From All of Us
Care in Times of Crisis

We hope you are safe and well. COVID-19 is affecting everyone — including our Hanna community near and far — and our thoughts and prayers are with you. Hanna is a safe haven for kids who have experienced unimaginable trauma. They come to our campus because they need help. They need treatment, they need a new environment and they need the skills necessary to change the trajectory of their life.

In these unprecedented times, our kids are facing new and different challenges. When the mandatory shelter in place order came into effect on March 19th, most of our students were at home — but for some of our students, Hanna is the only home they know. The doors at Hanna will remain open to any youth who needs us. Currently, our staff are onsite sheltering in place with the kids on campus. And we are working tirelessly with those who are at home to transition them to an online learning platform and virtual counseling services.

At Hanna we are funded solely on philanthropy, and in times like these we are so thankful for the support of our donors. Because of you, we’ve been able to provide a community, a safe place and a home to students who need us. We continue to deliver programs and services remotely and have set up a fund to support those efforts. We are so thankful to be working through this with all of Hanna’s amazing teachers, counselors, alumni, students and families.

Right now, we are all taking important steps to protect ourselves from the COVID-19 virus. We’re washing our hands, sheltering at home and physically distancing ourselves from others. We must also take steps to protect ourselves from the other impacts produced by the pandemic — the fear of the illness, the worry we feel for our loved ones and community, the disruption to our daily routines and the loneliness that may come from shelter-in-place. These stresses and anxiety have real effects on our minds and our bodies, so we’d like to offer a few tips to care for your mental health and wellbeing during this time.

Thank you to all who attended — and to all of our community partners for sponsoring this event.

The Summit team has set dates for the 2021 conference: January 27-29, 2021.

Virtual or in person to be determined.
A Day in the Life of a Youth Counselor at Hanna During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The youth counselors at Hanna are the unsung heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic in our world. Although the number of kids on campus during this time has been limited, they’ve been working to meet the needs of Hanna students around the clock.

Emily Alexander has worked as a youth counselor since 2015. A typical day for Emily and her team means getting the boys up in the morning, supporting them through a series of regular day-to-day activities, and helping them manage life in the cottages.

“Some of our kids need to learn basics like making a bed in the morning, the importance of cooking and eating healthy meals, navigating social situations and part time jobs — but it’s watching them interact with one another and working to improve those skills that really impacts me. It’s the little wins that really make the biggest impact on me.”

During COVID-19, the youth counselors have had an extra element added to their jobs. They are helping kids who call Hanna their home — all the while keeping 6 feet of distance between themselves and the kids.

“We’ve had to get creative — some days it’s going for a walk while the kids ride their bikes or virtually tutoring the kids to support their school work and academics.”

It’s different to say the least, but we are so thankful for our youth counselors who are at Hanna making sure the kids we have on campus are safe, cared for and continuing to grow.

To the unsung heroes at Hanna: thank you!

CLASS OF 2020

At this time of year, our seniors are usually starting the process of transitioning to life outside of Hanna — some heading to college or trade schools, some to full-time work and others to the military.

But for our seniors this year, the transition will be bittersweet. They will miss out on some of the celebrations surrounding graduation, but we will have them all back to campus as soon as it’s safe to walk across the stage to get their diplomas. Some of these students are the first in their family to graduate from high school, and this has been a dream for them and for their families.

As soon as we can, we will share a picture of our 2020 graduating class. But until then, here are a few images of the Class of 2020.

Meet Gabe
A Hanna Student Story

Gabe’s senior year at Hanna has been unlike anything he could have ever imagined.

For many students at Hanna, Spring Break is a week back at home with family and friends. While most of his classmates had left campus for the week, Gabe didn’t have that option — he was at Hanna, something he couldn’t have imagined years ago when he was struggling to find his way. Instead of welcoming his classmates back at the end of break, shelter in place orders went into effect. Gabe, already settled in at Hanna, found himself on a quiet campus with counselors and other residential staff.

When asked to tell his story, Gabe starts at the beginning — with his Mom, who passed away when he was 7 years old after a lengthy battle with cancer. The sadness overtook Gabe and he struggled with the pain and grief that comes along with losing a parent.

By the time he got to middle school Gabe was smoking marijuana and his grades were a problem. “I just didn’t care. I had always been told that I was bright, but I had never had to work for anything and I just didn’t try.” When Gabe realized that his hopes for college were slipping away he decided to make a change.

“I wanted to get into Hanna but it was late in the school year and I had to wait until the end of summer to get in.”

Since then Gabe has become one of Hanna’s true success stories. He’s turned his life around and is set to graduate this year with excellent grades and he’s excited about the future.

“At the beginning of the year I didn’t even know what I wanted to do, but it is clear now that I not only want to further my education, but I also want to set myself up to do better in life after school.” When Gabe goes to college he hopes to study kinesiology.

We know when he graduates this summer that he will go on to do amazing things. Most of this success is due to the fact that Gabe saw a better life for himself and worked at it — but this may not have been possible without the support of our donors at Hanna. Hanna is funded completely through philanthropy. And for students like Gabe, that has made all the difference in the world.

A CHANGE TO OUR FUNDRAISING PLAN

With the cancellation of this year’s Evening with the All-Stars Gala (scheduled for April 18th), our focus has shifted from planning a beloved event to finding new and creative ways to raise funds for the kids and communities we serve.

Introducing Hanna’s Fund-A-Need Campaign — a virtual fundraising campaign to raise $500,000 for Hanna Boys Center to continue providing vital services for our kids, alumni and community. We serve a vulnerable population that is experiencing exceptional hardship from COVID-19.

If you’d like to contribute to Hanna, please do so by visiting our website at hannacenter.org or filling out and returning the attached donation form.