

# 2021 IN REVIEW

Reducing health inequities in underserved communities through collaboration, testing resources, education, and financial support



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## About Quest for Health Equity

While COVID-19 exposed the health disparities that marginalized communities face, the health equity gap existed long before the pandemic. As one of the nation's leaders in COVID-19 testing, Quest Diagnostics was in a unique position to drive change. This led to the development of Quest for Health Equity (Q4HE).

Through Q4HE, we help improve access to testing and treatment for those in need, support organizations that address the root causes of health inequities across the country, and lead education and outreach efforts that enable better health outcomes for the most vulnerable among us. Learn more about our 2021 Q4HE initiatives on the following pages.

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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

## Fighting for health equity



**Steve Rusckowski**

President and Chief Executive Officer, Quest Diagnostics

**As a company dedicated to promoting a healthier world**, Quest serves on the front lines in the fight against health disparities. Our sense of urgency increased soon after we introduced one of the first COVID-19 PCR tests, as we saw the disproportionate and devastating impact of the pandemic on underserved communities.

Compelled to act, we established **Quest for Health Equity (Q4HE)** to address structural inequities in healthcare and support individuals by providing access to testing and healthcare services. While COVID-19 was a major driver in our initial efforts, it is by no means the only focus of Q4HE. Since we launched Q4HE in 2020, we have addressed a range of systemic inequities in healthcare, including increasing access to diagnostic testing for diverse populations; funding education for individuals from underserved communities to pursue careers in healthcare; and addressing key health issues impacting communities of color, especially diabetes and hypertension.

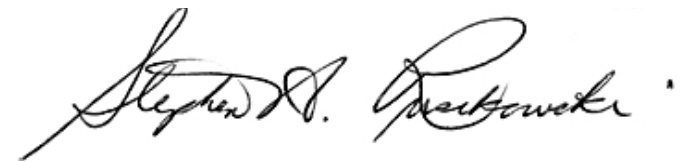
These challenging times demand action. The more than \$100 million we've committed to fund Q4HE marks the beginning of this critical initiative. However, in addition to funding, success requires a comprehensive approach focused on lasting positive impacts. In this report, you'll find background about our efforts to create a more equitable healthcare landscape for all, along with stories about the partnerships we've built to drive the critical work of Q4HE forward.



## Fighting for health equity

As we look to the future of Q4HE, we will pursue more collaborations with organizations committed to making a difference in the health and lives of those with the greatest need. I've always believed companies that do well have an opportunity to do good, and I would argue that today, given what our world has been through, we have an obligation to do good.

Through Q4HE and the alliances we're creating, we're proud to meet this challenge head-on.

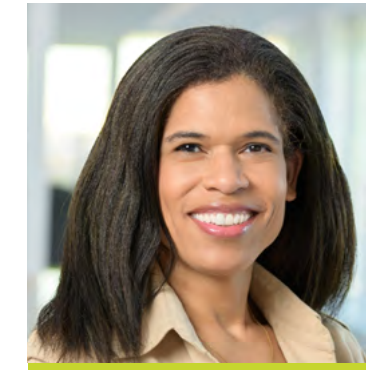


"I've always believed companies that do well have an opportunity to do good, and I would argue that today, given what our world has been through, we have an obligation to do good."





## Making health equity a priority for the most vulnerable among us



### Ruth Clements

Vice President/General Manager, Infectious Diseases and Immunology and Quest for Health Equity

As we surpass the 1-year anniversary of Q4HE, I'm proud to share the work we've accomplished to help address and reduce the health equity gap. In collaboration with a growing number of partners, we're addressing disparities that historically have made it difficult for underserved communities to access the care and resources they need to experience better health outcomes.

And while we've made progress, I'm keenly aware, as are many of you, of the work that lies ahead. To make meaningful changes, we need to address the health inequities that act as barriers to care for underserved communities. To accomplish this, we will continue to support and expand efforts with local and national partners focused on health equity while increasing access to affordable diagnostic testing and education to help patients take control of their health.

I've seen firsthand how those hardest hit by COVID-19—low-income communities and communities of color in particular—have come to rely on Quest for access to testing and information that can help reduce the spread of the virus among the most vulnerable. In my work with Q4HE, I've seen how Quest is helping those impacted by healthcare disparities through approaches that will create positive outcomes over the long term. Through these efforts—and by working closely with our growing network of partners—I'm convinced that we can help address the root causes of health inequities to create better outcomes for all.

I am proud to be a part of Q4HE and to work for a company that is taking meaningful and lasting steps to close these gaps and provide everyone with the chance to achieve the healthy life they deserve.

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# PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

## Joining forces to bridge the health equity gap in under-resourced communities

Q4HE has teamed up with numerous organizations across the US to support programs designed to address health inequities by **expanding access to care, reducing preventable health risks, and closing gaps in both care and resources**. Read on to learn more about the projects and initiatives we've supported to date.

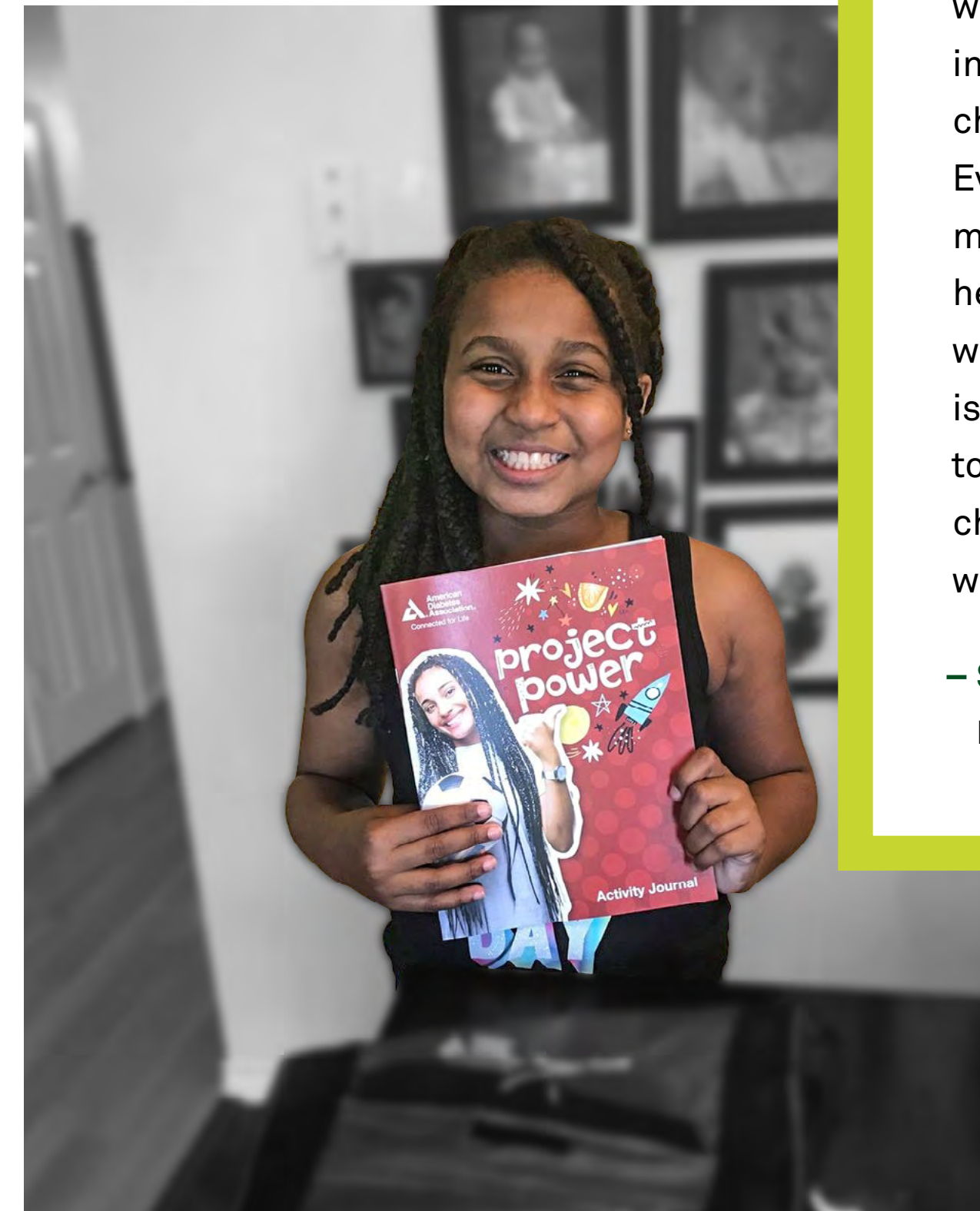
## Reducing childhood diabetes and obesity through education and support

