



PRAISE AND PRAYER LIST

With the COVID-19 crisis, our mission is more urgent than ever. It's critically important to continue loving and nurturing our kids, so the incredible progress they have made at By The Hand is not undone. But—as the four people who lowered their friend through the roof—we cannot do this alone. We need people like you who are committed to helping our kids experience abundant life.

The following is a list of challenges, praises and prayer requests—all having to do with our ability to provide the holistic wraparound services that our kids need. We appreciate you reading and praying through these as we seek God's help in Unleashing The Solution.

BY THE HAND CLUB MINISTRY OVERALL

Challenges

The longer the U.S. economy remains shut down to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the more uncertainty there is about the financial impact on how we plan and budget. The longer our kids and families are bound by the shelter-in-place order, the higher their risk is for stress, trauma and learning loss—and the greater their need is for the emergency care and holistic services that we provide. And yet, while we have pivoted to fill the role of a virtual out-of-school program, there is no substitute for in-person human interaction.

Keeping our current staff employed and present is critical to carrying out the mission of By The Hand. This fall, we will be adding 90 new students at our By The Hand Club—Moving Everest site as fifth-graders enter sixth grade. Knowing when we'll be able to add staff to support this necessary growth is hard to predict. Recognizing the potential for the coronavirus crisis to impact our long-term plans to serve more children in critical need of attention, we are adapting and learning from this experience. Our challenge is to become even more effective at reaching more kids and their families.

Praises

- God went before us with a few large financial gifts to ensure that we can continue serving our children and families during this crisis.
- The government has offered payroll reimbursement to help us keep our staff on board and on mission.

- We already had a robust technology-enabled learning program in place that enabled us to continue providing our kids with the academic support they need.
- We are nimble and have been able to respond quickly to changing needs and demands.
- Our staff and supporters are mission-minded and are committed to the Lord and our children, especially during this crisis.
- Our staff prayer times with Zoom have brought about great unity, fellowship and answered prayers for our children and By The Hand Club.

Prayer Requests

- The vision, wisdom and provision for moving forward in the future and, God willing, help more kids and families have abundant life.
- Wisdom, faith and obedience for our board of directors during this time of uncertainty.
- For our supporters' health and well-being—and for their faith, financial giving and witness to increase during this time of great need.
- For our staff's faith, unity and spiritual vitality not to wane post COVID-19—that we would not go back to business as usual.
- For new, innovative ideas and key learnings about how to leverage technology, improve communications, increase family outreach, enhance staff and volunteer coordination and utilization.

PROGRAMMING

Challenges

Learning at home is a challenge. Some students must care for younger family members. Not all students have a single place to study without distraction. Perhaps they don't have access to technology, or their family has only one laptop that several family members share. Stress from isolation and difficult home situations make it hard to concentrate. And some simply are not motivated without direct teacher and mentor interaction. Lord, have mercy on our students.

Praises

- Our staff has been innovative, figuring out how to continue holding Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and fitness classes, Bible studies, and blended learning challenges—virtually!
- We had the technology and ability to bless our students with computers and Wi-Fi to enable them to access their schoolwork and connect with us online.
- Our high school and college students are connecting even more now than they did before COVID-19.
- Our college and career staff have connected with more than 90 students to assist with technology, food and other basic needs.

Prayer Requests

- For our students to focus on academics during this time, when their schools lack the resources to provide online school or have not given enough school work to do.
- That our students will be motivated to learn and connect with By The Hand Club.
- Wisdom, patience and strength for families adjusting to a “homeschool” model—that they will know how to support their kids’ academics.
- For our eighth-grade students who are graduating this year. They will not have the opportunity to experience a graduation ceremony or the usual traditional celebratory activities done by schools.
- For our twelfth-grade students who will not experience a traditional graduation ceremony; may God give them and their families peace and hearts of thanksgiving for their next steps.
- That Dr. Deuser, Chief of College and Career Success, Chicago Public Schools, and other CPS leadership will have the wisdom to determine next steps and best practices for remote learning, as well as college and career transitions for twelfth-grade students.
- Provision for our students and alumni who are now unemployed, especially those who are the sole or primary providers for their families.
- Good mental and physical health for all students and their families.
- That all of our students will encounter God and yield to Him as Savior and Friend.

OPERATIONS

Challenges

COVID-19 presents challenges on many fronts for our people, facilities and technology. With the majority of staff working from home, we are challenged with keeping everyone engaged, connected and productive as they continue to serve our kids, families and each other virtually. HR continues to prepare for the summer hiring season while current staff openings are on hold. The Facilities team has stepped up its cleaning and sanitizing process to ensure the safety of those utilizing the buildings for food packaging and delivery to By The Hand Club families. Due to concerns about the financial impact of COVID-19 on By The Hand Club, four of our facilities have temporarily shuttered, and the services of our cleaning vendors have been placed on hold. The internal Facilities team is picking up their workload at the two facilities that remain open, in addition to their regularly scheduled building maintenance and repair responsibilities. With the increased volume of remote workers, it is important to keep staff connected to coworkers and By The Hand online resources. With technology device vendors facing staff reductions and reduced production due to COVID-19, the By The Hand IT team anticipates shortages and long delays in receiving new and replacement devices for students and staff for the upcoming academic year.

Praises

- A generous donor gift for assisting staff with rent/mortgage payment shortfalls due to COVID-19, and that resulted in funds being distributed to more than 20 staff members. We will continue to accept applications until all funds have been distributed.

