NEW ORLEANS MUSICIANS’ ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

YEAR IN REVIEW 2022

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

-James Baldwin (1924-1987)
WHAT NOMC+25 TAKES TO WIN

The New Orleans Assistance Foundation remains 100% focused on support to the NOMC medical care. Amplifying the needs of our communities begins with “home rule.”

Joining our NOMAF team this year as our donor relations coordinator was Bertha O’Neal, retired “Teacher of the Year” and widow of John O’Neal of Free Southern Theater, Kim DeLarge, retired controller of the City of New Orleans; and Kathy Richard, Acadian artist, and Tobacco Free advocate, to coordinate our Acadiana musicians’ services.

On October 4, 2022, we lost one of our guiding lights, Noelani Musicaro, who served NOMC&AF in many capacities from donor relations to Makin’ Groceries volunteer. She was instrumental in shaping You Got This, our mental health self-care initiative for creatives. If ever there was a creative, it was Noelani! She was an author, a drummer, and a former candidate for Lt. Gov in New Jersey. Each week she hosted the popular Living Well In the Big Easy on WHIV radio, was the founder of Kindness conversations, dazzled our streets as a dancing queen in the Disco Amigos, was a tireless WWOZ volunteer, and a magical spirit in the lives of her friends. Her legacy lives on at the NOMC&af in her motto: BE KIND.

The year began with the NOMAF Board enlisting a vibrant group of consultants to assist us in charting our course to meet the new challenges our patients face in post-Pandemic New Orleans and for NOMC+25. Our visionary strategic planners, financial advisors, payroll service, and public health experts worked closely with one another and the Executive committee of the board. We are deeply committed to serving as Agents of Change to overcome the inequities our patients suffer.

- Darvelle Hutchins, PhD and Bethany Bultman were selected by the NOMAF board to lead the transition team of the right-sized new foundation’s systems and procedures.
- We retained a specialist to apply for Federal Employment Retention Funds for 2021.
- A team of staff and professionals updated and expanded our NOMAF Employee handbook.
DONATIONS

With a switch over from the Kindful to Bloomerang/Give Butter donor software we have both had a learning curve and expanded potential to track those who invest in our mission.

Sarah Wild and Dr. Esther R. Dyer reviewed and revamped our annual end of the year donor appeal. Instead of mailing out 6-7000 hand-stuffed and addressed donor appeals (with hundreds returned for poor addresses) we stream-lined the list to 2300 current donors.

The printing cost of the appeal was under $4000 (using some left over remittance envelopes from last year).

The first email campaign went out to 7351 people and had a 53% open rate. The second email campaign went out to 7305 people two weeks later and had a 55% open rate.

The result is that to date we have deposited more than $200,000 and totals have not come in yet from online donations.

In 2023, we expect to receive $38,000 from the Employee Retention Credit program as unrestricted funding.

NOMC MEDICAL

In 2022 the New Orleans Musicians Clinic/LSU Healthcare Network returned to in-person appointments for 2600+ patients.

The LSUHN system upgraded its medical records system from Allscripts to Epic... a learning curve for our medical team and patients, alike. The benefit of Epic is the interaction and consistency in patient-directed medical care.

We are thrilled that after seventeen years it was announced that the NOMC, part of the LSU Health and Sciences Center Department of Comprehensive Medicine, will be returning to the downtown medical compound, to the medical office building across the street from the former ER of Hotel Dieu. We hope to be seeing patients at our new location by May 1, 2023 (our official 25th Anniversary).
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Our ties with the Performing Arts Medical Association and Athletes and the Arts, NOMC&af was a founding member, continuing to support evidence-based, peer-reviewed occupational data for the prevention and treatment of occupational health for performers. https://artsmed.org

Check out our podcasts: http://athletesandthearts.com

We were thrilled when on September 30, 2022, President Biden re-established the Presidential Commission of the Arts.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Thanks to several grants and new partnerships we have expanded our mental health provider network. The generous grant from the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation has allowed us to partner with the Loyola Department of Music Therapy to offer expanded services to our NOMC patients.