### American Diabetes Association

Project Power is an **American Diabetes Association** (ADA) initiative focused on slowing the spread of childhood obesity and diabetes among children ages 5–12 by promoting healthy habits, nutrition education, increased physical activity, and family involvement. This innovative free program connects youth who are at risk for type 2 diabetes with peers in a supportive educational environment.

**Project Power** applies behavior change principles to support children in making healthier choices related to nutrition, exercise, and daily habits, which are evaluated via periodic post-session check-ins. Education sessions are also provided to parents, enabling them to reinforce the healthy behaviors their children learn through Project Power. The program is run by volunteers, many of whom are students pursuing degrees in health professions including nursing, nutrition, and pharmacy.

**Due to COVID-19, Project Power** transitioned to a virtual format. This enabled the ADA to scale the program and reach students in under-resourced communities. Q4HE's support is enabling the ADA to engage more children through group meetings, hands-on activities (when permissible), partnerships with nonprofit community partners, and resources for long-term engagement. Ultimately, this focus on reducing preventable health risks can enable more children to experience a better quality of life.



“To create healthier communities and close this gap, we must start with younger populations. With support from Q4HE, we can empower young people with the information they need to make healthy choices and achieve better outcomes. Even if these children aren't entirely making their own choices about their health and nutrition, empowering them with information to make healthy choices is critical. As they grow, they can hold on to these messages regarding healthy choices to lessen the risk associated with these diseases.”

– **Sherry Hill**

Program Director, Project Power



With Q4HE's support, the ADA can engage more children to reduce preventable health risks and enable them to experience **a better quality of life.**



Connected for Life

**Project Power**



# Supporting future healthcare leaders and creating better health outcomes for all through COVID-19 relief and hypertension management

## American Heart Association

The **American Heart Association's** (AHA) Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Scholars Program is designed to develop a pipeline of talented, diverse researchers and healthcare professionals by providing minority undergraduate students with academic and career mentorship. In collaboration with Q4HE, AHA is expanding its HBCU Scholars Program and creating a new initiative focused on reaching and empowering Hispanic students. The Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Scholars Program will engage and inspire Hispanic students to pursue careers in medicine and scientific research. The Scholars Programs will help launch the research and healthcare careers of more than 100 diverse students at nearly 30 HBCUs and HSIs over the next two years.



**In collaboration with Q4HE,** AHA is expanding its HBCU Scholars Program and creating a new initiative focused on reaching and empowering Hispanic students.

Additionally, Q4HE is helping AHA advance the organization's ongoing partnerships with federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and community clinics nationwide to address gaps in hypertension care and patient outcomes. Hypertension is a precursor to various chronic health conditions and can be exacerbated by COVID-19. By expanding this initiative, the AHA and partners will be able to expand their ability to provide evidence-based resources for patients with hypertension, especially those in at-risk communities across the US. Four of the 10 geographies targeted for this initiative are predominantly Native American communities, which have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

“Hypertension is a public health and health disparity crisis. Nearly half of all American adults have high blood pressure, and almost everyone knows someone affected by this common chronic disease. But we know that high blood pressure is largely treatable and beatable. The AHA is grateful to Quest for Health Equity for supporting our efforts to champion community strategies that will help in identifying and removing barriers to healthcare access and quality.”

– **Monique Wilson**

National Corporate Relations Director, American Heart Association

“The opportunity to live a long, healthy life is a fundamental human right. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought inequity to the forefront of public health. The American Heart Association has long been a champion of health equity, and we are honored to work with Quest Diagnostics to address these core challenges.”

– **Nancy Brown**

Chief Executive Officer, American Heart Association



## Working to eliminate health disparities by cultivating a diverse pipeline of healthcare leaders

### Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute

The **Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute** (BHLI) is a professional development program focused on eliminating health disparities among minority and vulnerable populations. The Institute’s aim is to support culturally competent underrepresented scholars who are interested in pursuing leadership roles in healthcare. Through a series of experiential activities, analyses of healthcare issues with expert national presenters, site visits, and internships, BHLI exposes scholars to opportunities within today’s healthcare landscape. These future healthcare leaders are empowered to develop innovative solutions and policies to improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations.



**With Q4HE’s support,** BHLI was able to adapt its existing programming to a virtual environment.

A cornerstone of the **Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute** is its annual 12-day in-person event in Kansas City, MO. With Q4HE’s support, BHLI was able to adapt its existing programming to a virtual environment, including the implementation of dynamic virtual meeting technology, conference management resources, and audiovisual production.

“During the **BHLI**, I saw a side of healthcare that was new to me. The speakers and curriculum challenged my thinking about socioeconomic determinants of health, health disparities, and healthcare systems. The experience transformed my critical thinking and personal growth. My future just got a little brighter because of the experience.”

– **BHLI scholar**

“Closing the health equity gap reinforces the notion that healthcare is neither a right nor a privilege but a common good. Q4HE’s support validates the value and impact of our work. The Q4HE investment also reinforces our funding portfolio, which enables sustained performance, hopefully for generations of leaders to come.”

