

Staying focused on community needs is critical during times like these...

At Mesirow, we find value in connectivity — connecting deeply with our clients, our authentic connections within the communities we serve and [the connectivity within our employee base](#). In March 2020, the big question loomed: how are we going to continue those vital points of connection while separated at our home offices during the course of the pandemic?

The answer and course for moving forward came organically. Clients required deeper engagement to gain understanding of the fast-moving economic implications, and our communities needed us more than ever.

Addressing basic needs of our neighbors

To address urgent needs in food security, the acute needs of small businesses, and comprehensive needs of families across Chicago and the suburbs, Mesirow has doubled down on existing partnerships with nonprofit agencies such as [Chicago Public Schools Foundation Compassion Fund](#) and [Metropolitan Family Services](#). We also opened new avenues of funding via matching employee donations to 10 nonprofits that provide COVID-10 associated urgent assistance to individuals and families, including [Feeding America and its local affiliates](#), [Accion Illinois and national chapters](#) and families in Brighton Park, the neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side [with which we've partnered since 2013](#). Additionally, Mesirow's employee resource groups, [WomenConnect](#) and [PrideConnect](#), made critical donations to [YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago](#) and [Center on Halsted](#), respectively.

Our [new corporate partnership with Highland Park Community Foundation](#) helped make impact in our Highland Park office's backyard with multiple rounds of unprecedented and unexpected [emergency grant distribution](#) in the months of May through November.

Lifting up the performing arts community

A passion of many of our clients and employees is the performing arts, a sector that has been hit hard with patrons unable to take their seats in auditoriums, and fundraisers having come to a screeching halt. Partnering with World Business Chicago, the city's economic development agency, Mesirow sponsored a virtual 5K run/walk in October that raised critical funding for the [Arts for Illinois Relief Fund](#), providing grants and subsidies in support of Illinois' rich and diverse performing arts communities. And, Mesirow contributed toward the [Crisis Stability Fund of the Joffrey Ballet](#) through sponsorship of a virtual take on the annual Nutcracker Ballet.

Employees coming together for our communities, while apart

Despite not coming together, Mesirow's employee volunteerism and fundraising efforts haven't stopped. We provided 650 notes of hope that were distributed in food packages to Brighton Park families through nonprofit [Communities in Schools of Chicago](#). And, we worked one-on-one with young job seekers to conduct mock interviews and review resumes via video.

Our employees look forward annually to gathering around Thanksgiving and the winter holidays in our partner neighborhood of Brighton Park, where more than 550 coats and boots have been distributed and more than 900 individuals' holiday wish lists have been fulfilled over the past few years. While we must accomplish this from home this year, we're as determined as ever to make the holidays warm and special for these individuals. During the Thanksgiving holiday, employees provided 65 Brighton Park families with grocery gift cards and sent household necessities such as laundry detergent and shampoo to residents served by [Metropolitan Family Services](#) Evanston/Skokie Valley Center. And, we're currently gearing up our online shopping accounts to fulfil wish lists for the holidays.

Shared values

We invite you, our clients who we know share our deep values of giving and connecting, to find the organization that speaks to you, and stay connected in giving this year.

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