Our office at 330 Lynnway might be physically closed, but NAAM is very much still open. We have been working diligently from home to ensure that our refugee and immigrant clients continue to receive the services they need and deserve. Here are some things we have been up to this month:

**Case Management & Employment:**
As the summer comes to an end and we are a full two months into phase three of Massachusetts’ reopening plan, we are happy to see clients returning to work in various fields. Over the past few weeks, some clients have returned to their jobs at Logan Airport and others have found new employment as production workers, health care workers and delivery drivers. As has been the case since phase one of the re-opening, the local big box stores and supermarkets continue to post positions, and there are restaurants and other product delivery services that are looking for delivery drivers.

In addition, the local staffing agencies are advertising more new positions in production and sanitation, as some of the local production companies that have traditionally employed our clients are now heading into their busy seasons. In addition to monitoring the evolving employment landscape and helping clients with job applications and interviews, we will continue to assist clients with managing their unemployment claims and making the weekly benefit requests. As always, please reach out to Will, Lynne, Natasha or Venette if you need help with an unemployment claim or submitting a job application, help getting an appointment with the RMV for any reason, would like to join one of NAC's classes, or need another type of assistance.

**Citizenship Services:**
Another session of citizenship classes started on August 3rd. The students work in two classes. In each class are both new students and students from previous sessions who come to class to keep practicing while they are waiting for next steps. We have approximately 30 students in two classes. Each class has volunteers to work with the students on individual concerns. Our biggest excitement was getting Cecilia ready for her interview on September 3rd. The other students and the volunteers kept her practicing every day. (Spoiler: she passed with flying colors!) Also, Morris Kuyateh became NAAM's newest citizen, with an August 24th Oath Ceremony.

Citizenship classes covered the following topics: Geography, The American Flag, Three Branches of Government, and The Senate and Congress. Students are connecting from their living rooms, kitchens, and even their cars! This allows them some quiet time away from the kids. Breakout rooms are working well. Our tutors are working with several students on the 100 civics questions and the N-400 questions. Breakout rooms are the perfect setting for one-on-one tutoring and small group sessions. We never run out of space or seats. Citizenship students are from all corners of the world including Morocco, Dominican Republic, Russia, Ukraine, Peru, Brazil, Ethiopia, Haiti, and Iraq. Michelle Guzman, a community organizer from Lynn, will be visiting the class in September and will talk about community involvement and empowerment through voting. She has helped many students fill out the 2020 Census.
Direct Help to Clients in Need:

- We continue delivering food boxes to more than fifty immigrant and refugee households weekly. Thanks to My Brother’s Table and the Food Project, each family received a great combination of fresh produce, protein, and other wonderful products every week. Our special heartfelt thank you to St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Marblehead, Reverend Clyde Elledge, for giving us a shelter in the church so we can continue packing food boxes despite the unpleasant surprises New England weather brought this summer. Our deepest endless gratitude goes to parishioners of the church who, without a moment of hesitation, give their time to deliver these boxes to the families, putting together bags of vegetables, baking the most delicious cookies, and to their tireless, smart, brave and mighty leader, Dulany Alexander. From the bottom of our hearts thank you, Kibrom Tewoldmedhin, Nadav and Yaniv Havusha, Allie Coppola, for being the most faithful, reliable and motivated food drivers!

- We would like to thank our generous contributors, United Way, Essex County Community Foundation and other private donors, for helping us provide financial support to our clients/students who were affected financially due to COVID-19. We used this funding to assist over four hundred people and over one hundred households pay their rents, utilities, food purchases, and other needs.

Lowell Office: The Lowell office has been open (3 days/week) in the month of August, due to the increased need of existing clients to get back to work after their unemployment amounts declined, but also due to a dramatic increase in new referrals. We have been taking careful precautions to avoid the spread of covid in the office. Clients must wear masks, use hand sanitizer, and sit at least 6 feet away. They use their own pen to sign documents, and I clean the chair, pen, and table each time after they leave. We are not allowing them into the room with donated clothes and toys. If the individual does not understand English very well, I wear a transparent face shield so they can see my mouth and facial expression, or else I use a mask.

Youth Program: Our virtual summer youth program wrapped up successfully on August 21! Through the summer program, we served 70 students in grades K-12.

Elementary School Program
Our elementary school classes met Monday-Thursday mornings on Zoom. Students were in separate breakout rooms based on grade. Classes reviewed school year content, read the summer reading books, and did hands-on activities. Some highlights included:

- K/1st Grade – Ruth’s class did many crafts involving the stories they read. This included painting the Lorax, drawing a tree with monkeys in it, and making paper chains with their sight words written on each strip of paper.
• **2nd Grade** – Monica’s class learned about the scientific method. Their experiments included making slime, soaking an egg in vinegar, and making lava lamps. As a final project, the 2nd graders shared about their cultures.