– **John Bluford, III**

President and Founder, Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute



**BLUFORDHEALTHCARE  
LEADERSHIPINSTITUTE**

## Addressing social determinants of health and improving access to health services and resources

### Bridge to Health

Founded by Q4HE, **Bridge to Health** is a community program that aims to make better health more accessible to underserved communities in New Mexico. The program helps empower people through partnerships, education, and community engagement. In addition to improving access to wellness testing and health screenings, Bridge to Health serves as a connector between community members and local resources, bringing together a wide range of organizations that each provide unique insight and access to vital services. In 2021, **Bridge to Health engaged more than 100 community partners throughout New Mexico.**



In 2021, **Bridge to Health** engaged more than 100 community partners throughout New Mexico to provide vital healthcare services.

**Bridge to Health** works to help close gaps in important resources through health and wellness events that serve as one-stop shops for families. Here they can receive free routine diagnostic testing, health screenings, and additional resources and services provided by community partners. The program’s online community resource directory at [bridgetohealth.com](http://bridgetohealth.com) connects individuals to organizations offering housing assistance, food and nutrition programs, transportation, and more.

**Bridge to Health’s** first 2 events in Las Cruces and Albuquerque brought together a wide range of organizations providing access to vital services, including dental and vision screenings, health insurance enrollment, COVID-19 vaccinations, and Blueprint for Wellness health screenings.

“Too many communities across New Mexico lack access to essential resources like healthcare, affordable food, and safe housing. Making healthcare services available to all New Mexicans is a critical first step to improving lives and investing in the future of our communities.”

– **Donna Sauter**  
ICAN Director,  
New Mexico State University

“St. Paul’s is happy to support this important event for the community as an extension of our ministry to Las Cruces. We hope the community will take advantage of this outstanding opportunity and the **Bridge to Health** program.”

– **Greg Kennedy**  
Pastor, St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, Las Cruces, NM



## Helping protect staff and patients during COVID-19

### Cedarbrook Senior Care and Rehabilitation

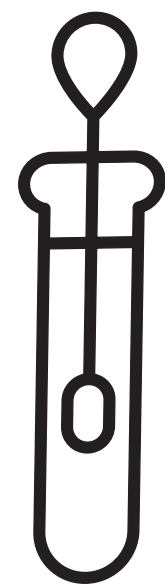
**Cedarbrook Senior Care and Rehabilitation** is a trusted, high-quality skilled nursing facility in Lehigh County, PA. Cedarbrook residents and patients receive a broad spectrum of services including long-term care, short-term rehabilitation, dementia care, memory support, independent care apartments, and hospice.

The long-term and residential care system suffered devastating impacts from the pandemic, and sadly, thousands of nursing home residents succumbed to the virus in the first few weeks alone. Nearly 1 in 12 individuals who lived in US long-term care facilities had died by March 2021, accounting for a third of all COVID-19 deaths in the country, according to the COVID Tracking Project.

“**Cedarbrook** serves a Medicaid population of nearly 90% of our nursing home residents, which is very difficult to maintain financially. The Quest mission has supported the Cedarbrook mission, and Quest for Health Equity set up an exceptional logistical system to support our COVID-19 testing.”

– **Jason Cumello**  
Nursing Home Administrator, Cedarbrook Senior Care and Rehabilitation

### COVID-19 PCR testing



**600** staff members

**500** residents

twice a week for **12 weeks**

In response to this reality and the crucial needs of long-term care facilities, Q4HE provided **Cedarbrook** with COVID-19 PCR testing for 600 staff members and 500 residents at their facility, with twice-weekly collections over a 12-week period—offering much-needed support to some of the most vulnerable members of the population.



## Addressing the threat of COVID-19 in Black communities

### Choose Healthy Life

Predominantly Black and Hispanic lower-income communities are experiencing some of the most devastating impacts of the pandemic. Many in these communities have struggled to gain access to and pay for healthcare resources and testing, resulting in higher rates of COVID-19 spread, positivity, and death. Upon the launch of Q4HE, these vulnerable communities were the first priority.

Beyond providing equitable access to testing and diagnostics, Quest leadership understood the need to pair Quest services with educational resources. Traditionally, there has been a level of distrust of the healthcare system within Black communities. To overcome this obstacle, Q4HE developed partnerships with highly trusted organizations and institutions, including **Choose Healthy Life** (CHL), a Black-led national nonprofit originally formed to address the impact of AIDS on Black communities. With Q4HE’s support, CHL has been able to evolve their proven model to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q4HE supported CHL’s efforts to engage one of the most trusted institutions within the Black community: the church. CHL partnered with 50 prominent Black reverends and their churches, working in “health deserts” in New York City, Newark, Atlanta, Detroit, and Washington, DC, to more directly engage their target communities. Q4HE supplied COVID-19 testing, education, and vaccines via church-hosted events and provided each church with a community health navigator and resources to help neighbors obtain vital healthcare services.



Since the program’s inception, more than 20,000 people have participated in testing events and over 54,000 have participated in vaccination events hosted by **Choose Healthy Life**.

## Choose Healthy Life

Since the program's inception in January 2021, more than 20,000 people have participated in testing events and over 54,000 have participated in vaccination events hosted by Choose Healthy Life in historically under-resourced, predominantly Black communities.

“This is not just about COVID. This is about the health disparities that made us vulnerable to death in the midst of this pandemic and every other pandemic that we have, that’s already here, and that’s getting ready to come. We have to get our community into a health status so that when something happens, it does not kill us 4 times or 6 times more than it kills anyone else anywhere else in the world. We have to overcome this, and this program was designed to help us do that.”

– **Debra Fraser-Howze**  
 Founder, Choose Healthy Life

“Our communities have suffered through endless medical hardships, and **Choose Healthy Life** created an infrastructure that helped me strengthen our ability to execute and deliver health services to the community. As a clergy member of the Black church, which is one of the most trusted resources in Black and Brown communities, CHL allowed me to expand and use more of my skill sets to minister beyond the walls and meet the needs of families beyond their salvation.”

– **Reverend Kimberly Williams**  
 Metropolitan Baptist Church, Newark, NJ



“The Quest partnership allows us to confront, in real time, the lack of access many of our neighbors face with testing. It also demonstrates that faith and science can work together to address our needs.”

– **Reverend Jacques Andre DeGraff**  
 Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, Harlem, NY



## Expanding COVID-19 testing access at historically Black colleges and universities

### Clark Atlanta University

While many college students have successfully transitioned to online learning, students in underserved communities may face barriers to access, including poor or no internet connection. Others may not thrive in an online environment or may lose out on essential hands-on instruction in labs or workshops. To enable **Clark Atlanta University** to safely welcome students back to campus in the spring of 2021, Q4HE worked with university officials to implement a COVID-19 testing program.



More than 1,000 students, faculty, and staff members at **Clark Atlanta University** received tests, enabling them to more safely participate in academic life on campus.

Together with the university, Q4HE developed an online portal where students, faculty, and staff were able to register for a free COVID-19 PCR test. More than 1,000 students, faculty, and staff members received tests and educational resources, enabling them to more safely participate in academic life on campus.



