

IMPACT REPORT



2020

HEART OF AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

What we envisioned 2020 would look like at the start of January was very different as the year played out and drew to a close. Some of our work paused. Some of it shifted. And yet, much of it continued because of the extraordinary dedication of staff, partners, communities and volunteers.

As the pandemic unfolded, we found innovative ways to work with school districts and community centers to forge ahead. We were determined to deliver resources and continue space transformations. These creative solutions have led us into 2021 stronger and even more determined.

One thing is certain. Students, families, and communities need education resources and safe places to learn now more than ever.

MISSION FOCUS

OUR MISSION

Heart of America transforms spaces into modern learning environments and provides education resources so students and communities can learn and grow.

Our work to address educational inequity began in 1997, and over the past 24 years the organization has provided more than 770 educational space transformations and resource distributions to all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Canada. More than two million students have taken home new resources or learned in an inspiring space that Heart of America and its partners, sponsors, and donors have helped to provide. Half a million volunteers have made this all possible by offering time and talent to help create these spaces, many in just a single day.

Vibrant, safe, well-resourced spaces create a sense of pride and communicate to students that they are valued and that their education and growth is important to the entire community. As Heart of America has witnessed, when in-person learning isn't possible, the learning environment at home is just as important for student success.

OUR PURPOSE

Heart of America's work lies at the intersection of education and social justice. The events of 2020 have underscored the critical nature of this work.

COVID-related school closures and the unprecedented adaptation to distance, hybrid, and adjusted in-person learning has both widened the resource gap and expanded the digital divide. Now these inequities must be addressed immediately so that students can learn, grow, and thrive now and for decades ahead.

Heart of America has also realized that these resources and spaces serve not only students, but also multiple generations living and learning together.

9 in 10
students

RISK FALLING AN ENTIRE
GRADE LEVEL BEHIND
DUE TO PANDEMIC
LEARNING LOSS

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

155,835

Students and Families
Served

21,998

Education Resource Packs

253

Transformation & Resource
Distribution Events

1,462

Volunteer Hours

638

At-Home & Distanced
Volunteers

58,108

Books

6,951

Solar Lanterns

\$697,839

Technology Value

2020 PROGRAMMING

1

Education Resource Packs & Tech

Beginning in March, Heart of America's first response was to get as many education resources into the hands of as many students as possible. More than 21,000 education resource packs helped offset inequities and position kids for distance learning. Heart of America wrapped up the year delivering school supplies, books, and technology to 205 total school and community sites across the U.S. serving more than 132,000 students through these resource distributions.

3

Twin Cities Rebuild

Heart of America's third response was to help drive rebuild efforts in Minneapolis and St. Paul after the death of George Floyd and resulting unrest. Heart of America is a founding member of the Twin Cities Community Rebuilding Coalition working to ensure the investment is done properly, involving BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities and providing what they actually need to rebuild stronger. Heart of America is proud to be engaged in important conversations around social justice and roll-up-your-sleeves work that are necessary to help these communities heal.

2

Navajo Nation Supplies & Light

Heart of America's second response was centered on critical distance learning needs for 7,000 (1 in 6) students and their families of the Navajo Nation. School closures pushed learning for more than 46,000 children from the classroom to the home, where school supplies are depleted or scarce. Comprehensive resource packs included solar lanterns, which provided young learners with light to learn after the sun sets.