• **3rd Grade** – Rachael’s class did a read aloud of Beverly Cleary’s Ramona and Beezus, which students greatly enjoyed. Students also spent the summer making a travel magazine about a location important to them.

• **4th Grade** – Sean’s class did a lot of math – reviewing old content and learning new concepts. Students also had a lot of fun playing Jeopardy games with each other.

• **5th Grade** – Paige’s class read the summer reading book, El Deafo, together. Through the story they learned about Deaf culture, American Sign Language, comics, and characterization. As a final project, students spent time working on their summer reading assignments.

**Teen Employment**

This summer we hired 9 teen staff members as part of our summer employment program. Teen staff acted as classroom assistants for the elementary school program. The staff also worked on goal setting, learned important job skills, and were given a presentation from the Attorney General’s Office about their rights as teen employees.

**Middle/High School Program**

Our teen program met Monday–Thursday afternoons. Students participated in three classes or activities each day. These included:

• **Reading** – Frances, Bobby, Harriet, and Rouaa led reading groups this summer. We had several middle school groups reading Home of the Brave, a high school group reading With the Fire on High, and a group of students who do not go to Lynn Public Schools reading Miles Morales: Straight out of Brooklyn. The middle school groups also had time to start working on their individual reading projects. Some of the projects included making a movie trailer, writing a poem, drawing a comic about the book, and writing paragraphs about the characters.

• **Storytelling** – Esther’s storytelling class focused on different forms of storytelling each week, including oral, written, comics, films, and video games.

• **Conversation** – Rouaa led a very popular conversation group. Topics of conversation included coronavirus, school reopening plans, sexism in the video game industry, police reform, and more.
- **Math** – Sean’s math class covered important foundation concepts like negative numbers, order of operations, and graphing linear equations.
- **Science/Cooking** – Reem and Bony led science experiments and cooking activities for students. Science experiments included planting basil seeds, extracting DNA from strawberries, and making models of dinosaur fossils. Cooking included yogurt parfaits, French toast, and tacos.
- **Art** - Katya led art on Tuesdays and Reem and Bony led art on Thursdays. Projects included painting, sketching, and virtual Pictionary.
- **English through Movies** – Anna taught an English through Movies class where students watched movies and learned vocabulary. One such movie was Despicable Me.
- **Girls’ Group** – Steph led a girls’ group. Topics included self-esteem, relationships, and puberty.

**Friday Activities**
On Fridays we did a mix of virtual and in-person activities. We played movies over Zoom on Friday mornings. Some picks included Zootopia, Frozen 2, and Mulan. We also did socially-distant outdoor activities, which included games and science experiments at the Neptune Boulevard Playground, a scavenger hunt at Lynn Woods, and swimming and sand castle building at Red Rock Park.

**Acknowledgements**
A big THANK YOU to….
- Our staff this summer: Anuragh, Sofiya, Britney, Zainab, Modestine, Akha, Kelly, Shaina, Hashim, Ruth, Monica, Rachael, Sean, Paige, Frances, Bobby, Harriet, Katya, Anna, Steph, Esther, Bony, Reem, and Rouaa. Without them, none of this would have been possible.
- Our coworkers at the NAC for referring many new families to us, helping with communication, and helping families get connected to the internet. Our students and their families! This summer was a new experience for all of us here at NAC and we are very grateful for everyone’s patience, support, and feedback.

**Future**
Lynn Public Schools begin on **September 16th** this year. Classes will be online until at least November. Students in grades 3-12 should pick up computers from the school if they have not already.

NAC Youth Program staff are taking a break, but we will be back to our virtual tutoring and activities when the school year begins!
CRES English Classes:

- **Dan’s class:** Students are studying English with the Voice of America “Let’s Learn English” program. Topics in August included grammar (nouns, regular and irregular verbs, present continuous and future tenses). Students also learned to speak English through: “News Word of the Day”, “English at the Movies”, and “English in a Minute”.

- **Gina’s class:** In August, we continued to focus on driving vocabulary and preparing for the road test. Three students took the Driver’s Permit test at home on-line with two passing and one failing. Along with practicing modal and phrasal verbs related to driving in order to understand spoken instructions, we also planned a post-COVID road trip to New Hampshire, maybe October 2021. We watched and discussed road test videos as well as driving tours of New Hampshire and Washington, DC where many would like to travel in the future. One student started a full-time job as a home health aide and had to leave our class. She’s very happy with her work and continues to check in via text.

- **Khara’s class:** My students are learning English through VOA (Voice of America) lessons. In August the following topics were practiced: conjunction, simple present tense and past tense of the verbs. Students also practiced simple conversation after watching the video from the VOA lessons. **Challenges:** Due to poor internet connection, sometimes they can’t watch the video, they have to be in and out to make it through. A couple of students have problems with their devices too. Overall, students are very interested to learn and their attendance is good.