## Supporting the wellness of tribal communities through nutrition education

### Cooking Matters

**Cooking Matters** is a Connecticut-based community nutrition, health, and wellness program focused on reducing obesity and its related health risks—such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes—in children, youth, pregnant/parenting women, and adults. This innovative program utilizes professional chefs, nutritionists, and community volunteers to lead hands-on courses that help people plan, shop for, and prepare nutritious meals.

Program participants may participate in “grocery tours” to learn how to read nutrition labels and select affordable, nutritious ingredients that can be used to prepare healthy meals. Volunteer chefs lend their time and expertise to instruct participants on basic food preparation and cooking skills, with a focus on recipes that can feed a family of four for \$10 or less.



“There are so many food deserts, and when you visit these communities, you understand the disparities and can see them. Because Quest for Health Equity’s financial support is unrestricted, it will enable us to expand into local regions we haven’t been able to reach.”

– **Patricia Scussel**

Executive Director, Community Health Network of Connecticut Foundation, Inc.



Q4HE has allowed **Cooking Matters** to expand the program’s reach to communities it may have historically lacked the funding to serve but where the need is great.

Unlike most of Cooking Matters’ funders, who restrict funding to the specific geographic areas they serve within Connecticut, Q4HE has not geographically restricted Cooking Matters’ support. This will provide Cooking Matters with the flexibility to expand the program’s reach to communities it may have historically lacked the funding to serve but where the need is great.





## Reducing the impact of COVID-19 in underserved communities in Illinois

### Family Christian Health Center

**Family Christian Health Center** (FCHC) is a nonprofit FQHC providing health services to underserved populations in Harvey, IL, and broader Southland Illinois communities. Today, FCHC is working to expand access to COVID-19 testing and vaccinations while improving healthcare coordination to individuals in need. With Q4HE’s support, FCHC is partnering with the faith-based community to expand awareness and education related to COVID-19 testing and vaccination, as well as chronic health-related issues.

Providing access to factual, current information about COVID-19 is essential to help more people make the choice to get tested or vaccinated. To give more community members access to these resources, prerecorded information sessions are being shared on FCHC’s website and Facebook page. These recordings will also be distributed to religious communities to use during online church services and share on their digital channels.



**With Q4HE’s support, FCHC** is partnering with the faith-based community to expand awareness and education related to COVID-19 testing and vaccination.

Additionally, Q4HE’s support empowers FCHC to expand health screenings for its members. Through these screenings, FCHC is able to ensure members have a primary care provider and are addressing chronic health conditions prevalent in minority communities, such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. For the many members who lost their employment due to the pandemic and now lack health insurance, Q4HE and FCHC are providing information regarding continued healthcare services through FCHC or a partner FQHC. Members will also be connected to one of FCHC’s insurance navigators for support in finding and applying for health coverage.

“Among the populations served by **Family Christian Health Center**, there is a low rate of vaccination and high vaccine hesitancy compared to the rest of Illinois. Through this initiative, FCHC will be able to increase the number of people willing to become vaccinated by providing health education, which will help reduce health disparities. Doing so will improve the quality of life in the communities we serve, as it improves people’s health and economic prosperity.”

– **Mia Webster Cross BSN, RN**  
Community Health & Programs Director



## Turning classrooms into living laboratories to engage students, improve nutrition, and create thriving communities

### Green Bronx Machine

**Green Bronx Machine** is an innovative, award-winning program that transforms hearts, minds, and futures by empowering students in low-income communities through learning experiences shaped by urban agriculture. Students and teachers work together to turn classrooms into agricultural laboratories where students grow their own plants and vegetables and watch as their seedlings become edible, nutritious, and delicious food. This indoor farming, which occurs in “tower gardens,” is supplemented by engaging lesson plans that use plants and food to teach a variety of subjects while also providing healthy, delicious food for families and communities.

The program’s founder, Stephen Ritz, is an internationally acclaimed and award-winning educator and best-selling author of *The Power of a Plant*. Among his many achievements, one of his most notable is the development of the world’s first edible classroom, producing enough food to serve the entire school all year long.

With its roots in the South Bronx, one of the nation’s poorest communities, Green Bronx Machine has grown into a celebrated national and international initiative. To date, Green Bronx Machine’s project-based learning program has engaged more than 100,000 students in 20 states and 6 nations, generating significant academic student achievement and increased graduation rates, improved health outcomes, and key insights into how food justice, food access, and overall well-being are interconnected.

Q4HE supports Stephen’s mission and aims to amplify its impressive results by providing Green Bronx Machine with funding and resources to drive expansion into 30 additional schools in 5 regions across the country. Q4HE’s support will equip each school with educational materials, tower gardens, and cooking supplies to support more students in achieving health, wellness, and academic success in an effort to close the health equity gap in these underserved communities.



“I’m proud to be the CEO—chief eternal optimist—of the Bronx! 116,000 pounds of vegetables later, my favorite crops are happy, healthy children, high-performing public schools, and families who have gone from surviving to thriving. Maya Angelou said it best: ‘My wish for you is that you continue. Continue to be who you are. To astonish a mean world with your random acts of kindness.’ That is my North Star.”

– **Stephen Ritz**  
Green Bronx Machine



Q4HE aims to amplify the results of **Green Bronx Machine** through funding and resources that will expand the program into 30 additional schools in 5 regions across the country.

