

**PEPS**  
PROGRAM FOR EARLY PARENT SUPPORT™

# Midyear Impact Report

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AUGUST 2020



# 2019 was a milestone year for PEPS

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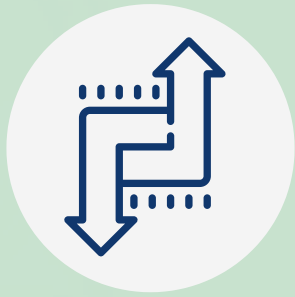


With your support and that of our entire giving community, our group leaders, our partners, board and staff we provided community and connection for 4,101 parents in 348 groups in King and Snohomish Counties; trained 237 group facilitators; collaborated with 6 community based organizations serving 45 Spanish-speaking mothers from low-income households, and 14 teen parents; collaborated with 9 Network Partners locally and across the country who served 750 parents; developed a new mission, vision, and values; and adopted a new strategic direction.

**01 MISSION - TO CONNECT PARENTS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND BUILD COMMUNITY**

**02 VISION - RESILIENT FAMILIES – CONNECTED COMMUNITIES – EQUITABLE OUTCOMES**

**03 VALUES - EQUITY, INNOVATION, INCLUSION, COMMUNITY, AUTHENTICITY**



## 2020—A Year of Adaptation

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We had a plan. And then the world changed!

This year has taken us places we never anticipated, so we are especially grateful for your support. It allowed us to adapt, pivot, change and respond to the impact of the pandemic and the impact of systemic racism.

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That babies continue to be born represents a sliver of hope at a time when the U.S. now has the most diagnosed COVID-19 cases in the world, .... But for those bearing these new lives into the world, giving birth in a pandemic is a terrifying task, full of unprecedented new challenges and uncertainty during what is already one of the most challenging of life's milestone events...

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CRYSTAL PAUL, SEATTLE TIMES

# Impact of the Pandemic

The pandemic has a deep impact specifically on expectant and brand new parents in our community who are experiencing anxiety in the face of uncertainty and a social distance reality during an already profound time of change as they transition into parenthood.

The pandemic has also had a deep impact in our service delivery and our organizational operations.



# Impact on Service Delivery

In order to continue to provide support and connection and combat loneliness for new parents during COVID-19, we've made these adaptations to our programming:

- In March we transitioned 74 groups that were meeting in person to virtual groups – requiring extensive communication and support for parents and group leaders; since then we launched an additional 75 virtual PEPS Groups, serving a total of 1,685 parents between January and June of this year.
- We created 'virtual neighborhood groups' that encapsulate a broader geographic area than a neighborhood group would cover.

I am so thankful that we can still hold PEPS groups despite not meeting in person. The PEPS staff has been incredibly supportive, and the training provided helped me develop the skills I needed to facilitate on Zoom. I've learned about group chats, sharing documents and most importantly how to keep the same nonjudgmental and supportive environment our parents deserve. For the group, it feels like we are meeting in person as the sharing is real and gritty and the overwhelming support they give each other is so heartwarming! Now more than ever these parents need community and these meetings provide just that.

