team? Are you on the team?

Today's parents: what's missing, what's better?

Heart health and related issues.

Understanding how the lack of housing and transportation can impact health.

Innovations in cancer diagnosis, care and treatment.

Understanding diabetes prevention and care.

Live healthy, active and happy.

Telehealth: improving healthcare delivery.

Healthy relationships and related issues.

Stress and related conditions.

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