About Cross Community & The Equity Center

Our mission is to advance equity & justice, empower generosity, and improve the quality of life in Gaithersburg and Montgomery Village - the GMV.

Our vision is for individual, community, and generational empowerment.
Key Impact Areas During the COVID-19 Pandemic - 2021

**Food for Gaithersburg**
Weekly food distribution in 4 locations, served 72,442 people

**Educational Equity Hubs**
Launched Sept 15, 2020, served 1,400 students

**The Resource Center at Lakeforest Mall**
Launched in December of 2020, serving community of 5,000+

**Covid 19 Equity Access Clinics**
First of its kind in Upper County, over 2,000 vaccine doses administered
About the 2021 GMV Community Survey

Surveyed 1,300 residents of the GMV from June-August 2021.

A window into the struggles, the hopes, and the dreams of low-income, immigrant families living in GMV area of Montgomery County.
Community Partners for the 2021 GMV Community Survey

Safe Places
Logares Seguros
Endroits Sécurisants
Cider Mill Residents' Association

Mujer.Fuerza y Coraje

HOLY CROSS HEALTH
A Member of Trinity Health

Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative

South Lake Elementary School

Gaithersburg Elementary School

Watkins Mill Cluster
Demographics

Race/Ethnicity
- Hispanic/Latino: 83.2%
- Black/AA: 8.9%
- White: 4.6%
- Other: 3.3%

Language Spoken
- Spanish: 70.0%
- English: 30.0%
Three Priority Results

• Pervasive and Systemic Poverty
• Need for Affordable Healthcare
• Need to Address Resource Barriers
Pervasive and Systemic Poverty

- **87%** of respondents make less than $40,000 annual income
- **72.5%** of respondents that they do not have enough income to meet their families needs
- **87%** of respondents don’t earn even half of what is needed to live modestly in Montgomery County
Pervasive and Systemic Poverty

• **51%** of respondents obtain some of their food from free food distributions

• **36%** responded that they don’t have enough to eat

• **80.4%** did not have enough savings available to cover a $500 emergency
Need for Affordable Healthcare

*Quality affordable healthcare is the highest-ranked need*

- **57%** of respondents identified healthcare as the highest social need
  - **Food (56%)** and **employment (53%)** were the 2nd and 3rd highest needs
- **52.6%** of respondents do not have health insurance
  - Among Spanish language respondents, **65.4%** do not have health insurance (approximately 595 respondents)
When asked what resources are needed in the community, an **affordable healthcare center** was the most desired amenity for the future of Lakeforest Mall.
Addressing Resource Barriers

Montgomery County has done a great job of increasing the level of support available to low-income families, but there is much more work to be done in the GMV to connect residents to resources & support.

*Investment in trusted community partners* is needed to ensure this community gets the help that is available to them.
The Disconnect – So Many Barriers

• The number one barrier is language, with 59% of community members indicating that language differences are a primary challenge to obtaining resources

• Second highest-ranked response was “not knowing where to go for help” (51% of respondents), & “too complicated and difficult to access” was ranked third (32% of respondents)

• Only 10% of the Spanish-language respondents indicated they are U.S. citizens – so understanding what support they are eligible for is critical
The Value and Dignity of the Community

The people we surveyed see the GMV as their community & are concerned about **public health & personal improvement**.

- **More than 70%** of respondents have lived in the GMV for 4+ years
- **74%** are very satisfied with their children’s public school education
- **98%** have never been incarcerated or in jail
- **More than 80%** believe it is important to get a college degree
- **Over 83%** of respondents had been vaccinated at the time of the survey
Critical Takeaway: Equity Requires Access

Access brings opportunity and empowerment and comes through trusted members of the community

Action Items

1. Intentional investment and capacity building in organizations that work closely with members of the community.

2. Hiring and investing in community JEDI’s (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) - The way to build up a community is to invest in its people.
Ben Wikner, Executive Director

ben@cross-community.org

240-801-5510