

Collective Action in Kent: an Extraordinary Response to COVID-19

An Exhibit for Greater Kent Historical Society & "GKHS Exhibit Building Guide"

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Background

Greater Kent Historical Society runs the Kent Museum located in Kent, WA. Kent was incorporated in 1890, and is the second oldest incorporated city in the county after Seattle. Kent was settled by European-American pioneers, and much of its history the population stayed relatively small. In the past 30 years, Kent population has increased drastically- by approx. 100,000 people. The city is now one of the most ethnically diverse in the nation, with 130 different languages represented in the school district.

The Kent Museum does a wonderful job of teaching the early history of the city through its current exhibitions. However, the museum is looking to more accurately represent modern residents by featuring a community focused exhibit on the first floor.

Greater Kent Historical Society (GKHS) recently updated their interpretive plan and is looking to install an exhibit that fits its new goals. The exhibit is about local response to COVID-19 and was requested by members of the community who participated in aid distribution. It will serve as representation for the audience that requested it and show that the community in Kent is resilient in the face of crisis.

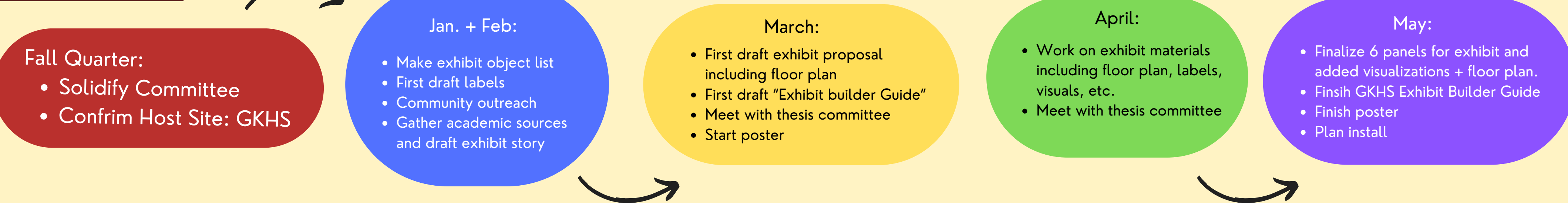
Purpose & Impact

The purpose is to create an exhibit for the Greater Kent Historical Society that follows their updated interpretive plan and to create a document to guide volunteers through future exhibits.

The first outcome is to completely prepare educational panels for an exhibit about Kent community members showing unity and bravery in the face of unprecedented times. The target audience is Kent community members and their allies who are interested in local aid distribution. The exhibit will be representative of many local nonprofits, volunteers and workers, and the community members that they serve. We hope that this exhibit advertises local organizations still in operation, and that visitors feel they can get involved in local community service initiatives.

The second outcome is creating an outline for future GKHS volunteers who want to create exhibits. Using my experience creating **Collective Action in Kent**, I explained the general process of exhibit creation. The purpose and impact of this document is to ease and quicken the process of planning future exhibits at GKHS.

Process



Conclusions & Next Steps

Planning an exhibit takes dozens of drafts, and editing down is an important step. There was so much information both about the pandemic and Kent in 2020 that I couldn't possibly include it all. I had to focus on what visitors should gain and only include the information necessary to achieve that take-away. A challenging part of writing the panels was organizing the information so it can be easily digested, with the most relevant points at the top and visuals to break up walls of text.

Next steps for this exhibit is to be installed at the Kent Museum. After a limited run, the panels can be re-used again in the future. The longer time passes from COVID-19, the more important it is to educate the next generation on what happened. Additionally, the "GKHS Exhibit Planning Guide" can be used to plan exhibits in the space after **Collective Action in Kent** closes.

Deliverables

Excerpts of all deliverables are on the right. The first deliverable is the Greater Kent Historical Society and Kent Museum Interpretive Planning document (outlined in orange). This document is the standard for the museum. It outlines project description, goals, audience, and desired visitor outcomes. Another deliverable is a plan for **Collective Action in Kent: an Extraordinary Response to COVID-19**. The final deliverable is the "GKHS Exhibit Building Guide". This document will help volunteers plan exhibits that take the new interpretive plan into account (outlined in yellow).