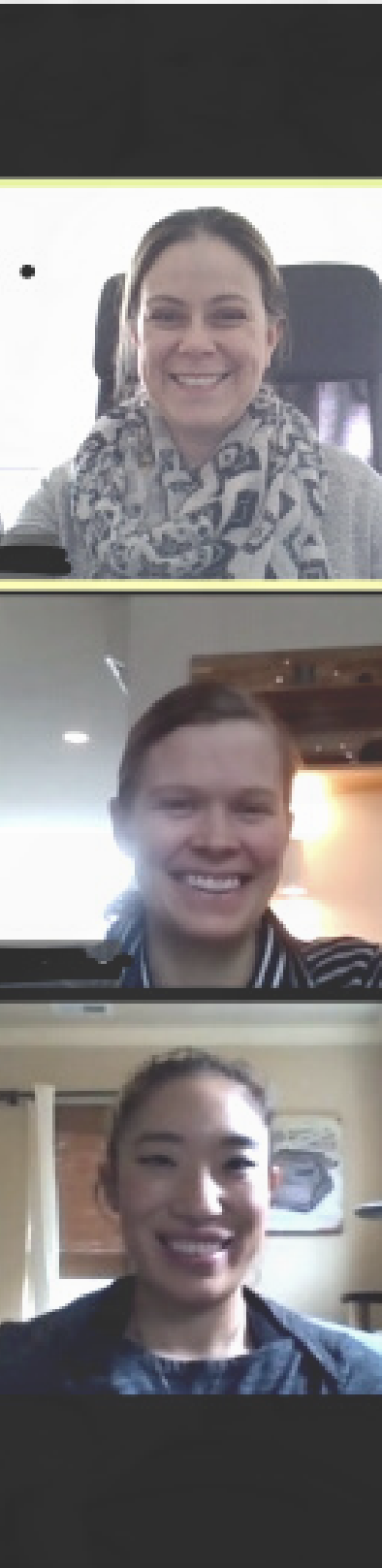
CONNIE H., PEPS GROUP LEADER

# Impact on Service Delivery

- Our Program Team is providing weekly virtual sessions for group leaders to support them with technology, facilitation tips and specific ideas and resource-sharing around PEPS Group topics.
- We designed and recorded a virtual facilitator training and are exploring next steps and technology tools to enhance this training.
- We made adjustments to our participant surveys and are tracking feedback from leaders so we can improve elements of our curriculum for virtual meetings. We're exploring how we can best address the collective trauma that new parents are experiencing through COVID-19.
- We developed a [COVID-19 resource page for expectant and new parents](#).
- We launched [peer support groups for expectant parents](#) who are experiencing unprecedented levels of stress and isolation. We intended to develop this program as a part of our strategic plan later in the year, but have moved it forward more quickly based on the current need in our community.
- We are working with our partner organizations to see how we can be of help for the parents and families they are serving. Two new support groups for Spanish speaking moms and clients of Open Arms have started. The first group was held via phone conference; the second group just started via an online platform.

**I am due in 3 weeks and have so been looking forward to being a part of PEPS, especially as a new transplant to Seattle. My husband and I are signed up for a couples group AND I'm signed up for the daytime group too. There are so many emotions and feelings of loss and fear associated with becoming a new parent at this time, and I am so very grateful that rather than cancelling, PEPS is finding ways to move things remote.**

**KAITLIN J., PEPS PARTICIPANT**



## Impact on Operations

- On March 4 and given the recommendations of King County Public Health at the time, we made the difficult decision to cancel our annual fundraising Luncheon (scheduled for March 10 and aimed to raise 25% of our fundraising budget for the year). We were one of the earliest organizations in our area who decided to cancel our event, crafted a virtual campaign within less than a week and produced [this video](#) featuring our Luncheon guest speaker and our Executive Director. Within 1 month, we were able to reach our goal, thanks to some generous donors.
- Our staff had to adapt to their own virtual work reality, as all of PEPS staff is working remotely since mid-March. As an organization, we are fiercely committed to not only supporting the parents we serve, but also our staff and their families in this critical time. Investments by our donors and funders in systems and technology, diversity, equity and inclusion and extensive work on strategy and a trust-based organizational culture over the last few years prepared us for this unsettling moment in history. We are so grateful, that we have an adaptive, creative and resilient team of staff.

“I would be lost without PEPS, given the lack of support during postpartum in COVID.”

PEPS GROUP PARTICIPANT  
(SURVEY RESPONSE)

# Impact of Racism

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As our country wakes up to the systemic racism, racial injustices and discrimination that Black Americans continue to face, so does PEPS. The last several years have been a time of deep learning and reflection at PEPS, and acknowledging mistakes we have made in our nearly 40 year history. This led us to prioritize racial equity across the organization and to the adoption of our racial equity statement in 2017.

PEPS has largely grown and remained in communities in Seattle and the surrounding areas that are predominantly white and middle/upper income. Systemic barriers and practices such as Redlining resulted in specific neighborhoods around Seattle becoming increasingly white and wealthy. Because PEPS operates neighborhood-based groups that have primarily grown through word-of-mouth recommendation, we acknowledge that in these neighborhoods as well as others within our service area, there are many families of color we have not served or not served well.

**As an organization, we know we can and must do better.**

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I know a lot has been written about the impact raising this next generation to be anti-racist can have on future generations, but I think there's also immense power in how the process of parenting can actually teach and transform the parents themselves right now. Through engaging with kids on racism, parents will become aware of their own role in perpetuating our white supremacy culture and racist system and hopefully get activated to dismantle it.

