

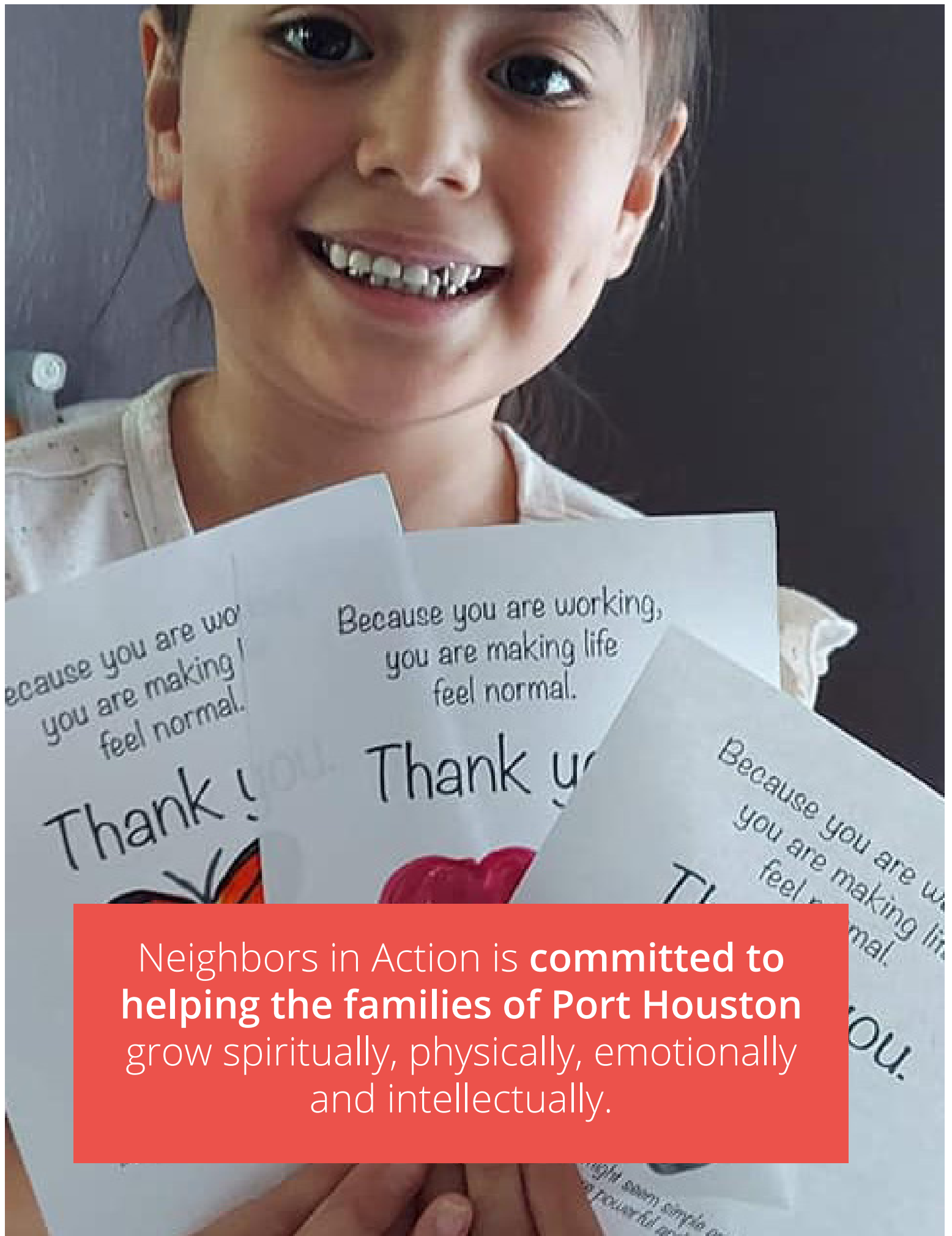


# NEIGHBORS IN ACTION ANNUAL REPORT

—2020—



EMPOWERING  
CHILDREN  
AND FAMILIES



Neighbors in Action is **committed to helping the families of Port Houston** grow spiritually, physically, emotionally and intellectually.



