



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

March 27, 2020

PAUL TORRES
Executive Director

Dear AHRC Suffolk Individuals, Family Members and Staff,

BOARD MEMBERS

Joseph Cassarini
John Smith
Joseph Zifchock

At AHRC Suffolk, the safety and well-being of the individuals we support and the staff that serves them continues to remain our main priority. We are actively monitoring the COVID-19 Pandemic and are continuing to take all necessary steps to help keep the individuals we support and staff safe and healthy. We remain in tune to our local Department of Health and OPWDD which are providing ongoing updates and guidance on actions to take. We continue utilizing CDC resources to understand the direction being provided to the community and healthcare. The Arc NY is in close contact with our chapter as well as OPWDD and is actively advocating on our behalf.

We realize that due to the visitor restrictions it may be difficult for families and friends to feel connected during this difficult time. We are encouraging everyone to continue to remain connected through phone calls, video chat (such as Facetime or Zoom) and social media. As we are all dealing with the changes to our routine we are aware that this disruption to schedules and daily activities can be very challenging. We continue to try to find creative ways to ensure the individuals' days are filled with a variety of activities and that there is a sense of routine on a daily basis. The residential and day program staff have been encouraging individuals to enjoy the outdoors, whether it be sitting outside or taking a walk in the neighborhood. Others have enjoyed listening to music and singing, assisting with cooking and baking, and various arts and crafts activities. Staff at AHRC Suffolk continue to educate and remind the individuals about social distancing so they understand the importance of it and why we must all follow the guidelines.

In addition to daily cleaning of our environments and frequent washing of hands, we have supplied our residences with personal protective equipment (PPE): gloves, masks, and where recommended gowns and eyewear. Despite our vigilance following recommended precautions, we have one positive case of COVID-19 in an individual in our residences and we have three confirmed positives for staff members who are on quarantine at home. Suffolk County has likely progressed into a Community Exposure stage of the virus and this is frightening to us as a community. Never before has the need to know that we can rely on each other been so great.

Over the past two weeks, there have been many challenges and I know that we will continue to face those challenges together. I continue to admire the way the AHRC Suffolk family has pulled together during these circumstances to ensure the care and needs of every individual. I have confidence in our staff and our families that we will be resilient as long as we are In It Together (#initttogether).

Stay Well,

Paul H. Torres
Executive Director

For updates, send an email (subject: *Contact Information*) to info@suffahrc.org and include your name, email address, cell phone number, and the name of the individual(s) in our program that you're connected to.

Visit www.ahrcsuffolk.org and [www.Facebook.com/AHRCSuffolk](https://www.facebook.com/AHRCSuffolk) for updates.