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VIDYA VASU-DEVAN, PEPS BOARD MEMBER

# Impact of Racism

We are committed to recognizing and learning from our past, engaging in honest reflection, and taking action. PEPS will be an organization that not only lives its values and is accessible to all parents and families, but also one that speaks up and advocates for equity in our region.

- We commit to making our services more available and accessible to communities who want them and to making every PEPS group a place where diversity is acknowledged, nurtured, celebrated, and valued.
- We recognize that we do have a responsibility to help our large community of traditionally white, affluent families understand how racial identity and prejudice and discrimination are formed and what their role in dismantling racial inequities is.
- We are providing every parent who participates in a PEPS group with tools and resources to raise anti-racist children.
- We believe it is healthy and necessary for parents to have conversations about Race and Social Identity in community with one another. We're providing advanced facilitation training and support to our group leaders to strengthen their ability to lead these conversations.
- Our board and staff commit to operating with a racial equity lens, meaning racial equity is embedded in our organizational culture, policies, and practices. We will continue to listen, learn, and dismantle white supremacy when it is showing up in our programming and organization.

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I'm glad that PEPS has been a great leader in adapting to the COVID situation and promoting conversations about racism and racial identity while continuing to serve the needs of new parents.

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PEPS GROUP LEADER

# Challenges and Path Forward

The uncertainty and complexity of our current times is challenging on many levels and is offering us as an organization ways to re-evaluate our work going forward:

- The health and safety of our families are a high priority, and while we believe wholeheartedly in the value of in-person connection, re-launching in-person groups will be challenging. At this point, all of our groups are virtual until December of 2020 and if a group starts virtually, it will end virtually as well. We are developing plans for a phased approach beyond December 2020 and are surveying parents about preferences. Additionally we are refining our curriculum for online use.
- In many PEPS Groups, the collective trauma our community is facing due to COVID-19, and racism and police brutality becoming a national conversation are articulated. Facilitating and holding space for these difficult conversations is challenging for group leaders, and staff is providing additional support through advanced facilitation trainings, Leader chats and one-on-one check-ins.



# Challenges and Path Forward

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- In July of 2019 PEPS adopted a 5 year plan (2020-2024) and bold goals focusing on Growing our Reach and Impact, Advocacy, and Innovation. As a result of the pandemic, we are currently holding off hiring new staff that we planned to bring on board this year. We are prioritizing strategies that help us meet the immediate needs of new and expectant parents. We will continue to: refine our Flexible Pricing Model; partner with and invest on community-based organization to specifically offer Spanish language groups free of charge; invest in educating PEPS staff and board on advocacy strategies; explore ways we can creatively support expectant, single, LGBTQ+ parents; explore how we can best serve parents of adolescents and teens, based on need, demand, and the science of the adolescent brain.
- We saw a 30% decrease in registrations in March/April due to parents either not wanting to meet virtually or waiting for when groups meet in person again. We've implemented a communications campaign that features testimonials from families who have participated in virtual groups.
- The downturn in registrations for our newborn groups coupled with the cancellation of all quarterly Baby Peppers groups affects our earned revenue, typically about 30% of our annual income. We are predicting a \$150,000 shortfall in program fee revenue this year. We have applied for and received a payroll protection loan.
- While many donors generously helped us reach our adjusted goal for our cancelled Benefit Luncheon in March, we were not able to reach our goal regarding donor numbers, which will likely have longer term implications. We are also projecting lower revenue from grants and individual gifts, as a number of foundations are not accepting new proposals this year, and many donors are currently focused on funding frontline and basic needs.

# Your Support Fuels our Work.



Like all non-profit organizations, PEPS is adapting and responding to the need in the community. But we know: we can only do that because our work is fueled by our giving community, by those who generously invest their financial resources, their time and their expertise because they believe in the importance of our mission – YOU!

70% of our revenue comes from individuals and families who experienced the power of their PEPS community first-hand and from some generous community or family foundations and community minded businesses. Only 30% is covered by program fees, which will likely decrease in the future, as we are seeking to increase access for underserved or under-represented communities.

At PEPS, we are convinced – and this pandemic has clearly brought this to light – that social connection in fact is a basic need and we are fiercely committed to standing by new parents in the most transformational time of their lives.

## Thank you for partnering with us. We need you.

“PEPS is building bridges between families who are welcoming new babies. These bridges are more important than they have ever been. In the midst of a global pandemic, new parents can face the unknown alongside a community of support and solidarity. This is why I give.”

JESSICA L., PEPS DONOR