# NEIGHBORS IN ACTION ANNUAL REPORT

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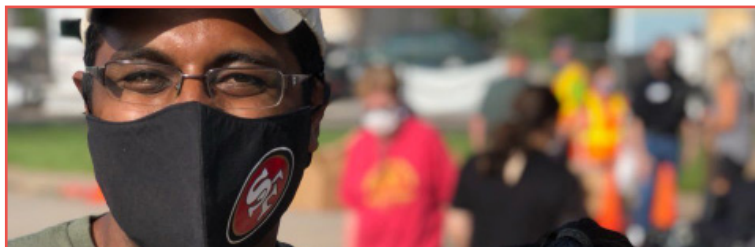
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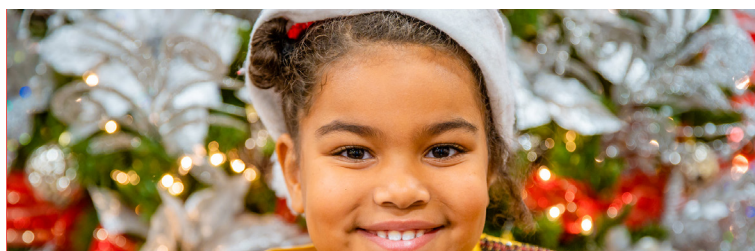
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## Letter of the Director



**Kathrin Meier**

Executive Director

**At the beginning of 2020, Neighbors in Action was suddenly faced with a pandemic that has taken a horrific toll on our Port Houston community, with the most vulnerable disproportionately affected. So many of our families have lost employment, lost their homes, and haven't enough to eat. Additionally, many are deeply frightened and depressed, and several have even lost loved ones due to COVID-19. What was God calling us to do in a time of social distancing and quarantines?**

After the initial shock, we rolled up our sleeves and got to work, developing new ways of doing ministry and interacting with the many children, youth and adults we consider family. I have been so proud of my staff and volunteers for adjusting to Zoom Bible studies, drive-way spiritual counseling, outdoor worship, safe-distance home visits, weekly food distribution events and drive-thru special events. A special blessing was the partnership with the Harris County COVID-19 Relief Fund that allowed us to provide stimulus checks for 89 of the most vulnerable families in our neighborhood. Due to several emergency assistance grants, we were able to double our budget in 2020.

While the delivery of services has radically changed, we remain committed to doing God's work in Port Houston. I trust deeply in God's providence that we will continue to discover surprising ways to meet unimaginable challenges! Please continue to pray and support us and know that you are treasured partners in this sacred work.



**Kathrin Meier**

What was God calling us to do in a time of social distancing and quarantines?





## Letter from the Capital Campaign Committee Co-Chair

In Haiti there is a proverb, "Dèyè mòn gen mòn," meaning, "beyond mountains there are mountains." Tracy Kidder used the translation in the title of his biography of Dr. Paul Farmer, founder of Partners in Health. Kidder says this about the phrase: "Haitians use the phrase in two different ways: to say that there's no end to obstacles, and also to say that there's no end to opportunities."

Little did we know that this proverb would apply to our Capital Campaign and construction of a new Neighborhood Center for Neighbors in Action. I know this is supposed to be the Annual Report for 2020, but I have to share some good and breaking news from 2021: We signed a construction contract in January and we broke ground in February. =If= we have no further disruptions due to economic crises, weather events, or pandemics, we =could= occupy the building in time for the beginning of school in Q3 of 2021. It brings us great joy to imagine a world where vaccinations have made it safe to resume our programming with the Port Houston community in a brand new, fit for purpose facility.

To recap 2020, we began the year having raised enough money to proceed confidently with construction. We also had in hand a pledge from the Mabee Foundation of an additional \$100,000 to be paid when construction began. We were well into the permitting process when Covid19 hit in March. The city's Permitting Office and our architects, engineers, and consultants all transitioned to working remotely. Additional complicating factors were the unique purpose and location of

our facility: a building to serve the community, with capacity for 100 people, on a residential street across the street from a city park. Our location is perfect for our mission but raised some concerns during the permitting review. Eventually all questions were resolved and we received the permit in December. During 2020 we also selected a contractor with a long and successful relationship with our architects and who also comes highly recommended for his work with churches and non-profits, including completing projects on time and under budget. Also, the Mabee Foundation has graciously extended payment of their pledge into 2021.

