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### **HIF Awards 2020 Brooks Saltsman Award**

*The Healthcare Initiative Foundation Awards Vietnamese American Services the 2020 Brooks Saltsman Award for their commitment to volunteerism in the health field*

**Montgomery County, MD – July 8, 2020** – The Healthcare Initiative Foundation (HIF) is honored to announce Vietnamese American Services (VAS) as the 2020 recipient of the Brooks Saltsman Award for their innovative utilization of volunteers to increase access to health and wellness resources during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Brooks Johnstone Saltsman was a former Healthcare Initiative Foundation Trustee who dedicated her life to volunteerism and this award was created to honor her legacy. In 1999, Saltsman was elected as a Board of Trustee for the Healthcare Initiative Foundation. During her tenure as a Trustee, the Foundation had the privilege of benefiting from Saltsman’s tremendous talent and love of service for Montgomery County residents. With this award, VAS will receive \$5,000 to support their ongoing response to COVID-19.

VAS is a Montgomery County nonprofit that exemplifies Saltsman’s dedication to community and volunteerism. Established in 2015 and based in Silver Spring, VAS is focused on the social, physical, and economic well-being of Vietnamese-Americans. VAS’s diverse programming reaches deep into the community through events, such as their annual Maryland Mid-Autumn Festival, English language and economic classes, and their Adult Medical Care Center which opened in 2020. Providing on-site comprehensive medical care, connection to insurance resources, and culturally equitable services, meals, and activities, the Adult Medical Care Center is the first of its kind center in the region to offer this level of care to the Vietnamese-American community.

When COVID-19 struck in March 2020, VAS responded immediately by launching their Sewing Mask Project utilizing members of their community who had been laid off during the pandemic. Within two months, those volunteers had made 15,000 masks for local hospitals and clinics, essential front-line staff, employees at senior care facilities, group-homes, and local shelters. Selflessly, these volunteers sprang into action and addressed an immediate and critical need. One of the Sewing Mask Project’s volunteer seamstress said, “During the quarantine, sewing masks for VAS kept my family busy and allowed us to stay strong together and work together. I called my friends and relatives to donate fabrics, my husband fixed the sewing machine, I sewed, and my kids helped to iron the masks. We were worried about the pandemic but I believe that we can fight back together.” VAS will use this \$5,000 award to continue this COVID-19 response project and to celebrate their volunteers. If you would like to learn more about Vietnamese American Services, their Adult Medical Care Center, or to assist with the Sewing Mask Project, visit their website at [www.vasusa.org](http://www.vasusa.org).

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*HIF supports organizations, within our geographic and focus area, that improve the quality and delivery of healthcare, expand the availability of comprehensive healthcare, build appropriate capacity in the healthcare network, and grow the healthcare workforce for Montgomery County residents. To learn more, please visit our website at [www.hifmc.org](http://www.hifmc.org) and like us on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/hifmc](http://www.Facebook.com/hifmc).*

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If you would like more information about this topic or the Healthcare Initiative Foundation's grant priorities, please contact Jess Fuchs at [Jess.Fuchs@hifmc.org](mailto:Jess.Fuchs@hifmc.org) or 240-499-2827.