“The one-room schoolhouse.”

That was what those that visited the Knollwood Community Center called the original building when it first began. Since then, the Center has grown to provide a variety of child- and family-centered programs, while also providing for the needs of the community. In recent months, those needs have gone up while their capacity to hold events and services has declined. Like many community leaders, however, the people behind the community center have not given up their dedication to go above and beyond for those they serve.

In this era of a global pandemic and an increasingly dwindling sense of normalcy, the Knollwood Community Center has been working on ensuring that their community members’ needs are met. Whether that be food provided by the USDA or daytime activities for children provided online, Community Center Director Shirley and her staff have been making sure to go above and beyond, especially for those that need it.

These leaders, however, can only perform so many miracles for their community. One miracle that they have been less successful in providing is proper medical care for the high number of uninsured community members. Thankfully, Director Shirley has another ally: the Mobile Health Initiative.

“Partnering with the van brings another element to what we are able to provide,” Director Shirley said in an interview. Due to the pandemic, the van’s services have temporarily been halted. The community, however, has asked for the van to return and continue its mission. Even though people are staying inside and doing their best to be as healthy as possible, those that live in the community are still asking for the van to return to assist them with various health issues.

Looking past the pandemic, the Center and their staff are looking to work more from home and provide services through that. As for the Mobile Health Van, they would be interested in webinars while the pandemic rages on and possibly resuming its services once the restrictions on social interactions are lifted. They also expressed interest in classes that would teach the community members how to live more healthy lives, similar to services provided by Christiana Care. Additionally, one member of Director Shirley’s staff that we spoke to, for example, said that she would like to see the van provide services like dental, which is another service that is less available in such communities.

It may be some time before the Mobile Health Van is back at work but our interview with Director Shirley has given us hope that the communities are alive, well, and ready for the van to return. The services provided by the van are appreciated by those in the Claymont area for many reasons but the main reason was probably expressed best by Director Shirley when she said, “This gives them a chance to seek healthcare where they may not be able to seek it anywhere else.”