

# LEXINGTON HAPPENINGS



Welcome to “Lexington Happenings,” a collection of things to do and see and experience at Lexington!

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2020

## MESSAGE FROM SHALONI



Dear Lexington staff member,

I hope each of you is doing well, as are your families.

We currently have one employee in our Albany programs who is positive related to travel. She is recovering. There is

no exposure to anyone else. There has been an increase in testing due to travel, new admissions, return from home visits and hospitalizations. However, no new cases have been diagnosed.

As of July 23, there were a total of 268 positive cases of coronavirus in Fulton County and 2,401 in Albany County. Since July 16, Albany cases rose by 111 and Fulton County by 2. The number of new cases in Albany over a 7-day period rose significantly this week – there are 36 positive cases so far that have been traced back to a July 4 party on Hudson Street in Albany with college students in attendance. The Albany County Executive is encouraging these young people to get tested to help stop the spread. Fulton County dropped during the same period. There has been an increase in Montgomery County due to social gatherings as well.

We are including a resource at the end of Lexington Happenings regarding social gatherings. I would encourage you to read it as you consider expanding your social circle.

Guidance from OPWDD came to us two weeks ago regarding re-opening of day programs, allowing of home visits for people who live in our homes and slightly greater flexibility in allowing community activities. We have been working diligently to develop plans for this. You will find brief overviews of our plans later in this newsletter. Things are changing day by day and will continue to change as we get back to as normal a life as this pandemic allows for the people we support and for you, our staff members. There is a lot of new information for re-opening that is becoming available that we have touched

### MANAGERS:

Please post/share this information with your staff.

Does your program have an event/information you'd like listed here?

Please send all information to Megan Balser ([balserm@thearclexington.org](mailto:balserm@thearclexington.org))

at least two weeks in advance of the event. For community events in Fulton or Albany Counties, please visit the links below.

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

FULTON COUNTY: [fultonmontgomeryny.org](http://fultonmontgomeryny.org)  
[44lakes.com](http://44lakes.com)

ALBANY COUNTY: [albany.com/events/](http://albany.com/events/)  
[events.timesunion.com](http://events.timesunion.com)

on in this newsletter. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your supervisor to get clear and concise guidance about anything that you have questions about so you can best support individuals and each other.

Earlier this week, we held Town Hall Zoom meetings for families and advocates. We were pleased that over 75 families from both Lexington and Schoharie were able to join us to discuss Schoharie Arc and Lexington's experience with COVID-19 to date, and new guidelines from both OPWDD and our agencies regarding the opening of day hab programs, employment supports, transportation, visits of people supported to their family homes, community outings and more. All of the families and advocates were overwhelmingly thankful to all of you for all you have done, and continue to do, for their loved ones. We heard stories and comments about individual programs, residences and more. I would like to share just a few of those statements:

"We are so thankful to the house and day program staff that have been so great ... so wonderful."

"Everyone is doing such a fantastic job."

"I am very impressed with the work that your staff do."

"I really like Lexington. My son is happy."

"I want to praise the staff for keeping my daughter so happy during such a difficult time."

"Lexington has done amazing by my daughter. The staff have been amazing. I am so impressed and thankful."

The sense of pride we feel when we hear these testimonials is overwhelming ... and that's all due to you and what you continue to do every single day with the people you support.

We continue to be amazed at how you are dealing with all of the new guidance and how it affects everyone at Lexington. Thank you so much for your understanding and patience as we all work together to do amazing things ... every single day.

Please take care of yourselves and your families,

Shaloni

## **RE-OPENING OF DAY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

Day services will resume in phases starting Monday, July 27, 2020. The rollout will occur in small steps to ensure that health and safety precautions that include COVID-19 temperature checks and screening, extensive cleaning and disinfection procedures, and social distancing in program areas will be implemented. There have been changes made to day hab locations with such things as furniture groupings, signage and more to accomplish these safety measures.

### **Phase 1**

We will return 30 people who live with their families to our Gloversville and Johnstown Day Habs and 43 Harrison Street locations. These groups will be small in size to start and will not go above 15 participants, and everyone will stay in family-like groups and not co-mingle. There will be no agency transportation at this time.

The Day Hab day is a 4.5 hour day, and as such, Family Support Services will begin to offer services to the individuals in Phase 1 to "wrap around" day habilitation program hours to offer people the opportunity for a longer day beyond the 4.5 hours of day hab, for any individual who is approved for Respite, Community Habilitation and Supplemental Day Hab.

### **Phase 2**

Phase 2 will allow us to serve an additional 35 people who live at home, and will include our Oppenheim Day

Habilitation location. The date for Phase 2 has not yet been determined, but is anticipated to occur several weeks after Phase 1 is implemented. Family Support Services will be offered as well to this group in the same manner as in the first phase.

Individuals living in our Residential Program will continue to receive their day program services at their home until further notice.

### **Employment/Pre-vocational Services**

For employment services, we will begin to assess job positions for those who live in Lexington homes who are employed by Lexington to see how we can start to return them safely to work. We will keep people updated as we move through this process.

## **VISITS TO FAMILY HOMES**

New guidelines and corresponding documents have been developed and put in place, based on OPWDD guidelines. The specifics within each are designed to help ensure that everyone directly and indirectly involved in these visits remains safe and healthy in light of the unique challenges associated with COVID-19.