As construction begins, we are entering a period of strategic planning to ensure that we are ready to utilize the building to its fullest potential. As the proverb reminds us, in addition to the obstacles, we have witnessed no end to opportunities in our years in Port Houston with new opportunities created in 2020 by the pandemic and subsequent recovery in 2021. Please "stay tuned" as we make plans for this new chapter for NIA and Port Houston. Additional gifts from our donors will only increase the impact of their past gifts to the Capital Campaign.

Thank you for your support and your prayers. Together we are building Neighbors in Action!



**Don Macune**



## Our Mission is To Help The Neighborhood of Port Houston Grow ... **Spiritually** – In Relationship With God

Neighbors in Action aims to support the families of Port Houston in their relationship with God. While we traditionally offer weekly Bible studies and worship times for children, teenagers, and adults, as well as VBS and faith-based summer camps, we were creative in finding new ways of ministry in 2020. We stayed connected with our children, teens and parents through weekly Zoom Bible studies, Facebook live workshops, one-on-one driveway visits, and virtual VBS and Christian Arts Academy summer camps. Our staff delivered weekly crafts and supplies packages to each child's house, so the children could follow the programs from home. Our women's group met on Zoom until September, when we switched to a safe-distance, outdoor gathering format in the neighborhood park. Our youth group also participated in several service projects, such as food distributions and flu shot events. Our staff has gone out of their way to facilitate safe-distance home visits, backyard spiritual direction, and prayer groups over the phone.

"I am so thankful that NIA has continued all its programs since COVID-19 hit! My children have felt very loved in this time of social distancing."

Divina Z.



One-on-one time and small groups would be beneficial to these children so deeper connections could be made between the children and the adults and more emphasis can be put on their particular needs.

Neighbors in Action aims to support the families of Port Houston in their relationship with God.