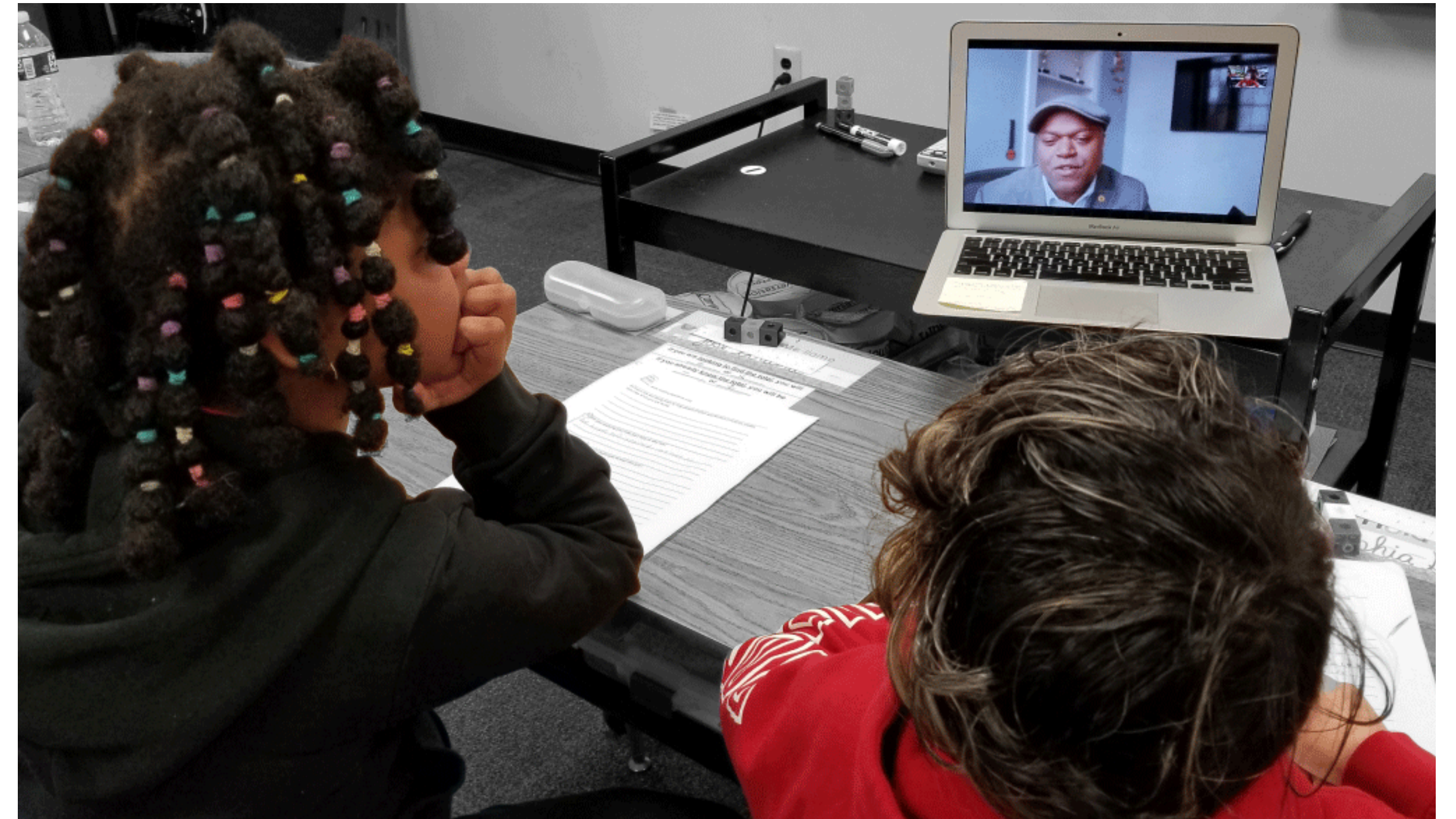


## Empowering students to create better health outcomes through school-based journalism

### Healthy NewsWorks

**Healthy NewsWorks** (HNW) empowers elementary and middle-school students to advocate for health literacy through school-based journalism programs. HNW provides these students with the tools and skills to become researchers, writers, critical thinkers, and confident communicators equipped to investigate health information and report their findings, ultimately fostering healthier and more informed communities.

HNW's unique approach addresses two significant concerns for children: gaps in literacy education and mounting health issues. These issues are deeply connected, as children who acquire good listening and communication skills are better equipped to understand and use health information during their lifetimes.



Q4HE is helping **Healthy NewsWorks** expand its programming to help more students develop communication skills that will empower a lifetime of critical thinking.

Q4HE's support enables HNW to build upon 18 years of experience delivering classroom-based health journalism programs, deepen its positive impact within schools the program currently serves, and expand programming to reach new schools and communities. The resources that Q4HE provides will enable HNW to expand its programming to help more students develop communication skills that will empower a lifetime of critical thinking.

“We’ve been privileged to have partnered with Quest employees for many years who have mentored our students, participated in student interviews, and assisted in other volunteer activities. We look forward to deepening our relationship so our students and communities can benefit from the talent and resources that Quest offers.”

– **Marian Uhlman**  
Executive Director, Healthy NewsWorks

## Healthy NewsWorks



“Through Healthy NewsWorks, my students are taught skills they would not otherwise have been exposed to at this early age. The program challenges our young reporters every step of the way as they learn the importance of carefully researched and fact-based informational writing. The program taps into the talents of my students while also presenting them with career choices that they didn’t know existed.”

– **Morgan Washington-Leslie**  
Healthy NewsWorks Teacher

“I learned much about things and how to be careful around viruses, the internet, and more, especially when we interviewed an emergency department nurse. I actually listened and enjoyed being there. I learned about how nurses handle patients who have COVID—even how people work together during this pandemic.”

– **Healthy NewsWorks student**  
4th grade



## Helping ensure the health and success of future leaders

### National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc.

The **National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc.** (NBCA) is dedicated to the growth and development of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) through scholarships, internships, training, technical assistance, alumni recognition, and programs that encourage humanitarian involvement. With a new grant, Q4HE is expanding Quest’s long-term support for the NBCA with a focus on 3 areas of need:

- Providing funding for HBCUs to engage healthcare leaders to educate college students about critical issues such as mental health, social justice, and violence prevention
- Helping HBCUs identify and address COVID-19 testing needs at their institutions in partnership with the National Sustainability Summit
- Supporting the creation of a health testing and diagnostics program for 7 HBCU football teams, including their coaches and trainers

The athletic initiative is designed to integrate with each university’s health system to more effectively deliver care and utilize findings to educate students about their overall health and well-being. This integration will enable universities to better analyze campus food and health service systems.

With more than 300,000 students enrolled, HBCUs send nearly 60,000 graduates into the workforce annually. Through Quest’s ongoing support, and with this new investment from Q4HE, the NBCA will expand its efforts to help students transform their potential into possibility.



“Quest for Health Equity provides a depth of partnership that will have a real impact on the health of students at HBCUs. Quest’s diverse executive team has demonstrated a commitment to our young adults’ health and their future well-being. Leadership is everything, and we are thankful to Steve Rusckowski and his vision to close the significant gaps in healthcare in this country.”

– **Tommy Dortch**  
NBCA Board Chairman and CEO, TWD, Inc.



Through Quest’s ongoing support, and with this new investment from Q4HE, the **NBCA** will expand its efforts to help HBCU students transform their potential into possibility.

# Preventing diabetes and improving health outcomes across New Mexico

## Presbyterian Medical Services

**Presbyterian Medical Services** (PMS) is an FQHC that delivers integrated healthcare, education, and services to address the needs of diverse communities across the Southwest, with a specific focus on Native American populations. PMS serves more than 9,000 patients with diabetes across New Mexico. Of those patients, one-third are not adequately managing their conditions, and are therefore at risk of developing life-threatening complications.



With Q4HE’s support, **Presbyterian Medical Services** is implementing the New Mexico Diabetes Prevention Action Plan to provide intervention and support services for individuals living with diabetes.

With Q4HE’s support, PMS is implementing the New Mexico Diabetes Prevention Action Plan, a comprehensive plan to provide intervention and support services for individuals living with diabetes. The Action Plan’s certified diabetes educators provide counseling for tribal and other community members newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes as well as for existing patients with uncontrolled diabetes. Follow-up services are provided in person, over the phone, and virtually to better monitor patients, address questions, and ensure medication compliance. This can include regular screenings for blood pressure, BMI, and general health to monitor HbA1c levels and make referrals for additional treatment if necessary. Additionally, PMS provides supplies including home-monitoring glucometers to enable patients to monitor and report their glucose levels more regularly.