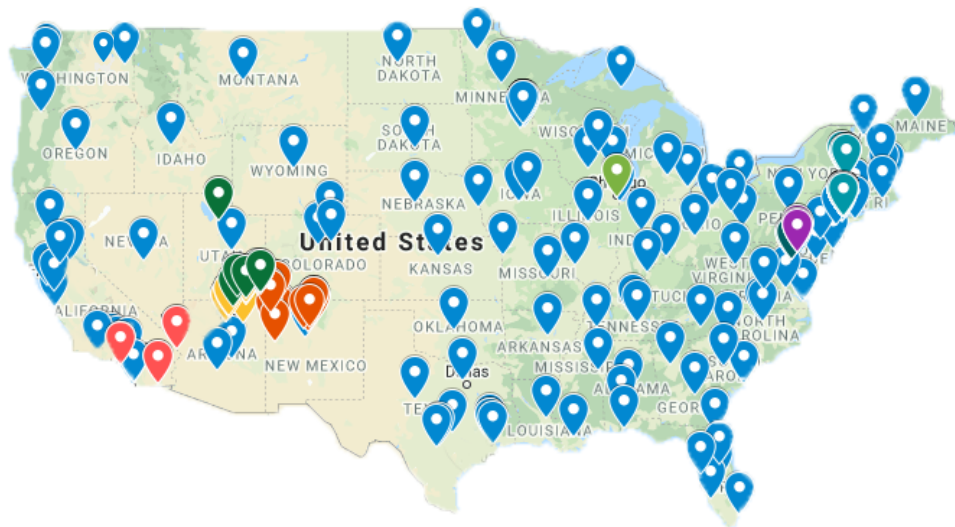
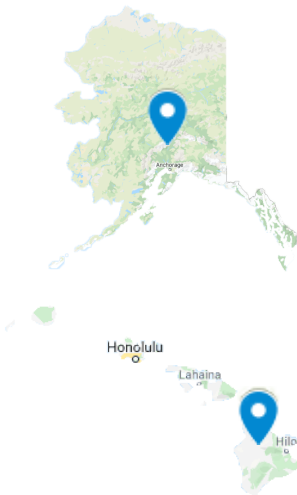
4

Education Facility Transformations

Heart of America's fourth response focused on the mission-critical work of transforming spaces around the country. While children and teachers were out of school buildings, Heart of America completed even more renovations to inspire them when they return. Heart of America's design teams developed pandemic-mindful concepts both indoors and out, with exciting spaces like outdoor classrooms and peace and meditation rooms to help address post-pandemic social and emotional needs for students, teachers, and parents.

1

EDUCATION RESOURCE PACKS AND TECHNOLOGY



In March 2020 Heart of America leveraged partnerships to reach students more quickly with robust supplies to transition to and support remote learning.

Heart of America stood up an assembly network of volunteers to complete **205 Resource Distributions** at homes, meal sites, schools, and community centers in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia.

These books, school supplies, art supplies, STEM kits, technology, personal protective equipment and solar lanterns all helped provide equitable education and make distance learning more accessible.

In all, Heart of America **delivered 21,998 education packs** and provided additional resources to **132,620 students and their families**.

2

NAVAJO NATION SUPPLIES & LIGHT



An estimated 30% of families in the Navajo Nation lack reliable access to power. Heart of America and partners including Tribal Leaders, Swinerton Renewable Energy, Real Salt Lake Foundation, The Somos Unidos Foundation, the Santa Fe Opera, Goal Zero, and many others **reached 6,951 students** with education packs. These were filled with books, school and art supplies, STEM kits, PPE, COVID safety guides, and solar-powered lanterns to make learning possible even after dark.

More than 170 individual donors and organizations across the United States helped support this distribution that has spanned 4 states and reached students and families at **34 schools in 13 school districts, four medical centers and a community center**. Heart of America and partners will return in 2021 to support even more families in the Navajo Nation and other Native American communities.

"Our district provides instruction via distance learning, which is very challenging for our students, their families and our teachers. More so for those who do not have Internet connectivity at their home. Having school supplies readily available for our students is greatly appreciated, as one must travel over two hours in any direction to shop [for these supplies]. The provided STEM activities will further develop our students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. Most importantly, our students' curiosity will be sparked with these hands-on activities."

—Diane Fuller, Educational Services Coordinator
Kayenta Unified School District

3 TWIN CITIES REBUILD

As a result of unrest in the Twin Cities, nearly 1,500 small businesses, homeowners, and nonprofits faced damages ranging from disheartening to catastrophic. According to the Star Tribune, estimates to repair facilities could exceed \$500 million. This figure would bring facilities back to where they were before, ignoring much-needed and long-overdue facility upgrades and modernization required to thrive in and beyond the pandemic. Heart of America is supporting affected organizations through renovation and resource distribution projects as well as through leadership in the Twin Cities Community Rebuilding Coalition as a founding member. Learn about a few of these rebuild and COVID support projects below.

Juxtaposition Arts

Heart of America and Target partnered to support young artists and apprentices with a rebuilt and renovated Drawing and Ceramics Studio, Gallery, Lounge, and an updated Meeting Space. Students helped with the design and more than 50 socially distanced volunteers completed these spaces in a single day event in September.

Gordon Parks High School

In partnership with 3M, Heart of America cleaned up the shattered window and fire damage. A multi-use Family and Consumer Science Lab, Career and Technical Education Lab, an Art Instruction Space, the Photography Classroom, and an Outdoor Instruction and Garden area were all renovated including exterior damages resulting from unrest.