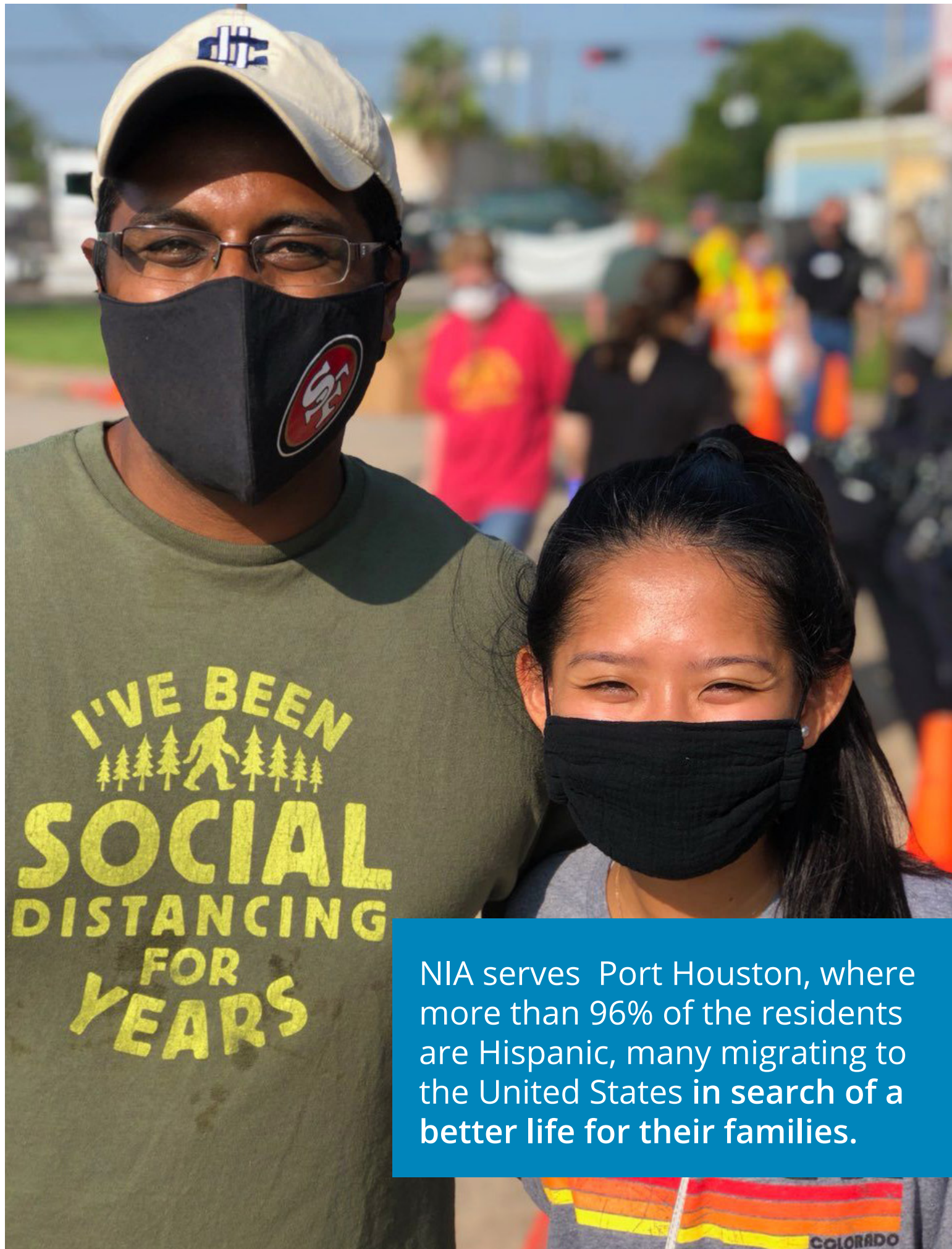




"I am so grateful for the women's prayer group. I have had such a rough year. My husband was deported, and I am left with five children. My teenage son tried to commit suicide earlier this year, and I have been in so much pain because of it. We also barely make ends meet every month because my son and I lost our jobs when COVID started, and we were evicted, too. But coming to the women's prayer group in the park has given me new strength and courage. God is always there to look out for me, and I feel so loved and welcome by the other women. I feel I can share my struggles, and we pray together."

Osiris V.





NIA serves Port Houston, where more than 96% of the residents are Hispanic, many migrating to the United States in search of a better life for their families.

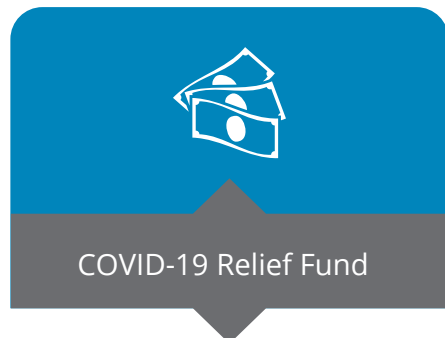


# Physically

## In Meeting Basic Needs Such As Food And Shelter

"My name is Maribel Rodriguez, and my family is originally from Honduras, where my husband and I were police officers fighting against gang violence. We have two children, and just received our permanent residency after we applied for political asylum five years ago due to death threats we received in Honduras on a constant basis for being police officers. My husband has been having severe mental health issues after being detained in a Texas immigration detention center for ten months, where he was abused in various ways. This pandemic has made his mental health worse, because his hours at work were reduced by a lot, so he hasn't been seeing his doctors on a regular basis because we hadn't been able to pay for all the appointments with his psychologist and psychiatrist. He has been worrying about bills and rent, and those stress factors have worsened his condition also. That is why I want to thank Neighbors in Action so much for the emergency assistance we have received. My husband has been able to get the medical help he needs, and we were able to pay rent. My family and I are involved as volunteers to give back some of the blessings we have received."