Preventive services are crucial to help patients manage their health before conditions like diabetes develop, so PMS also provides counseling and educational resources for individuals with prediabetic symptoms.



“Adult diabetes tends to be highest among Native Americans and Hispanics across our service area, and early diagnosis, education, and continuing chronic care follow-up are key factors in reducing this health disparity. The number of uncontrolled diabetes patients has also increased in the past year partly due to reduced clinic visits and lifestyle changes caused by COVID. By partnering with Quest for Health Equity, PMS can expand access to diabetes education programs and home monitoring systems. This will create pathways for consistent health education and awareness, resulting in healthy habits and long-term positive impacts in underserved populations.”

– **Lisa Stephens**  
Grants and Contracts Manager, Presbyterian Medical Services



Our purpose is you.

## Bringing healthcare to children in rural communities

### Primary Care of Southwest Georgia

For many underserved families, transportation is a barrier to getting their children to routine doctor appointments or to receiving critical medical treatment. With Q4HE’s support, **Primary Care of Southwest Georgia** (PCSG)—an FQHC providing healthcare services to families—will open its second school-based health center. There, it will deploy mobile COVID-19 testing as well as provide general healthcare services for students and their families.

In addition to wellness screenings, chronic disease screenings, and other routine health services, PCSG plans to expand COVID-19 testing, vaccine access, and educational efforts with a focus on public housing sites, church events, and underserved populations in the Early County area of southwest Georgia. Q4HE’s support will also fund the purchase of a van to ensure that a lack of transportation is never a barrier to families seeking care at one of PCSG’s clinics.



With Q4HE’s support, **Primary Care of Southwest Georgia** will open its second school-based health center and purchase a van to ensure that a lack of transportation is never a barrier to care.



“The day we received the Q4HE grant was one of the most rewarding days I’ve had as CEO of PCSG. We’ve worked with Quest Diagnostics for more than 10 years, and our partnership has allowed our sliding-scale patients to receive critical lab work at a discounted rate. Now we’re able to open a site at a school that serves a predominantly low-income community, and we’re purchasing a van to transport students from across the area so they can get medical care without their parents having to take off a day of work. What a blessing for the community of Early County to expand our safety net of healthcare services.”

– **Angie McVey**  
Primary Care of Southwest Georgia



## Reducing COVID-19’s impact in long-term care facilities

### Project HOPE

**Project HOPE** is an international global health and humanitarian relief organization with decades of experience responding to crises around the world. Teams from Project HOPE help people overcome disease and empower health workers with the training and tools they need to save lives. As COVID-19 evolved into a pandemic in early 2020, Project HOPE expanded its support services to a network of healthcare workers and frontline responders as they fought to contain the virus and reduce its impacts around the globe and in the US.



Q4HE is providing COVID-19 testing to support **Project HOPE’s** targeted pandemic response in long-term care and residential facilities.

Q4HE is providing COVID-19 testing to support Project HOPE’s targeted pandemic response in long-term care and residential facilities, with a focus on those that are most vulnerable and possess the fewest resources. In addition, Q4HE is providing funding to support Project HOPE’s crisis response program, which includes staffing, travel, materials, and more. Together, Project HOPE and Q4HE are working to improve COVID-19 testing access for vulnerable populations, reduce transmission in long-term care facilities, and address—and overcome—key health inequities in marginalized communities.

“Project HOPE served as a bridge between our organization and the Illinois Department of Public Health, which put us at ease in moving forward through the pandemic, especially when an outbreak hit our facility. The Project offered us many resources to comply with what was needed during that time and in the aftermath, including support, encouragement, and instruction that we otherwise would not have had, and without which, in the end, we may not have been so successful in pulling through. Having resources and a go-to with any question or trouble we experienced, with typically immediate response, allowed us to take care of our residents during the height of the outbreak, providing them with the best care possible.”

– **Natalie Pekala**  
OP, NHA, Rosary Hill Home, Justice, IL

“Everyone has a right to health, and everyone has a right to care, and if we don’t provide it and equip those in need with the tools to respond to the next emergency, the gap will continue to widen. Quest for Health Equity’s support is critical, allowing us to address the needs of these populations. If it wasn’t for Quest for Health Equity, we wouldn’t be able to do it. There is no one doing what Quest is doing, and it is greatly appreciated that they’re thinking of a market that isn’t getting a lot of funding and attention. They’re establishing their own path with Project HOPE to address these overlooked elderly populations.”

– **Theresa Rhodes**  
Associate Vice President, Project HOPE





## Helping Puerto Ricans recover from long COVID

Salud Integral en la Montaña, Inc.

Since 1974, **Salud Integral en la Montaña, Inc** (SIM), an FQHC in Puerto Rico, has been dedicated to serving the needs of medically underserved residents in multiple municipalities across the island. When COVID-19 began to spread throughout Puerto Rico, particularly in underserved communities, SIM found itself with a crucial role to play in supporting the health of the medically underserved.

While SIM has helped many Puerto Ricans recover from the virus, many are experiencing long COVID, where symptoms persist long past the point of active infection. Recognizing the suffering experienced by these long-haulers, SIM set up the first clinic in Puerto Rico to provide treatment and care specifically for these patients. Made possible through funding support from Q4HE, Puerto Rico’s first post-COVID-19 Care Clinic was opened by SIM, and a growing number of patients experiencing long COVID symptoms have been receiving critical tailored care.

With a strong track record and a comprehensive suite of services, SIM is well positioned to support this post-COVID-19 community and serve as a model for other clinics and centers around the world. With our support, SIM will be able to build upon these resources and help thousands of Puerto Ricans manage and overcome the impacts of long COVID.





Made possible through funding support from Q4HE, **SIM** opened Puerto Rico’s first post-COVID-19 Care Clinic.

Through this funding, SIM provides post-COVID-19 patients with care from a multidisciplinary team comprised of specialists in cardiology, psychology, dermatology, gastroenterology, pneumology, and nephrology who are equipped to address respiratory issues, heart and vascular problems, fatigue, neurological abnormalities, and more. Patients benefit by having all their needs examined at once rather than having to visit different doctors who lack access to the electronic health records managed by a different facility.

These services are available not only to those inside the scope of SIM’s service areas, but also to people across all 78 municipalities of the island, reflecting SIM’s long-standing commitment to serving those with the greatest need. Through this innovative clinic, SIM expects to deliver integrated care for at least 2,450 patients who meet clinical admission criteria during the first year of operation, and this number will likely increase.

