

OUR TOMORROWS SCAN

May 27, 2020

The **Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund** is leading efforts to build an "Our Tomorrows Story Bank" which will house brief accounts – or stories – of the variety of experiences Kansans are facing. The **Our Tomorrows Scan** is a periodic snapshot of story narratives, and includes interesting data, outliers, and observations on the experiences of Kansans. Decision-makers at all levels can use these insights to stay informed of Kansas-specific trends and emergent needs, and to prompt further exploration into the larger shared Story Bank.

Summary of data collected through May 27, 2020

Food For Thought. *Interesting observations about the stories, organized into thematic categories.*

Relief Efforts are a Bright Spot

- Kansans express that they are facing stressful times, but services and governmental policies are working and providing much needed help
- Individuals with quality social supports (i.e., family, friends, community services) are reporting the most amount of relief
 - Indicates that social supports leverage governmental relief efforts, and increases the impact
- Stories show that some relief efforts (including policy changes) may be keeping people from falling into much more dire circumstances e.g. resorting to pay day loan, self-harm, etc.)
 - Demonstrating an emerging theme that government relief is helping keep some people from falling into dire straits

Growing Divide Regarding Covid-19 Restrictions

- Some Kansans are expressing frustration with social distancing guidelines, expressing that they have been excessive or unwarranted, while others are worried about guidelines being relaxed too soon
- There is growing resentment about Covid-19 restrictions, particularly with small business owners such as hair salon owners and independent contractors
- Others are expressing fear about loosening restrictions too soon, particularly with frontline workers and healthcare providers

Service Providers Key for Family Resilience

- Nearly 1 in 4 stories are being shared *about someone else*, by service providers (i.e., child care providers, healthcare workers, orgs addressing food insecurity, etc.) sharing about families/individuals they serve, or individuals they know within the community
- Stories shared by service providers indicate that families are working in partnership with local organizations and service providers to meet basic needs
- Stories shared about others they know indicate that people they know have little or no help, and few local organizations/service providers to help meet basic needs
- Findings highlight that families and service providers are working together to meet basic needs, and service providers are key for family resilience in the midst of crisis

Low-Hanging Fruit. *Articulated needs from story narratives that can be addressed quickly.*

Using Relief Bright Spots to Prepare for the Future

- Deeper dives into who is benefiting most and least from vital relief efforts will help inform future relief initiatives
- Investigate ways in which general relief efforts can be combined with service provider support initiatives (i.e. child care providers) to create larger impact

Bridging the Growing Divide

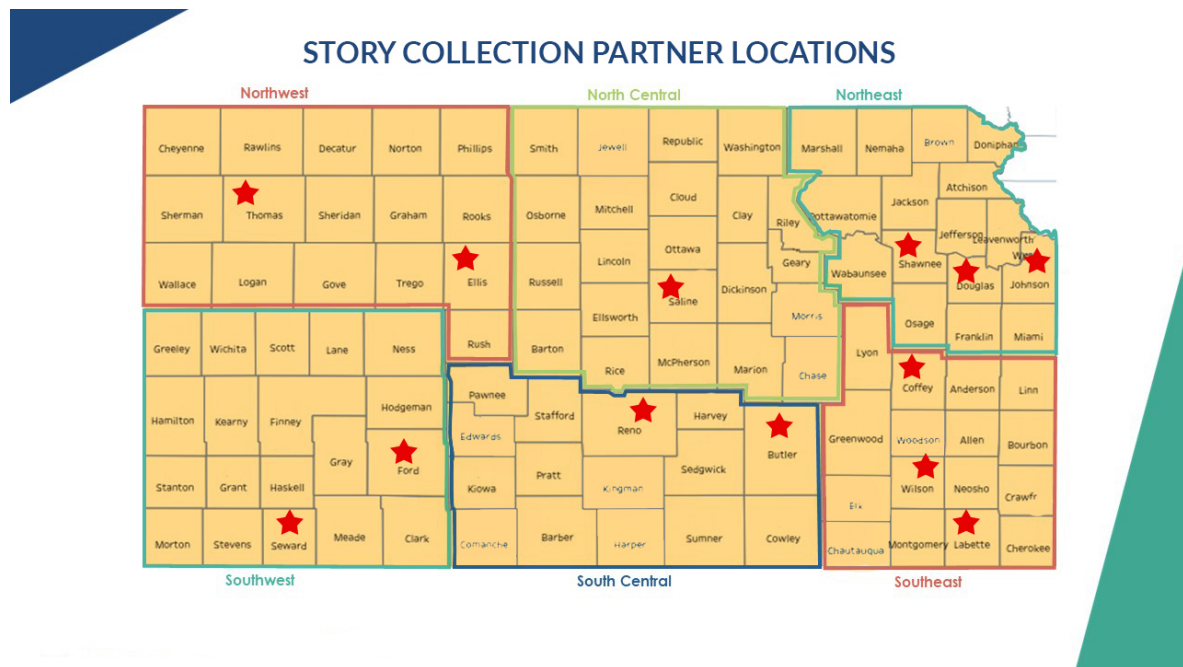
- Increase efforts to communicate a balanced approach to social distancing to bridge differences in perspective and priorities between small business owners and frontline workers, and communities that have seen few cases of Covid-19 versus communities that have seen many through:
 - Empower Kansans that are worried about loosening restrictions through education about social distancing priorities such as high-risk and low-risk behaviors
 - Increase education to communities with few cases about risk, behaviors that increase risk, and targeted efforts to inform Kansans about the realities of Covid-19 outbreaks