Maribel Rodriguez – Community Volunteer and NIA Board Member



While Neighbors in Action traditionally focuses on empowerment programs, we shifted our focus to meeting basic needs in this time of crisis. Many Port Houston families have struggled immensely to make ends meet. Port Houston has been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, not only in number of cases, but also with regards to job loss, food insecurity and eviction threats. Thanks to God's providence, Neighbors in Action was chosen as one of 44 partner organizations for the Harris County COVID-19 Relief Fund, and we were able to provide stimulus checks for 89 families, with a total of \$125,000. We also received a total of \$75,000 from the Greater Houston Community Foundation, the Texas Methodist Foundation, the Junior League, and First Methodist Missions to assist more than 100 families with rent, medical expenses, funeral costs, and food. In addition, we had weekly food distribution events for 50 families each, as well several large food distributions for more than 300 families each. We also hosted a free flu shot event. Our drive-thru Thanksgiving Feast served more than 350 families. Neighbors in Action organized Drive Thru Christmas parties for the 135 children and youth involved in our programs. We also connected some newly arrived families from Central America with sponsors who helped them get settled with basic things such as clothes, food, toiletries, and furniture.

# Emotionally

## By Developing Self-Esteem and Providing Support

Emotional support is part of our everyday programs. Some children who attend Neighbors in Action have undergone severe trauma in their lives, such as the violence in their countries of origin, a deported parent, and more. The pandemic has brought additional trauma, such as evictions, extreme food insecurity, or being constrained to small apartments during stay-at-home orders and school closures. Our staff and volunteers worked together to provide a loving and safe environment for everyone and followed up with one-on-one phone calls and visits. In a similar way, the Neighbors in Action youth group benefited from weekly small groups that offered a safe space, where teens shared about their struggles at home, school, dating and sexuality. Our moms received much of their emotional support from their peers in the moms' group (virtually and in-person), as well as many one-on-one meetings with staff.

We also continued to focus on developing leadership skills. In the beginning of 2020, we trained 4 teenage volunteers to be

leaders at our programs for children from Pre-K through 5th grade. Six NIA moms are currently part of the NIA leadership team. They get together weekly on Zoom to receive leadership training, discuss ideas, programs and events with our staff. Two of the moms also serve on the board.

"My husband is currently in an immigration detention center. He was pulled over on his way to work because one of the car's taillights wasn't working. I don't know if he will be deported, and I have fallen into depression. My 4-year old son cries every day, asking for his daddy. It was the saddest Christmas I ever had. My heart is breaking for my son, and I don't know how to comfort him. I am so grateful for everyone at NIA who calls to check in on me, who cares for my little baby, bringing him gifts and trying to be there for him when he is sad. Thank you so much for caring about our family and supporting us emotionally in this terrible time."

J. G.



Children, from 3rd to 5th grade, learn about Jesus through worship, prayer, games, crafts and age appropriate lessons.





More than 98% of the students of Elementary School qualify as economically disadvantaged, receive free or reduced lunch.

# Intellectually Through Education

Before COVID-19 stopped all in-person programming, we had started an afterschool arts club sponsored by City Connections (which is funded in part by the City of Houston, CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education). After the stay-at-home order in March, we continued the club online, delivering the supplies to each child.

We were also able to offer a cooking class camp during summer, thanks to youth volunteer who raised enough funds to not only buy all the groceries for each participant and deliver them to every house, but also to purchase Chromebooks for all children so they could participate in the class. In addition, Neighbors in Action hosted a two-week online Arts Academy for 35 children, delivering the supply bags to each child's home.

In September, we started offering a safe-distance outdoor learning center in the mornings for students of Port Houston Elementary and Holland Middle School. Once HISD opened its schools mid-October, we moved to an after-school outdoor learning center for 24 children, helping them to catch up on homework and months of missed schooling. We also provided school supplies for all families who participated in NIA programming.







# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

**10**  
**FAMILIES**

10 families were saved from eviction.

**2,500**  
**LUNCHES**

2,500 sack lunches provided during summer months

**150**  
**VOLUNTEERS**

150 people volunteered throughout the year.

