As we close out another busy summer and head into the fall, there is a lot to reflect on and even more to look forward to at West Modesto Community Collaborative.

August brought another successful Back to School Health Fair, an event that has continued to grow over the years. When WMCC brought the Health Fair back as COVID restrictions began to ease, our goal was not only to connect families with health services and resources, but also to bring the community back together and encourage in-person participation. Since then, the event has grown to include more community partners and vendors, a wider range of free health services and screenings, family activities, basic-needs resources, and hundreds of backpacks and school supplies for local students. Our sponsors, partners, volunteers, and community members have played a huge role in that growth and in keeping the event free and accessible to families.

We are already looking forward to next year and are especially excited to bring the Back to School Health Fair to the newly renovated MLK Jr. Park, bringing families, services, resources, and community together.

Our work to improve community health also continues beyond individual events. WMCC has been working alongside the StanCO Health Coalition, HR1 Working Group, Sutter Health, Kaiser, Covered California, and Golden Valley Health Centers to better understand and prepare for the impacts that changes under HR1 may have on our communities. Partnerships like these, whether through coalitions, workgroups, community outreach, or direct services, are increasingly important as we work together to address the health inequities and barriers to care that families throughout Stanislaus County continue to face.

We are also continuing to build the People's Plan Partner Collaborative, which launched its partner meetings in July. These meetings bring together organizations working across the People's Plan priority areas to learn more about each other's work, identify opportunities for partnership, share resources, and strengthen collaboration around the priorities residents have identified for their communities. Our next collaborative meeting will take place on September 10, and we look forward to continuing to build this space with our community partners.

And somehow, fall is already right around the corner! The next few months will bring many of the WMCC traditions our community looks forward to each year, including our Trunk or Treat, Coat Drive, Thanksgiving Food Drive, and Christmas Toy Drive. These events are an important part of how we continue supporting families with basic needs while also creating opportunities for our community to come together.

We have also officially started planning our annual Crab Feed Fundraiser, taking place Saturday, January 30. The support we receive through the Crab Feed helps make so much of our community work possible, including the events, resources, and basic-needs assistance we provide throughout the year.

There is a lot ahead, and we are grateful for the residents and our partners, funders, sponsors, volunteers, and supporters who continue to make this work possible. We look forward to another busy fall and winter and to continuing this work alongside our community.

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