

*A home is where we live. But it is also the place we want to feel safest. Sometimes it isn't a physical structure, but a community, a city, a country. And if the pandemic reminded us of the fundamental need for protection, so too did the killing of George Floyd remind us that some Americans were not being given that protection—not in their streets, not in their cities, not in their country.*

- Hanya Yanagihara

**What will we remember when we look back on 2020?** COVID-19. George Floyd. Sheltering in place. Missing those we couldn't be with. Ahmaud Arbery. Long lines at food banks. And polling places. Too much work or not enough. Democracy in descent. Breonna Taylor. Demands for justice. Courage. Resilience.

At **WestCoast Children's Clinic**, we worried about our children and families having enough to eat. And a safe place to stay. The kids we serve live at the intersection of poverty, systemic racism, and intergenerational trauma. The majority are in foster care. Nearly all are children of color.

Their list of worries is longer and more dangerous than most:  
Being stopped by the police and not making it home alive.  
Living in a zip code where they are twice as likely to contract COVID-19.  
And two and a half times more likely to die from it.

Some kids had to shelter in place without a home. At our Assessment Center, 1,000 children made their way to us as they first entered foster care. Helping kids acclimate to foster care is not new. But this year, "When will I get to see my Mom?" became "Will I ever see my Mom?"

Antonio's mom leaves for her job at 5 a.m. before he wakes up. He's by himself all day. When he can find a spot in the apartment where the internet works, he keeps his camera off so the connection is more stable—he's invisible to his teacher and classmates, except for his name on the screen in a small black box.

Angela's refuge was school. And it's where she ate breakfast and lunch. The school is still offering food for pickup but the school bus isn't running.

Rashad didn't want to "do therapy" at all, let alone on Zoom. So his therapist taught him yoga online. Now, he is sitting on his yoga mat when his therapist signs on. Handstands are how they make sense of a world turned upside down.

Kiesha hadn't been in contact with WestCoast. For weeks. After missed calls and texts, her case manager drove to her house to drop off a note and back-to-school supplies, including the purple pens Kiesha likes. A little while later, she texted her case manager: "You remembered!"

**Our work as mental health providers expanded as kids' worlds shrunk.** We have provided a stable connection for our kids by innovating and adapting to the added challenge of the pandemic, and all it brings to bear.

We delivered groceries, masks, and other essentials to our children and families.

We got laptops to kids and internet service vouchers to caregivers.

We connected hungry kids to schools where they can get breakfast and lunch—without taking a bus.

We made sure kids who are alone all day while their parent works had regular check-ins with their favorite teacher and someone on their WestCoast team.

We don't know what 2021 will bring. But with your support, we will keep doing whatever it takes to help our kids feel safe and connected.

**Until safety is a right, not a privilege.**





## WestCoast Children's Clinic

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