\$225,000 in COVID-19 financial assistance  
for more than 250 families



**180** PEOPLE  
RECEIVED FREE FLU SHOTS

PROVIDED

**2,500**

GROCERY/PRODUCE/CARE PACKAGES



400 guests attended  
the Drive-Thru  
Thanksgiving Feast



160 guests attended  
the Drive-Thru  
Christmas Parties



**35** CHILDREN PARTICIPATED  
IN OUR VIRTUAL ARTS ACADEMY  
AND VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



**25** WOMEN PARTICIPATED IN OUR  
NIA MOMS PRAYER GROUP ON ZOOM/OUTDOOR  
IN-PERSON MEETINGS EVERY WEEK



**50** RECEIVED FAMILIES  
**SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

**facebook**  
**LIVE**

**70** CHILDREN AND YOUTH PARTICIPATED IN OUR  
WEEKLY ZOOM AND FACEBOOK LIVE PROGRAMMING





# Volunteers and Partners

We could not do what we do without our amazing and committed volunteers! In 2020, volunteers worked a total of 2,000 hours, worth \$30,000. Thank you to all who come faithfully every week to build up relationships with our children, teenagers and parents!

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS 2020

AA Diesel  
Abrego Properties  
Amigo Trucking  
Communities in School  
Connor's Gas and Diesel  
Don Chile Restaurant  
Councilwoman Karla Cisneros  
Constable Adrian Garcia (Precinct 2)  
State Representative Ana Hernandez  
Harris County  
Houston Dynamo  
Houston Food Bank  
Pedro Morales  
Palletized Trucking  
Port Houston Elementary School  
Port of Houston Authority  
Sam's Body Shop  
Supermercado SuKsa // El Rey  
Constable Silvia Trevino (Precinct 6)

## VOLUNTEER GROUPS IN 2020

Cavemen Cookers  
First Methodist Houston  
Girl Scout Troops  
Grace Fellowship  
Harvest UMC  
Lakewood UMC  
Kingwood UMC  
Memorial Drive UMC  
Redeemer UMC  
St. Peter's UMC both campuses

*Thank  
you!*



“Working with Neighbors in Action has single-handedly been one of the greatest gifts I’ve ever received. I had no idea five years ago that I would be rooting myself within a community so committed to loving their neighbor well that it would fundamentally change the way I see the world. I remember walking into a room full of rowdy kids that very first Monday, thinking I didn’t stand a chance. I thought I would be the outsider, having to prove myself to a gaggle of children. It became evident very quickly that that wasn’t how things worked around here. It took all of five minutes before I was a human jungle gym and the rest was history.

Port Houston, and NIA have become holy ground to me. Turning onto Flaxman ignites a flame in my soul. No matter what my week has been like, no matter how burdened or beat up I am by life’s circumstances, the moment I walk through the door at Neighbors, things change. A hug, a high five, a game of football, a dance party, an untied shoe, these are moments where I see Jesus clearly, and they happen all the time at NIA. I am beyond grateful that I stumbled upon the treasure of this community. It makes me think of Jesus’ parable in Matthew 13:44, “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field,” The kids and families at NIA are that treasure and I couldn’t imagine life without them.”

**Nick Uselton, Volunteer**



# Financial Statements

**REVENUES**  
**\$582,001.56**



Churches (24%)
  Individuals (21%)
  Businesse (1%)
  Harris County & City of Houston (23%)
  Foundations (31%)

**EXPENSES**  
**\$493,349.74**



Direct Emergency Assistance (49%)
  Administrative Expenses (9%)
  Fundraising (3%)
  Programs (39%)

## Capital Campaign


**\$1,240,983.47**  
 NIA Capital Capital

Since the beginning of the capital campaign, NIA has raised a total of \$1,240,983.47 in gifts, and had spent \$252,521.47 on the purchase of the property, architect and civil engineer fees, lot maintenance, etc. as of December 31, 2020.

## Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

In April 2020, NIA received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan of \$31,884.00 through the CARES Act. The PPP provided loans to help businesses and non-profits keep their workforce employed during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. NIA is currently applying for loan forgiveness.





Adult educational classes focusing on financial literacy, self-esteem, parenting, health and nutrition.





