Community organizations made sure residents were aided

BY ABRAMIAN GAJIAN

The shutdown caused by the pandemic did not stop several community leaders from reaching out and going beyond their means to help their community. From providing local immigration services to yoga classes, community organizations made sure residents were taken care of one way or another.

MUJER has been a critical organization working to ensure that everyone has access to help. Regardless of legal status, those who need assistance can access the organization's help without fear.

Ms. Cohen said the roughly 100 participants who take online classes every week, “Not only are we giving hope to people from around the US can also join.”

At this time, she says, “It’s too dangerous to head out to in-person therapy sessions or exercise classes for residents with disabilities, who can be very vulnerable to Covid-19.”

“Programs are geared towards people with disabilities but it’s not exclusive if a family member wants to join in.”

The Sabrina Cohen Foundation is working hard to develop a three-story facility at 53rd Street and Collins Avenue. The full-service building would include a rooftop pool with state-of-the-art technology and robotics labs.

“Right now, we are in phase one of fundraising with a milestone to raise $2.5 million by the summer of next year,” she said of the $10 million development project. “We are excited to be trailblazers and give this kind of services, like yoga and exercise, to people with disabilities can have a permanent beach access and enjoy it.”

First responders and their supporters faced dangers squarely

BY ABRAMIAN GAJIAN

At times when people were confused and afraid of what the coronavirus would bring, first responders and major community-based organizations raced straight into danger and faced the significant impact the pandemic would eventually right.

Right before Coral Cables Fire Department Captain and newly named Infectious Disease Control Officer Daniel Amador had a home-bound Covid-19 testing site, Miami Beach had one in place under the direction of Infectious Disease Control Officer and EMS Manager Salvatore Frosceno, who became his main resource and mentor, giving him all the weapons needed to make his job easier.

“He’s somebody you instantly feel comfortable around. If you have a hard day, you don’t feel like you’re asking a dumb question, which makes that interaction much more welcome,” Capt. Amador said.

After becoming a firefighter over 32 years ago and a registered nurse during his respected career, Mr. Frosceno said he always had a compassion to help and save lives.

“When the pandemic first hit, we didn’t have a handbook to go back on to tell us exactly what we should do. This has been a dynamic thing that quickly evolves and changes every day,” Mr. Frosceno said. “We needed to be up to date with Covid-19 testing because some of these families are afraid to venture out.”

Ms. Rivera said, “It was no surprise to me that it’s his responsibility to teach the others.”

“Capt. Amador is our new generation and it’s our responsibility as leaders to pass on our knowledge. This pandemic has really pushed us hard to new learning curves and lessons along with the latest science,” he said.

Fana Holtz, president of Fana Holtz Foundation and benefactor of Holtz Children’s Hospital at Jackson Memorial Hospital, has always admired how committed Matthew Whitman Lazenby, president and CEO of Whitman Family Development, which created Bal Harbour Shops, has been and made the Bal Harbour Shops site available at no cost to be used as a Covid-19 testing site, she said.

“Matthew’s efforts have no doubt helped many in our community get through this difficult time,” she said.

“We recognized that in addition to the critical needs in local health facilities, there was a significant mental health concern with anxiety and separation,” she said. “It was a great way to celebrate the resilience of the company to find a way to support our faith leaders.”

Whitman Family Bal Harbour Foundation contributed a total of $750,000 to three community organizations so they could help families in need during the Covid-19 crisis. Benefiting organizations were St. Joseph Catholic Church, the Shal Jewish Community Center, and Church by the Sea. The family also allowed for the set-up of a Covid-19 testing operations at the Bal Harbour site for one month, while it was temporarily shut down, at no cost. The foundation purchased the tents and materials necessary for the Covid-19 crisis.