NOMAF’s first VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (LCLE) reimbursement grant launched in October 2021 and concluded September 30, 2022, with a $50,000 award. In 2022, the grant received a continuation at the same level ($50,000). After demonstrating effective mental health access, NOMAF has now been invited to double our upcoming grant request for 2023-2024. Given the expansion of the VOCA program budget outlay in District 9 (New Orleans), we anticipate being able to increase and sustain award level for the upcoming year.

Megan McStravick, Nicole Rochat and Sarah Wild work closely to coordinate and document these services for NOMC&AF.

With continued support from LCLE, NOMAF:

• Helps develop new curated mental health counseling plans specific to performers victimized by crime, in collaboration with experts of our provider network specializing in areas such as trauma and domestic violence response;

• Covers 12 sessions and co-payments per underinsured patient in need, with the possibility of offering additional sessions to ensure that patients can continue their therapy and counseling programming for as long as necessary;

• Creates awareness within our insured patient population of the new initiative, so that they can also take advantage of the available mental health opportunities available;

• Devotes additional staff time to regular check-ins with these patients, for updates on the mental health counseling, and to ascertain if there are other interventions to provide, such as food access, housing assistance, bill payment, transportation, or social service signup help.
NOMAF continues to serve an increasing number of victims of crime within our NOMC patients, providing the mental health support they need. Our existing network features specialists in domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, trauma, PTSD, recovery, addiction, depression, anxiety, and grief.

The VOCA grant ensures that NOMC&AF can arrange completely free in-depth mental health services for upwards of 50 underinsured NOMC patients per year and additionally make these patients aware of available mental health opportunities and make referrals as necessary. Additionally, the grant provides NOMAF the opportunity to work within a small cohort of other LCLE service providers in New Orleans including Vietnamese Initiative in Economic Training and Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Center (STAR).

We have strengthened our ties with Xavier University as advisors in the impact of generational trauma on health outcomes and in community engagement for the early detection of chronic diseases.

On a bitter cold, Saturday (November 12) our YGT team and Kathy Richard from our Acadiana Initiative tabled at Bridge’s House 1st Annual Sober Fest. Stay tuned for more sober music events in 2023 when Taylor Cohen, one of the founders of YGT, will be returning to NOMC full-time.

The following week, Saturday, November 19, 2022, the chilly drizzle didn’t dampen our enthusiasm as we tabled in Armstrong Park. Our NOMC funky butts celebrated the life of our long-time donor, Barney Kilpatrick, at the NAMI Walk. We are already looking forward to the 2023 walk!

REDEFINING HEALTH CARE AS HEALTH EQUITY

While Makin’ Groceries was created by the NOMAF team during the pandemic as a means of safe food delivery; the NOMC medical team reported that nutritional security was a vital component of health. Under the dynamic directorship of Vatican Lokey, actor, director, writer, and logistical genius, Makin’ Groceries is a masterful fete of coordination involving Top Box Food, Eat Fit NOLA, dozens of dedicated volunteers, and weekly medical outreach from an FNP. The weekly deliveries go out each Wednesday, packed at Zony Mash, and include a lovingly composed weekly newsletter with recipes and health news for the 110+ NOMC patient households who depend on us for their care.

Under the visionary leadership of Katherine Klimitas, promoted in 2022 to Director of Communications, we have sent out more than 74,000 individual emails via weekly e-blasts and our “open” rate each week is much higher than the not-for-profit average. Three-quarters of these e-blasts are health-related and were shared on Facebook and Linkedin, where they are liked, shared, and commented on. This level of engagement has resulted in the record breaking success of our donor appeal.

2022 included the online relaunch of our benefit cd, GET YOU A HEALIN, the publication of Michael Weintrob’s INSTRUMENTHEAD REVEALED with a % of the proceeds going to us, the Tipitina’s sold-out Allen Toussaint tribute to benefit the NOMC, Stacey Morigeau’s phenomenal success with our Crescent City Classic running team, the funky Butts, and the generous support of our international partners, especially the FullSteam Brass Band in Switzerland. In November, we were honored to have the District Director of Region 6 of DHH and one of her deputies on a site visit to NOMC to research our model for access to care.
AGENTS OF CHANGE

Electronic medical records may seem like just a bunch of numbers, but what they provide is a road map of need. The promise of our NOMC mission: to sustain our patients in mind, body, and spirit.