Mount Olivet Rolling Acres

The community critical organization was in desperate need of updating. A two-phased transformation began with a new gym and support room for clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The renovation provides space for physical fitness and training for the Special Olympics. Phase two, in early 2021, includes a Teaching Kitchen, Therapy Room, and Technology Lab

Seward Pharmacy

This culturally vital pharmacy – that serves clients speaking 8 languages – had just opened its doors when area unrest resulted in significant damages. Heart of America and UnitedHeath Group launched a rebuild project to repair and upgrade the retail and consultation spaces. The facility continues to serve their community while renovations continue into 2021.



4 EDUCATION FACILITY TRANSFORMATIONS

When COVID closed campuses across the country, Heart of America's work continued to safely develop and create engaging learning environments. These spaces have served as hubs for educators to conduct remote learning, for students to socially distance in learning pods, and in readiness for the gradual return to campuses.

Verizon Innovative Learning Labs

Since 2018, Heart of America has partnered with Verizon to create Verizon Innovative Learning (VIL) Labs, providing renewed space and innovative technology, in under-resourced schools across the country. According to Verizon students who participated in Years 1 and 2 of the Verizon Innovative Learning Lab Program report that as a result of the program: 48% would like a job that uses technology, 49% are more interested in attending college, 45% are more interested in technology careers and 73% say that learning is more interesting. Since 2019, Heart of America has also consulted with Verizon as experts in the development of their Community Labs in four markets across the country. This partnership includes, physical space assessment, planning and design, procurement, and renovation guidance.

Trinity Basin Preparatory in Mesquite, Texas engaged Heart of America to design and outfit several innovative learning environments in their brand new campus serving under-resourced students. This unique ground-up partnership included the design of Classrooms, Support Rooms, Music and Art Classrooms, the Library, Main Entryway, a Meditation Room, and a Multi-Purpose Innovative Learning Room. The school surpassed their goal to **stock library shelves with 15,000 titles**. 2020 enrollment welcomed nearly 350 students in grades PK through 3rd and 6th grade and **will eventually serve 1,000 students** in PK3 through 8th grade. Through the pandemic, this campus had more students seeking in-person learning than any other campus district-wide.

The Westport Homes Boys & Girls Club in Baltimore, Maryland heeded the call for a space where first responders and healthcare workers could bring their children. The new, COVID-mindful design of the Tech Lab included a digital studio and lounge for **nearly 100 students** to test ideas, collaborate, and complete homework. The makeover was made possible through a partnership among Heart of America, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore, the Housing Authority of Baltimore City, and Under Armour.



FUNDRAISING

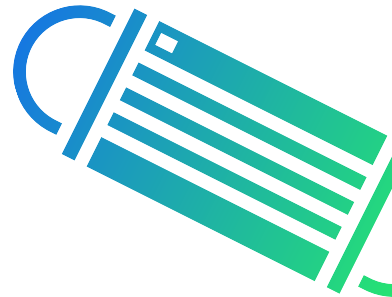


Target Circle

Heart of America was a Target Circle featured nonprofit from July through September 2020 where guests earned votes with every eligible purchase. Heart of America received **more than 3.1 million votes** across the U.S. to help address educational inequities, especially during COVID closures. The partnership provided 111,479 students and their families with books, school supplies, laptops, notebooks, and physical fitness equipment to support all forms of learning.

Back to School Bingo

Friends and family from school district leaders to students and their families joined Heart of America in September for an evening of laughs and lots of bingo as a virtual game night. Announcer Chuck Cureau led as Master of Games and shared stories of Heart of America's impact – **185 participants** helped raise money for COVID-response Education Packs.



Crayola SchoolMaskPacks

Heart of America also partnered with Crayola and SchoolMaskPack. For every purchase, customers could vote for Heart of America as one of three featured nonprofits supporting students, families and educators during the pandemic. With these funds, Heart of America was able to provide education, art and school supplies to students during distance-learning.

Individual Donors

Individual donors from coast to coast joined Heart of America in helping to deliver education packs to students displaced by pandemic closures. Heart of America's individual donors skyrocketed and more than **170 donors** directly supported one of COVID's hardest-hit areas, the Navajo Nation and surrounding Native American communities.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following corporate, foundation, and business sponsors have supported and helped to make Heart of America's work possible in 2020.

3M Foundation
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Crayola SchoolMaskPacks
Cureau II Household*
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