# Donors in 2020

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

### \$15,000 +

Anheuser Busch Foundation

### \$10,000 - \$14,999

Russell and Christie Harrison

### \$1,000 - \$2,500

Dan Kristen and Jones

Abdul Kargbo and Kathrin Meier

Bill and Carol Marshall

### Up to \$1,000

Pat Bonner

David Brooks

Cynthia Compton

Bill Henderson

Jan Imig

Stephen and Jennifer Kirk

Andy and Deborah Nixon

Garrett Nondorf

Rachel Paulson

Ellen Rodriguez

James and Lela Windham

## IN-KIND DONATIONS \$54,740.16

AA Diesel

Danny Abrego - Abrego Properties

Mary Ellen Abshire

Debbie Bridges

Caveman Cookers

DiMare Produce

First Methodist Houston

Esther Forbus

Melissa Garza

Grace Fellowship Church

Donna Gyles

Harris County

Shirley Hartmann and Girl Scout Troop

Houston Food Bank

Sally Hrebenar

Lakewood United Methodist

Don Macune

Ben and Jen McClure

Memorial Drive United Methodist

Pedro Morales

Edie Oguynn

Phillip and Tamir Pena

Port Houston Authority

Port Houston Elementary

Nydia Quant

Redeemer United Methodist

Joe and Sandra Roberson

Society of St. Stephen, Kingwood UMC

St. Peter's United Methodist

Supermercado Suksa

Mona Thomas

Jan Whitehead

Milton Hanks

Harris County Department  
of Education

The Hildebrand Foundation

Texas Methodist Foundation

### \$2,500 - \$4,999

David Blockhus

City of Houston Foundation

Ruthie Estes

Michael and Donna Farr

Rachel Gummattira

The Junior League Of Houston

Lakewood United Methodist Church

Don and Mary Julia Macune

McClure Converted

Sandy Miller

St. Paul's Foundation

Union Pacific Foundation

West University United

Methodist Church

## PROGRAM DONORS

### \$100,000 +

Harris County COVID-19

Relief Fund

### \$50,000 - \$99,999

First Methodist Houston

Greater Houston Community  
Foundation

The Gugenheim Family Foundation

Permanent Endowment Fund of Moody  
Memorial FUMC

### \$25,000 - \$49,999

David Weekley Family Foundation

Helm Foundation

Kurt and Marlene Nondorf

### \$5,000 - \$10,000

Clayton and Laura Boldt

Christ The Servant

Lutheran Church

### \$1,000 - \$2,499

Bill and Pattie Allen

Donald Ast

Jack Aulick

Judy Bowers

John Esquivel

Exxonmobil Foundation

FUMC Open Door Class

Jesus Gonzalez

John and Terri Gugenheim

Michael Hrebenar

Sarah Hrebenar

Aaron and Bonnie Jones

Terry Marriott

Bill and Carol Marshall

Larry and Kathryn Medford

Memorial Drive UMC

Joel and Teresa Montgomery

Network for Good (Facebook  
Fundraisers)

Diane O'Brien

Philip and Tamir Pena  
Sandra Stevens  
Clayton Turks  
Nick Uselton  
Eric Viehman and Nancy Jenkins  
Lawrence Walton  
Byrom Wehner  
Steve and Karen Wende  
Tracy Wyman

#### **\$500 - \$999**

AA Diesel Truck  
Jerry and Molly Abshire  
Alpha and Omega SS Class  
Richard Brown  
Oscar and Linda Civallero  
Vera Dunlop  
Glenda Flores  
Shirley Hartmann  
Carolyn Gray  
Abdul Kargbo and Kathrin Meier  
Treva Kigar  
Margaret Lam  
Logos SS Class  
McClure Charitable Fund  
James McGrew  
Bethany Miller  
Kevin and Jane O'Brien  
Harry and Mari Okabayashi  
Bishale Patel  
Alan and Evelyn Radwanski  
Micah and JoAnn Siesennop  
Karen Wilson  
Jan Whitehead

#### **Up to \$500**

Catherine Airola  
Jeff and Laura Aldis  
Margaret Allen  
Inri and Yesly Antu  
Donald Ast  
Bible Discovery SS Class  
Cynthia Blackburn  
Sophia Boateng  
Patricia Bonner

