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Serving Children and Adults with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities for over 70 Years

July 31, 2020

Dear Individuals, Families, and AHRC Suffolk Team Members:

PAUL H. TORRES
Executive Director

Several months back when we began sending out these updates, we all knew there would be a tough road ahead for all of us. So far, that has been true. But your resilience, in concert with our fellow New Yorkers, has shone through and we are now in Phase-4 of reopening Suffolk. With vigilance and continued persistence, we will stay the course. There are concerns that a second wave of COVID-19 could arrive in Suffolk during the upcoming flu season. We are doing what we need to do to stay safe and keep all members of the AHRC Suffolk community safe while planning for the gradual return of service delivery and operations. As always, and as medical experts have stressed, social distancing, mask-wearing, and handwashing/infection control protocols are the new constant we must follow. Thanks to you all for your consistent vigilance with these precautions. They are making a big difference. *#InItTogether*

OFFICERS
John Smith
President

Joseph Zifchock
Treasurer

Joseph Cassarini
Secretary

These last few months have been exceedingly difficult, but your ingenuity, persistence, and creativity never cease to amaze me. Wonderful things have continued to happen at AHRC Suffolk. Our front line team members in Residential, our School and our Day Services have truly been "miracle workers". Valuable, impactful, and positive things continue to take place every day.

DIRECTORS
Deborah Pflieger

So where are we today, almost five months to the day since the stay-at-home order was put into place in New York? Below are very helpful and informative updates on the work being done throughout AHRC Suffolk as well as plans for the coming months.

Educational Services:

- Our summer session at the Seiff Educare Center is currently in progress.
 - Administrative staff are developing several models to put into place for September which will help to educate the students safely.
- "We are now more than halfway through summer session, and our enhanced health and safety practices are becoming routine. It's exciting to see the children adjusting to our new procedures, like stopping at the door during arrival for a temp check and happy greeting from our nurses!" – Andrea Nickdow, Director, Children's Services*

Residential Services:

- Visitation and community outings have resumed in our Residential Department, following safety precautions and guidance from OPWDD.
- Social distancing procedures are continuing to be followed when performing residential screenings and staff has continued to successfully meet and work with families whose loved ones are in need of residential placement. Our procedures for intakes has been commended by families, as we have been able to move in their loved ones to a safe and healthy home.

Adult Day Services:

- In accordance with the regulations set forth by OPWDD, Adult Day Service facilities are now open at no more than 50% capacity applying stringent social distancing, disinfecting and cleaning protocols.
 - Individuals living at home have returned to Adult Day Programs at our Bohemia, Knickerbocker and Westhampton Beach locations; this also includes individuals who usually attend programs at our Lakeland and Annex buildings.
 - Virtual or in-home Day Hab services continue to be provided to individuals who have not yet returned to program. Starting Tuesday, August 4, Day Hab will begin its My Choice Virtual D/H Zoom Classes. These zoom classes will consist of a variety of interesting topics for individuals to learn and enjoy including painting, exercise, cooking and life skills among others.
 - Adult Day Habilitation staff who have been working in the AHRC Suffolk residences since the beginning of the pandemic continue to do so.
 - Those in our Supported Employment program have returned to their jobs with 73 of 89 individuals back at work.
- "We are thrilled to report that with each passing week, more of our individuals in Supported Employment return to the community-based jobs that they love! The individuals are happy, the employers are grateful and the Job Coaches are doing a fabulous job of reacclimating everyone to their tasks and the new safety protocols related to PPE that have been put into place to keep everyone safe!" – Colleen D., Assistant Program Administrator*

In this unpredictable time of constant change, we are always checking and following guidance from Federal, State, and City agencies that regulate to ensure the continued safety of all. Everyone's health and safety has and will continue to be our top priority.

Stay well, stay safe and thank you for all you do,


Paul H. Torres
Executive Director



Your gift to our **COVID-19 Relief Fund** helps us purchase personal protective equipment, provide expanded medical and mental health services, increase our technology, and so much more. To donate, visit www.ahrcsuffolk.org/covidrelief (donations, marked **COVID-19 Relief Fund**, can also be mailed to the address at the top of this page)