References

Ellis, L. (2020, September 30). What's happening in Kent? A documentary film about Summer 2020 in Kent, WA, <https://youtu.be/YW7KcV2i1lo?feature=shared>
Hunter, S. (2022, September 16). "Kent ranks 7th as most ethnically diverse city in the nation." *Kent Reporter*. <https://www.kentreporter.com/news/kent-ranks-7th-as-most-ethnically-diverse-city-in-the-nation/>

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge the Greater Kent Historical Society and Kent Museum, Dylan High, Lane Eagles, Spencer Williams, Brenda Farwell, Kent Community Foundation, Logan Ellis, Nancy Salguero-McKay, and the non-profits who participated in Kent Community Partners. I'd also like to thank my partner, my friends, and my family for helping me brainstorm. Finally, I'd like to thank the University of Washington, the Museology Program, and all the faculty and students who contributed to my education.

Look and Feel of Exhibit

- Greater Kent Historical Society brand colors, and adjacent colors



- cartoon & clip art vibe to lighten the serious tone of pandemic for younger visitors

Pack a grocery box!

An idea for a hands on activity would be providing USDA boxes and objects for people to pack in them/play with.

Fake fruits, veggies, and seafood, empty milk cartons and egg cartons to demonstrate what would've been in a grocery box

We can also include a food groups sign that can serve as an extra educational element such as "Dairy: Milk, Yogurt, Cheese" and "Fruit: Apple, Orange, Banana", etc.



Possible text:

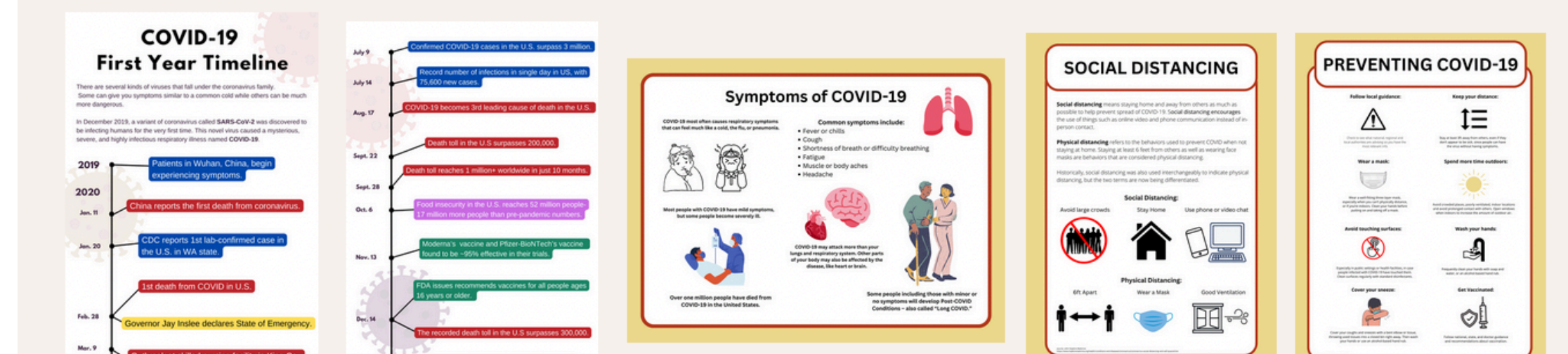
During the COVID-19 pandemic, local volunteers packed boxes of groceries to distribute to help keep their neighbors fed.

Try packing one of the boxes. Make sure to add a variety of items including fruit, vegetables, dairy, and protein sources.

Take Home Messages:

- The COVID-19 pandemic was unlike anything that had been experienced before, and systems were unprepared to deal with the fallout of a global pandemic.
- Facing unprecedented times, Kent community members and organizations took the reins and stepped up to care for each other in ways that were exceptional and held up as a national example of how to respond during COVID-19.
- When we work together as a community, we can accomplish wonderful feats like feeding thousands of people while abiding by mask and distancing rules. If other disruptions to daily life occur, we have the ability to care for each other and make it through hard times.