Leveraging Service Providers

- Equip service providers with flexible funds to allow for expansion of services and social supports to families in times of crisis
- Identify areas with higher rates of families who report difficulty meeting basic needs and develop streamlined processes for connecting families with local service providers in a meaningful way
 - Help struggling families connect with local service providers directly rather than just making referrals
 - Increase media awareness about local service providers that are helping fill Covid-19 basic needs

Story Collection Network. *Partner Organizations & Citizen Journalists.*

In the past week there have been twenty new URL links created for Citizen Journalists and partnering organizations. Below is an image of all the places in Kansas where Our Tomorrows has story collectors!



Sampling. *Who is sharing their story?*

Story Count

Total Story Count	310
Prompt 1: Something within the last week that helped or hurt the family	228
Prompt 2: Thrive or survive	82

- 81% of respondents are female
- Increase in stories shared outside of Johnson and Douglas counties, notable increase in Wilson county
- 72% of respondents are white
- 37% of respondents are considered “COVID essential staff” and/or required to work outside of isolation
- 34% of respondents are between 30 – 44 years old
- 34% of respondents are between 45 – 65 years old

Emergent Needs Story Pack. *Actual Our Tomorrows stories shared by Kansans, in their own words. Titles are chosen by the respondent and observer edits are in [] to protect confidentiality.*

Stimulus

We didn't get our stimulus check when everybody else did last month. We really needed it as my husband was laid off from work. From what I could find online we wouldn't get ours until the first week of June. This morning we got our stimulus unexpectedly. It was great timing as I was getting ready to resort to a payday loan.

College grant

My daughter was awarded a CoViD19 emergency funds grant from her community college. These funds helped cover technology costs that were extensive due to online classes.

Unexpected Financial Support

When the COVID-19 crisis started, my husband (an independent contractor) lost his biggest client. He didn't qualify for unemployment, due to his independent contractor status. We resigned ourselves to tightening our belts to ride out our income shortfall. Unbeknownst to me my husband had applied for a program that helped unemployed people in his situation. He hadn't mentioned it to me as he thought there was little chance it would come to fruition. Last night we were wondering how we could pay our rent and car payment. This morning, my husband found out that he received \$1,000. We have enough to get by another month.

Community Hunger

I have a couple friends who are experiencing unemployment during this time of COVID-19 and both have applied for unemployment and food stamps. I was happy to hear from one friend who has 4 children, and her spouse who works in the entertainment industry and tours with bands (unemployed now), their family was able to get on food stamps within a few hours of applying. they received a phone call 2 hrs after applying and are now receiving \$900/month and they were really surprised by how much money they are receiving and are very thankful.

Community Steps Up

Our school was providing free lunches to all community children until one of the cooks came down with COVID-19. The school temporarily cancelled meals for the week. Before the week started our community restaurants started offering \$1

meals to all kids. Then community members started donating money. This resulted in the \$1 meals being free. It gave me such a feeling of pride that our community worked together to make sure our kids were fed. Go Hays!

Help

I grew up in a hard home and my way of escape was to get pregnant and move in with my boyfriend. We were living with his stepdad who was a drug user when we were connected with a program that helps young moms. Our worker said that the home we were in was not a safe place to have a baby so she helped us get into an apartment and helped us find some donated furniture. I don't know what we would have done without her help

Positive

I work alongside home educators and they have been finding creative ways to stay in contact with their families. One visitor went to the home and she stayed on the sidewalk while mom and kiddo stayed on the porch. They were able to talk and she helped entertain the kiddo by acting out funny stories.

COVID19 and the leaky roof

In our small northwest community we are a happy little non profit daycare center. The shock of COVID19 and string of incidents that came along with it, stunned us all. We had to restructure our staff because of the older ladies we employ and their health. School age kids being out of school also added to our stress. We had to have teachers to help with K- 4 grade studies. They had worksheets and on line classes to schedule. We did however come up with enough tablets and laptops thanks to our families that we serve. The older kids fell into a routine fairly quick and we continued preschool activities as scheduled. A thunderstorm happened. That storm revealed two leaks in the toddler unit. This was definitely not a good time to have to replace the roof. Our finances had taken a big hit due to COVID19 and the loss of income due to the families working from home. We could not put off the repairs. We replaced the roof and will be praying for the funds to help us stay in a safe financial state. The government has offered option which we faithful apply for and we have wonderful community support. I'm sure we will survive this struggle as some other small businesses will not. For that, I feel blessed!