Take for example the addresses of where our patients live. One of our consultants, a recent graduate in environmental law, mapped the addresses of more than 100 of our most vulnerable patients, unable to evacuate in times of a natural disaster—overlaying flooding risks, food deserts, and health outcome disparity. Knowing that few of these patients had a computer or cell, rendering them “off the grid” in current emergency plans for the city. These NOMC address maps were divided into council districts and distributed to council members and NOLAREady to ensure these households were monitored.

To serve the needs of the NOMC patients we actively participate in three local coalitions:

JUSTICE & BEYOND

NOMAF’s participation in Justice & Beyond, a coalition of 25 social justice and racial equity coalitions moved beyond producing weekly Monday 5 pm forums (Zoom, Facebook and YouTube) to hosting a Reparations Town Hall on March 12 at Ashe Powerhouse. Our goal was to host local and national leaders of the Reparations Movement to determine areas of harm to those descended from the enslaved.

NOMAF board members, Darvelle Hutchins, PhD and Bethany Bultman, served on the host committee. Dr. Hutchins introduced the world premiere of the docu-film, Bayou Blues, funded by NOMAF about the cultural extinction faced by our culture bearers. It was produced and directed by the award-winning, Stacey Muhammed.

After the town hall, Justice & Beyond, crafted a petition to present to the city council requesting a commission be appointed to address the points where harm was done. In particular, NOMAF supports the following petitions:

1. New gun violence prevention programs
2. Women of color seek reparations to repair the harm done to them by policies in new orleans, louisiana and the united states which deprive them of sovereignty over their bodies and access to equitable health resources
3. Community-based public safety projects
4. Restorative justice services for victims of gun violence
5. Financial assistance to musicians and other cultural workers and institutions
6. Grants for housing and neighborhood improvement organizations
SAVE OUR SOUL (SOS) COALITION

NOMAF in conjunction with 20+ other local organizations effectively advocated for city ordinances to preserve the legacies of the Morris FX Jeff Municipal Auditorium, Congo Square, and Armstrong Park, thus paving the way for community input in defining a celebration of Black cultural expression. The next step in guiding the process for cultural celebration and development.

HEALTHY HOMES COALITION

Under the leadership of the local and national housing equity non-profits who serve our NOMC patients, NOMAF actively participated with dozens of local groups to use social activism and community organizing to succeed in getting the New Orleans City Council to pass *(sadly, watered down)* Healthy Homes Ordinance. This has been a ten-year process and we acknowledge this was only a first step to ensuring our patients live in safe, affordable housing.

The New Orleans Coalition: So many of the NOMC&AF staff and our patients bare the scars of the violence in our city. Judge Calvin Johnson, retired Chief Justice of the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court, and chair of the National Alliance of Mental Illness *(NAMI New Orleans)* invited our participation and we joined in hopes that we could bring the challenges of our patients to the group to preserve the fabric of our historic cultural neighborhoods.

NOLA COALITION

As of December 29, 2022, New Orleans had tallied 264 murders, surpassing the 2021 total and averaging 23 homicides a month. The current total places New Orleans among the nation’s most murderous cities. These deaths impact each of us, as many are part of our cultural community.

At the behest of NOMC partner and advisor, *(retired)* Judge Calvin Johnson, the interim director of our neighbor and provider, the National Alliance of Mental Illness *(NAMI)*, NOMAF became one of the 480 nonprofits, civic organizations, and businesses to lend our voices to the crisis of violence in New Orleans. We actively support NOLA Coalition’s “second plank” for Investment in Youth Services.

July 30, 2022, Bethany Bultman, wearing many hats *(NOMC, NOMAF, and Justice & Beyond)* co-produced the re-dedication of St. Anna’s Episcopal Church’s monument to the victims of violent crime, featuring national and local politicians and NOMC staff and patients who have lost loved ones to violence. NOMAF sponsored the Young Guardians of the Flame to perform, who sadly had lost one of their members to violence several years ago.