- For the technology that allows our staff, volunteers and students to connect with each other.
- For daily prayer meetings with all By The Hand Club staff keeping people connected in fellowship, Bible teaching, personal sharing and prayer—and for no connectivity issues.
- Praise for our cleaning vendors who were able to fully clean and sanitize all facilities before temporarily suspending their services.
- For the amazing, godly group of men who serve on the By The Hand Club Facilities team, keeping everyone safe from the spread of COVID-19 in our buildings.
- For Novak Construction and all of the workers who continue to move forward with the completion of the Moving Everest middle school. We anticipate an on-time opening of the new facility this fall.

Prayer Requests

- For the health and mental well-being of our most valuable resources, our staff, as they work at home.
- That our students and families will know the love of God through the work of our staff at By The Hand Club as they provide food, computers and other resources.
- That our staff do not become weary or disconnected during this time of physical separation from fellow workers and students.
- For the HR team as they develop and offer online programs for leadership development and enrichment to our staff.

OPERATIONS

continued

- That the Facilities team remains safe, healthy and avoids contracting the virus—and that they not become weary or discouraged as they complete maintenance and repair projects in addition to the extra workload of keeping buildings clean and sanitized.
- That all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies remain available as we need it.
- That pricing for new and replacement computers remains favorable, and that the devices arrive on time for set up by the beginning of the new academic year.
- That By The Hand Club continues to effectively utilize online resources to reach out to donors, staff, students and families.

VOLUNTEERS

Challenges

Due to the shelter-in-place order, our volunteer community has also been impacted by our clubs not meeting in person. When our students attend By The Hand Club, our volunteers consistently come alongside our staff to provide academic and spiritual support, encouragement and social-emotional connections for our students.

During this time in which we operate virtually, our students and staff need support from our volunteers. Knowing that By The Hand Club volunteers play an important role for encouraging, tutoring and mentoring our students, we are still developing new channels for our students and volunteers to connect during these unprecedented times.

Praises

- For our faithful volunteers who return year after year because of their deep love and commitment to our students.
- For volunteers thinking of ways they can support students and families even when they're not able to be present with our students physically. (ie, including prayers, care packages and encouraging notes to mention a few.)
- Volunteers who eagerly seek to learn more about how they can serve students and who are willing to spend time in training to do so.
- Volunteers who have actively responded to By The Hand Club opportunities to join students virtually to be a part of club time.

Prayer Requests

- For the safety and security of all of our volunteers.
- For volunteers who work in essential, front-line industries during this time of public health crisis.
- For By The Hand and our volunteers to be creative in using technology and overcoming the challenges of social distancing and isolation.
- For volunteers to continue to connect with students even when they are unable to meet in person.
- For students who volunteered from Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton and other colleges—and for those grieving the loss of community and the schedule they had at school.
- For student volunteers to embrace serving virtually and that they would commit to serving again during the 2020-2021 school year.
- For volunteers to help recruit new volunteers from their networks.
- That as a result of the current crisis, we will develop new ways for developing friendships and community with local churches, schools, businesses, and other entities.

FINANCE

Challenges

Given the economic challenges many Americans are experiencing, and the likelihood of continuing layoffs, small business closures and other financial hardships, our revenue is likely to be impacted. Approximately 90 percent of our revenue comes from donations. Since it is hard to predict how long our current and future donors will feel the impact of the economic downturn, it is difficult to anticipate their level of giving. This raises the question of how to plan for sustaining operations and continuing our life-transforming services should revenues decline significantly.

Praises

- Providence Bank, a banking partner that is extremely supportive of our organization.
- The availability of government funding to support payroll costs.
- Donor support, including unanticipated large gifts that were received just before virus hit.
- Understanding vendors when we have to slow down payments.

Prayer Requests

- For continued donor support during this economic crisis—and despite the cancellation of the Spring Benefit.
- For the early release of stay-in-place orders so people can get back to work, and the economy can return to a good state.
- For continued strength and resiliency and energy for our outsourced finance vendor, Cedarstone Partners, especially Felicia and Diane.

FUNDRAISING

Challenge

Due to the growing pandemic, we have postponed all of our fundraising-related visits, tours, group service days and events. This includes the cancellation of the Spring Benefit, our largest fundraising event of the year. These postponements and cancellations, along with the growing financial crisis, have created a unique challenge for fundraising. We know our mission is more important than ever and we are working hard to ensure the mission can continue to move forward. We are connecting via phone and video conference with our supporters as much as possible, sharing updates, presenting needs and providing hope during this difficult time, but we know there is no substitute for in-person interaction. We are praying that God will move in the hearts and minds of our friends to give in faith above and beyond during this difficult time.

Praises

- Friends rising to the occasion and providing care packages for many of our families in need.
- Some supporters gave above and beyond to help us with this COVID-19 crisis.
- Several supporters are giving ahead of schedule to help us with cash flow, especially now as our big fundraiser has been canceled.
- That construction for our By The Hand—Moving Everest middle school is still proceeding and still on schedule for opening this fall.

Prayer Requests

- Good health for our supporters, staff and children.
- Blessings and wisdom for our supporters as they face these challenging economic times.
- That the Lord would put By The Hand on our supporters' hearts to continue providing the funding needed to keep on mission.
- The shelter in place to end soon so people can get back to work and the economy can begin improving again.
- That the commitments we receive on April 23 will equal, or even exceed, our goal for raising funds during the Spring Benefit—and for wisdom and provision for how to overcome any decreases in giving.