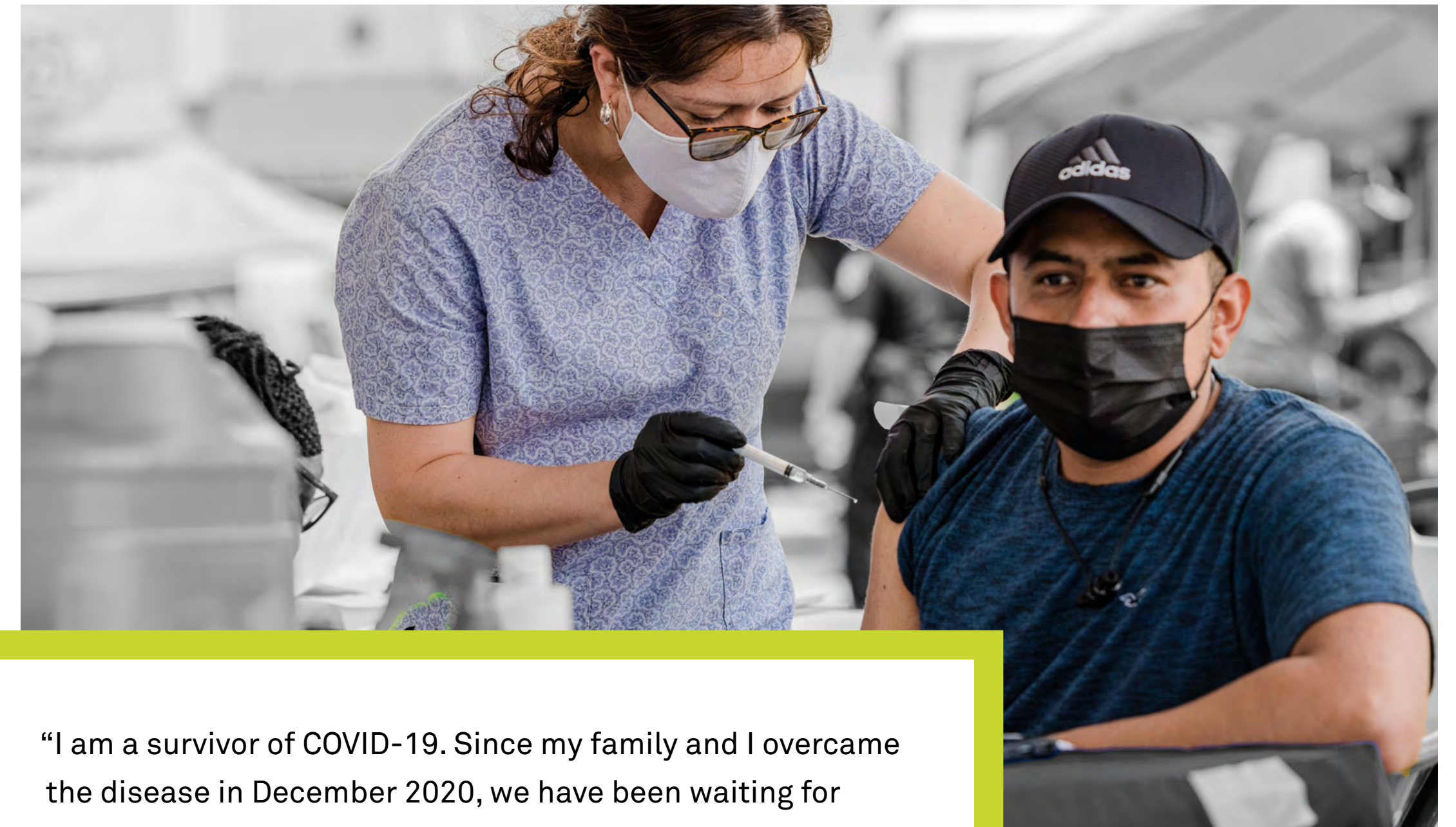
## Salud Integral en la Montaña, Inc.

“There’s no doubt that we have a big responsibility; however, we feel proud of being selected by Quest for Health Equity to open the first and only post-COVID-19 Care Clinic in Puerto Rico. We also feel confident that we can accomplish this important task by improving the lives of our post-COVID-19 patients and that this experience will enable SIM to understand the cause of a post-COVID-19 patient’s symptoms, find out if the patient is at risk of additional health issues, and create a treatment plan that meets the patient’s needs.”

– **Dr. Gloria del C. Amador Fernández**  
President and Chief Executive Officer, SIM

“Scientific evidence reveals that a majority of patients who suffer or have suffered from COVID-19 face a variety of ongoing symptoms, from respiratory and cardiac problems to fatigue and neurological symptoms to any number of other symptoms and diseases. In response, we established a team of medical specialists who can help our patients address and overcome these debilitating ailments. With Q4HE’s support, this team will be able to serve a growing number of Puerto Ricans in need of this highly specialized and critical care.”

– **Dr. Nelson Almodóvar**  
Medical Director, SIM



“I am a survivor of COVID-19. Since my family and I overcame the disease in December 2020, we have been waiting for a post-COVID clinic in Puerto Rico. We were pleasantly surprised when we received a call from Salud Integral en la Montaña inviting us to the first clinic. They have met my expectations regarding the follow-up of all symptoms with corresponding specialists to ensure my optimal health and wellness. I urge all the surviving patients of COVID wherever SIM is present to access these valuable services. Thank you for taking care of my and my family’s health, and may this clinic continue to help many more people.”

– **Alberto Vazquez**  
Patient



## Supporting the health and wellness of vulnerable children and families

### Sesame Workshop

**Sesame Workshop** is on a “quest for health equity.” The global nonprofit organization and its beloved characters, backed by their tremendous decades-long child development expertise, will partner with Q4HE to serve young children and families in rural and urban environments to promote healthy behaviors and well-being. With Q4HE’s support, Sesame Workshop is creating dynamic, culturally relevant content and resources for children, parents, and healthcare providers, centered on 3 key goals: promoting healthy practices during sick- and well-child visits, using culturally sensitive health literacy to create partnerships to reduce health disparities, and taking action to address nutritional well-being and food insecurity.



Together, Q4HE and **Sesame Workshop** are creating an initiative to improve the well-being of young children and their families, especially those most marginalized, through their trusted brand and adored Sesame Street characters.

Sesame Workshop’s health equity initiative is designed to reach marginalized communities most affected by health disparities. To achieve the greatest reach, all content will be in English and Spanish. Using the learnings and strategies from Sesame Workshop’s Coming Together racial justice initiative, this effort will address the health and well-being inequities frequently impacting young children and families as well as those experiencing greater health risks due to COVID-19. The initiative will lead with formative research to create a series of multimedia resources and child-friendly spaces in a variety of locations where children and families access health services.