Kermit and Linda Brence  
Walter Buehler  
David Brooks  
Sharon Brown  
Yolanda Caldwell  
Jennifer Coats  
Clayton Compton  
Cynthia Compton  
Valerie Condon  
Conner's Gas and Diesel  
Sherry Coward  
Brook Crichton  
Divas Class  
George Elam  
John Erwin  
Scott and Maryann Fanty  
Patrick and Erin Fisk  
Raymond Garcia  
Denver Gartner  
Chris George  
Cathie Gittleman  
Laura Griffenberg  
Donna Gyles  
Lakisha Hayes  
Stacey Hansen  
William Harris  
Russell and Christie Harrison  
Linda Hazelip  
Bill and Jackie Henderson  
Rebecca Holland  
Harry and Pam Horne  
Houston Arts Alliance  
M Hovind  
Allison Hoybach  
Kelly Hrebenar  
Dawn Hurst  
Chris and Marcie Hysinger  
Jan Imig  
Kathleen Irving  
Joya Inc  
Michael Kenny  
Karen Kent  
Albert Kidd  
Howard Kidd  
Tina Kirsch  
Tom and Mary Lambrecht

Brent Larsen  
Linda Macdougall  
Mary Maiden  
Donnie Martin  
Leslie Massy  
Vivek Massy  
Jeff and Alexis McCarty  
Ben and Jen McClure  
Thomas and Judy McGowan  
Guy Meaders  
Sarah Montgomery  
Nancy Moore  
Linda Morgan  
Morris Export Services  
Natural Stone Inc  
Network Good  
Andy and Deborah Nixon  
Edie O'Guynn  
Peter and Jo Linda Papadakis  
Jim and Karen Park  
Robert and Janice Reynolds  
Lyle Riggs  
Beatriz Riva-Palacio  
Joe and Sandra Roberson  
Tara Roy  
Abel Rojas  
James Roper  
Jean Rupert  
Sam's Body Shop, Inc  
Morgan Sanders  
Darleen Schauer  
Ruby Schell  
Reed Schmidt  
Ward and Iris Ann Schmidt  
Shell Oil Company Foundation  
Spindrift Development LP  
Janis Stevenson  
St. Peter's UMC  
Carol Tardiff  
Bonnie Tooley  
Benjamin Unger  
Hope Webber  
Charles Werlla  
Mark Wimberly  
C.M. Wittman  
Wesley Wright





## Mission Statement

Neighbors in Action is committed to helping the neighborhood of Port Houston grow Spiritually: in relationship with God; Physically: in meeting basic needs; Emotionally: by developing self-esteem; and Intellectually: through education in literacy, language, and technology, resulting in a **community that is self-sufficient and outreach-focused.**



### 2021 Board of Directors

#### Chair

Bill Marshall  
bmarshall@neighborsinaction.com

Pattie Allen

Linda Civallero

Don Macune

Ben McClure

Luz Mendoza Olivares

Deborah Nixon

Marlene Nondorf

Maribel Rodriguez

Ward Schmidt

Laura Wayne



### Capital Campaign

#### Capital Campaign Chair

Don Macune  
dmacune@yahoo.com

#### Capital-Campaign Co-Chair

Marlene Nondorf

## Neighbors in Action Staff

#### Executive Director

Kathrin Meier  
kmeier@neighborsinaction.com

#### Program Assistant

Diana Carrasco  
dcarrasco@neighborsinaction.com

#### Administrative Coordinator

Mariana Castillo  
mcastillo@neighborsinaction.com

#### Children and Family Coordinator

Nydia Quant  
nquant@neighborsinaction.com

#### Women's and Family Minister

Rev. Sara Reyes  
sreyes@neighborsinaction.com

#### Program Director/Special Events

Sandra Roberson  
sroberson@neighborsinaction.com

#### Youth Coordinator

Taylor Woodruff  
twoodruff@neighborsinaction.com





## NEIGHBORS IN ACTION, INC.

7927 Flaxman Street  
Houston, TX 77029