LPS English Classes:

- **Dulany’s class:** In August we did many amazing things in class: conversations, grammar, information about covid19... and we all had fun together. One of the big things that we explored was about learning different ways that each of us practices when we want to learn language. We discovered working in small groups in a big way! Little study groups met at different times, with a teacher or a volunteer, or maybe with a classmate who doesn’t speak the same first language. Some groups worked on reading and writing, while others worked on citizenship.
• **Bobby’s class:** My classes have been going well. This past summer, I met with my “newer” section of adult ESL class from 4:30-6:15 on Wednesdays, followed after by my “older” section from 6:30-8:15. In the first class, we have been studying the various uses of the verbs “to be” and “to have.” In the second class, we have been studying possessive pronouns.

*Technology challenges:* It is harder to engage students to the full extent in a virtual setting. Since students are staying at home, they often get distracted by their family.

*Ways to overcome:* I had to establish new class norms with ZOOM classes (i.e. - muting mics). I also incorporated different platforms to incorporate class participation. PollEverywhere, Kahoot and Quizlet Live have been fun resources to engage students.

• **Suzie:** I have had excellent attendance these past 5 weeks, with either no absentees or only one on a given day. In addition to working through chapters 3 & 4 of book 2 of Stepping Forward, I am working on the past tense. Each week I introduce a new group of irregular verbs. Not everyone does homework, but those who do are improving nicely. Maria’s work is exceptional. They all need more conversation, but they find it particularly difficult to do online.

All of the students seem happy when we meet and they greet each other warmly and with concern for each other’s welfare. The camaraderie is really special.

**ELT-I:**

• **Art:** This month, the following topics were discussed in class: quantities, identifying instruments, colors, determining similarities, and determining differences through observation. Students participated and enjoyed the lesson plan.

• **Music:** During the Music ELT-I session we talked and learned about Labor Day. We looked at lyrics from a song, called solidarity forever, that was written in 1915 by Ralph Chaplin which was meant to empower people and give them a sense of dignity in American society. During this period of time, we also read about the band, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and their famous song *Teach Your Children.* We read and discussed background information about the song, discussed the first verse of lyrics and listened to the original song. During the reflection toward the end of class, Hughes Israel noted that “Mohammed and Asia’s family is like the message of the song….the way they work together and support each other.” It was a very moving experience for everyone and even through the screen you could see how touched Mohammed (Hussein) was by that comment.

• **Phone Technology:** This month we looked at a Bostonglobe.com article dated 08/24/2020 about the City of
Lynn. We learned Lynn emerges as the center of COVID-19 in MA. Students took turns and read portions of the newspaper articles, which gave the number of confirmed cases, the reported probable cases, and the total number of deaths among confirmed cases. The other source we looked up was the COVID MGH - Massachusetts General Hospital site. The importance of taking precautions and staying safe was stressed, as well as wearing a face mask, social distancing and looking up information on Covid-19 on reliable sites such as MGH. Another lesson was learning to navigate the Lynn Public School website. This is to help our parents get information about how to contact the school, when school opens, as well as other information.

Volunteers:
Volunteers were vital to NAAM before Covid-19, and they still are. Who are the volunteers? Some of the volunteers are students, some are former students, and some are friends and family of the NAAM staff. How do they volunteer? Some volunteer “remotely”: there are volunteers who work with individual students in a breakout room, off of the Zoom classrooms. Others meet in “spare” Zoom classrooms. Some volunteers are not in Zoom at all: they’re in parking lots or driveways, organizing food donations into family boxes and then making weekly deliveries to the homes of families experiencing food insecurity. Where would we be without them? Let’s not think about it. We’re grateful for all that they do!

2020 Census: The Census team has been reaching out to different areas in Lynn and visiting markets. We coordinated with Phillip D’Agati, Regional MQA Coordinator (Mobile Questionnaire Assistance) to bring Census personnel with handheld devices to our outreach events, for people to fill out the Census right there and then. Michelle Richardson created banners in different languages to promote NAAM and what we do. We wore masks, had gloves, hand sanitizers and practiced social distancing. First, we started at Compare Supermarket, a popular market among the Latino community. Then, we visited 2 Cambodian markets on Western Avenue, Mekong and Soriya. Then, this weekend, we will visit the store on Essex St, Alnour Market, a popular market among the middle eastern community; and Gastronome European Deli And Market, on Broad Street, a popular market for Russians and Europeans. We can’t thank enough the effort and collaboration of our interpreters, who have been an important piece in helping people to complete their Census. In total, we have helped people to complete their 2020Census in 10 different languages: English, Spanish, Haitian-Creole, French, Swahili, Khmer, Russian, Farsi, Tigrinya and Arabic.

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We hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy in these difficult times. We look forward to the day that we can once again greet you all in person at the New American Center.