## Educating early learners to create better health outcomes

### Social and Health Research Center

Hispanic and Black populations have long experienced disproportionate rates of childhood obesity in the US. COVID-19 has exacerbated this issue and others, putting more minority and low-income populations at risk for extensive health complications, according to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

To help address this crisis, the **Social and Health Research Center** (SAHRC) of San Antonio, TX, under the leadership of Executive Director Dr. Roberto Trevino, developed the **Bienestar/NEEMA Coordinated School Health Program** (**Bienestar**). This evidence-based curriculum is designed to educate and engage children in positive behaviors that can significantly reduce the health risks of obesity, diabetes, respiratory ailments, and other predisposing conditions. Since its launch, Bienestar has been recognized as a successful intervention program by numerous public health and education agencies, including the CDC, the National Institutes for Health (NIH), the Texas Education Agency, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the National Cancer Institute.

To influence behavior change, SAHRC is developing content that is both affordable for schools and engaging for students. With support from Q4HE, SAHRC is converting its kindergarten through 3rd-grade curriculum from a traditional textbook format to an interactive, digital animated platform, making it more economical for school districts and more compelling for students. This new platform utilizes age-appropriate, full-motion 3D animated characters, animated sing-alongs, tutorials, and gamification of quizzes and tests to inform, entertain, and inspire students to adopt healthy habits.



“This grant from Q4HE provides a better chance of reaching more children and families with more effective health messaging. This means that we can help close the gap in health equity and prevent the development of type 2 diabetes and heart disease in more communities. Less disease means fewer sick days taken, less school missed, and longer lives lived. If that doesn’t tug at your heartstrings, what does?”

– **Dr. Roberto Trevino**  
Executive Director, SAHRC



With Q4HE’s support, **SAHRC** will be able to expand its reach, offering a more accessible, inspiring, and affordable curriculum for schools to engage underserved student populations.

## Social and Health Research Center



The Bienestar program is culturally appropriate and designed to engage high-risk students. Its coordinated lessons were created for use in health and physical education classes, in school food service programs, and in direct engagement with parents. SAHRC is using this curriculum to help reduce blood glucose and insulin levels, decrease obesity rates, increase dietary fiber intake, and increase fitness levels in children. With Q4HE's support, SAHRC will be able to expand its reach from San Antonio across the country, offering a more accessible, inspiring, and affordable curriculum for schools to engage underserved student populations.

“The dramatic decrease in the cost of the Bienestar curriculum makes it accessible for school districts serving low-income communities. Through digitization of its content, the price for schools dropped from \$18,000 for the printed version to under \$1,000 for the digitized version. This puts the resource within reach so our students can improve their health and quality of life.”

– **Pedro Martinez**

Superintendent, San Antonio Independent School District

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# TEAM REFLECTIONS



Committed to expanding access to critical testing and services for those who need it most

Hear from Q4HE team members who, together with Quest's collaborators, are making great strides in **reducing health inequities in the country's most vulnerable communities**. Their work to date has already made a difference—though they view it as just the beginning.

## Fighting COVID-19 is just the beginning



**Mandell Jackson**

Vice President/General Manager, Quest for Health Equity

When we launched Quest for Health Equity (Q4HE), we focused first on addressing the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on our most vulnerable communities. We collaborated with others to move forward—and to move quickly—to provide testing and information. While fighting COVID-19 aligns perfectly with our larger goal to increase health equity, **we also knew when we started Q4HE** that our poorest communities faced the greatest risk from healthcare disparities. We have been—and continue to be—focused on that larger goal through initiatives that support underserved communities.

Quest stepped in to do this work because healthcare disparities, especially in Black and Hispanic communities, are a growing concern. **In the time since we launched Q4HE**, we've built partnerships with community-based organizations, national nonprofits, religious leaders, academic institutions, and healthcare leaders to address these disproportionate impacts and advance health equity for underserved populations. And we'll continue to build these partnerships—to fund the work of those providing direct services and make our own expertise and resources available—so we can close the gap in health disparities.

I'm excited to share what we've accomplished so far, and I'm also eager to move Q4HE forward. Together, we will leverage our insights, our knowledge, and our collective commitment to help ensure everyone—regardless of income, ethnicity, geography, or demographics—has the same opportunity for better health.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MJ'.



**Bonnie Reyna, MPH, MsED**

Director, Advancing Equity in Communities

“Being part of this team and this organization is inspiring. It allows us to **collectively and positively impact communities** to examine social determinants of health and reduce health inequalities. I am most proud of being able to offer our partners opportunities to address critical health needs in ways that are community centered, respectful, culturally intelligent, and trustworthy.”

**Michael Floyd**

Sr. Director, Advancing Equity in Diagnostics

“What is beautifully unique about Quest for Health Equity is that we support authentic projects that truly impact lives in communities that, through no fault of their own, have been marginalized. From helping to launch a rural FQHC’s school-based clinic (and funding its purchase of a van to deliver healthcare to patients without transportation) to addressing the ravages of diabetes in hard-hit New Mexico communities, we continue to do amazing work. Going forward, we endeavor to go deeper into underserved and under-resourced communities. **My excitement is high and my commitment is even stronger to continue supporting and offering value to those in need!**”

**Stacey Ingram**

Sr. Manager, Networked Initiatives

“Like many other companies in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder during a global pandemic, Quest decided to do something about health inequity. Unlike many of these other companies, we are still at it. More than a year later, Quest is still actively engaged in positively impacting disparities in healthcare, and Q4HE is building increasing momentum in this vein. This journey has the feel and excitement of a start-up, and my role in Quest for Health Equity has provided a great opportunity for me to learn and develop—both personally and professionally—as we build this start-up. **That’s why I feel so proud to be a part of this initiative to impact health equity.**”

**Cynita Smith-Watson**

Sr. Manager, Community Partnerships

“I recently joined the Quest for Health Equity team, and it makes me feel honored to be doing good work for our communities on behalf of Quest Diagnostics. I take enormous pride in knowing that my company is a leader in addressing healthcare disparities and inequities. **Moving forward, I see us expanding Q4HE to provide resources to those who need them the most.**”



**Rafael Irizarry**

Director, Aged and Elder Initiatives

“**Quest for Health Equity’s vision and mission**—to level the playing field for health disparities in underserved populations and/or marginalized populations and to enhance access to care—touched me very closely. I’ve been the leader for the long-term care segment, an area where I can see myself helping my family as I am helping others with no access to healthcare. It has been a privilege to work with this team as well as with an organization that truly cares about its patients. Why? Because every step of the way we treat them as we would our own loved ones.”

**Kimberley Tucker**

Sr. Manager, Operations

“I’m honored that I’ve had the opportunity to work with such a great team to make a difference in underserved communities. This team, together with our collaborators, is making great strides in reducing health disparities in our most vulnerable communities. This is just the beginning, as I foresee **Quest for Health Equity continuing to build trust and improve critical health inequities in these communities.**”

**Callie Poindexter**

Marketing and Place-Based Programs

“Working with a team of such passionate, caring, and motivated individuals on truly **impactful initiatives** has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me. I’m proud of the work we’ve done to expand access to critical testing and services in communities across the US and couldn’t be more excited about initiatives we’ll be launching in the coming months. Year one has been a building year—**building processes, relationships, programs, and more**—and I know the best is yet to come.”