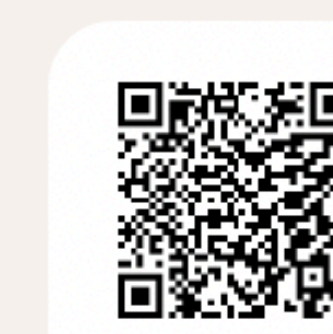
COVID-19 and the rise in emergency aid



- This section will consist of two 23.5" x 60" panels and five 11" x 17" poster board panels, including the title and the introductory quote by Katy Miller panels
- Timeline of COVID to show how quickly the pandemic hit and how devastating it was in terms of deaths and infections.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 to show it is a VERY serious illness that targets multiple organ systems
- Social distancing signage and preventing COVID-19 to show that it took a lot of trial and error to come up with protocol for best protecting ourselves. Now that we know best practices, we must take precautions to avoid getting infected with an illness that can leave lasting and compounding repercussions to one's health.

Kent Community Partners and Increased Cooperation:

- This section is the bulk of the story and will include two 23.5" x 60" panels (example of panel one on the left)
- It will include pictures and quotes from local non-profits
- This section will ask the visitors to reflect on what they went through during the COVID-19 pandemic
- A QR code to the Kent Community Partners page that has links to the participating organizations
- There will be community member spotlights of specific volunteers and their experiences



Scan to go to the Kent Community Partner's website & links to webpages of all involved organizations.

Looking Ahead and Getting involved

Trying to decide what to do about the food bank?
Top 5 service member issues about food bank:
1. Stop...
2. Contact...
3. Contact...
4. Contact...
5. Contact...
6. Contact...
7. Contact...
8. Contact...
9. Contact...
10. Contact...
Thank to yourself! What would be needed to get a food delivery?
Add a non-participate from the member position or your needs.



- This section is guides visitors to get involved in the local community service network
- It will include two 23.5" x 60" panels and a resource cork board with current contact info for local organizations
- We can also put up monthly schedules on where to find local food assistance
- We hope that these panels help visitors take the leap by providing access to webpages of local organizations

(Above) Excerpts of Exhibit Plan

Part 2: Community Outreach

Some exhibits require input from community members or local organizations. It is important to reach out prior to the majority of the exhibit planning process, in case the community has unexpected issues or seems uninterested. If community outreach is low priority, email is an appropriate way to reach out. If community input is high priority, there might be more responses if you reach out via phone.

- Example questions used for *Collective Action in Kent: an Extraordinary Response to COVID-19*:
- What would you like to see included in an exhibit about 2020 Kent community cooperation for food distribution?
 - Is there anything you would like the Greater Kent Historical Society to know about your organization or your contribution during 2020 that you would like included in the exhibit? Is there anything we should avoid including in the exhibit?
 - Are there lessons from 2020 that your organization learned that contribute to your current work?
 - Do you have advice for visitors who might want to get involved in community service?

Excerpt of GKHS Exhibit Building Guide

Project/Exhibit Title: Collective Action in Kent: an Extraordinary Response to COVID-19

Location/Gallery/Space: Small room behind office, first floor

Date(s): Summer/Fall 2024

Curator/Program Organizer: Ray Cagnetta, Dylan High, and the Greater Kent Historical Society

Museum Goals: (What will the museum achieve with this project/exhibit. 1-3 goals maximum.)

- GKHS will create an exhibit about COVID-19 and the initial response, a topic that is under-explored since it has only been 4 years since the outbreak.
- GKHS will make an exhibit that faithfully represents the diverse assortment of organizations that came together for the first time and their contribution to the Kent community.
- GKHS will have a framework for future exhibits about modern topics.

Partners/Partner Organizations: N/A

Big Idea: This exhibit explores the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationally recognized grassroots response led by Kent community members.

Excerpt of Interpretive Planning document



Scan to go to the Kent Community Partner's website & links to webpages of involved organizations