Here are some of the highlights for these visits:

- All visits have to be pre-scheduled with the Residence Manager or Assistant Director.
- Families will need to provide their own transportation for the visit.
- Visits for less than 48 hours will require individuals to have standard screening procedures upon return.
- Visits that exceed 48 hours will require self-quarantine and COVID testing upon return and then in 7 days.
- We would require that there be no more than one (1) off-site visit every 14 days.
- We are requiring families fill out a “COVID-19 Family Home Visit Attestation” that asks families to document travel, if any, taken outside the family home and names of people with whom the person supported came in close contact (other than those who live in the family residence).
- Screening procedures, including temperature checks, will take place upon return.

## **FAMILY VISITS TO LEXINGTON**

We have instituted new guidelines for family visits to Lexington. In order to make family visits more comfortable, we are offering space within our day programs so that families can use these locations to visit their loved one. This will allow for bathroom use and a controlled environment to avoid weather conditions such as high temperatures or rain. We will still welcome visits at our homes, in outside areas or window visits. The new guidelines also allow for brief embraces (keeping masks on), and we are no longer prohibiting food or drink if the person supported does not need support or supervision to do so.

## **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

New OPWDD guidelines are now allowing for participation in community settings, while remaining safe given the risks associated with COVID-19. Group outings are currently limited to a maximum of 8 people, inclusive of employees, and groups must be from the same home or day program group. Outings are limited to one per day per person. Currently allowable community activities include rides, walks and hikes, picnics, drive-in movies, drive thru food service, picnics, outdoor farmer’s markets, barbershops and hair salons (with knowledge of expectations prior to appointments), and outdoor church services. Indoor church services can be accessed only if the person supported wears a mask throughout the service.

## #RISINGTOGETHER AT LEXINGTON!



*Please enjoy some stories of what's been going on at Lexington for the past couple weeks!*

- Harry Bushnell was excited to go back to in-person physical and occupational therapy! This week, he was the first to try out the NuStep, a new piece of exercise equipment purchased through Community Health Outreach Project grant funds. This accessible cross-trainer style bike will help him improve his strength and endurance, which will in turn improve his ability to transfer and walk. Seventeen people total at the Burke Clinic will benefit from the NuStep to develop strength and independence that can help manage a variety of conditions and mobility needs! Thank you so much to the Cerebral Palsy Association of NYS and The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation for making this possible by providing and administering the Community Health Outreach Program grants!
- Zach Lalonde recently got to spend his birthday at home with his family! Like most of the people we support, Zach had not been able to visit his family in a long time due to the pandemic, so this was a wonderful way to make his special day that much more so!
- Danielle Rector, Gabrielle Jacobs and staff Terri Salvione took advantage of the beautiful weather with a refreshing hike at Willie Wildlife Marsh! Thanks to Terri and all staff making the most of new policies to get people out of the house for safe, rejuvenating outings!
- The women at 24 are always crafting! This week, they painted colorful stepping stones for their yard. Thanks to all the staff who have been so imaginative in recent months coming up with fun, engaging ways to keep everyone busy, happy and creative while they are stuck at home!



## SUPPORT LEXINGTON BY BECOMING A MEMBER!

Lexington memberships are crucial to providing the best possible support to individuals with disabilities and their families, and to being the best possible employer to you! In a difficult time like this, memberships are crucial to financially supporting us to provide enough personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to keep you and the people we support safe and healthy every day. Memberships are also crucial for education and advocacy purposes, as the more members we have, the stronger our representation is with The Arc New York. Your support in membership gives us a stronger voice on behalf of the people we support and you, our employees. As a Chapter of our statewide organization, The Arc New York, and a member of the national organization, The Arc, we are working together closer than ever on advocacy for services and funding as the state and federal financial crises unfold. By becoming a member you help us show our strength and provide valuable resources to keep our advocacy efforts working.

Lexington is a strong organization and we are confident we will be even stronger as we come out of this, but not without your support. **Annual memberships are only \$3 for Lexington employees.** You can purchase a membership for a family member at your same address for \$5, and additional family members for \$3. You can also sponsor someone we support to be a member for \$1. To learn more about membership and sign up, please visit [thearclexington.org/membership](http://thearclexington.org/membership) or contact Lynette May at (518) 661-9932 or [mayl@thearclexington.org](mailto:mayl@thearclexington.org). Thank you for your support!

## WORKPLACE RESOURCES—COMING SOON! KNOWLEDGE LIBRARY

Equipping employees with the latest guides, tools, resources and information is so crucial to helping you learn more about how to navigate Workplace. To complement the information provided to you through the Workplace Resources Articles in Lexington Happenings, we are introducing a new resource tool called **Knowledge Library**!

Knowledge Library is a hub for employees to find and engage with useful content on ways to use Workplace. It is fully searchable and shareable to easily help you find what you are looking for. Access content such as links, files, videos, infographics and other helpful resources. The information found in Knowledge Library is easy to engage with and allows you to share, comment, react or ask questions on specific content! Lexington's Workplace Knowledge Library will be available for employees to access in early August 2020, so keep an eye out for a notification of the launch!

Not on Workplace? Email Meredith Fritch at [fritchm@thearclexington.org](mailto:fritchm@thearclexington.org) for an invitation request! Check it out and be part of the Lexington conversation.

## THE ARC NY SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS IN I/DD FIELDS

The Arc NY presents annual scholarships to students seeking degrees in fields related to intellectual or developmental disabilities, including special education, physical or occupational therapy, and more! Applications are open now through **January 11, 2021**. Each \$3,000 scholarship is paid in two installments of \$1,500 per semester and must be claimed within four years of being awarded. For more information and to apply, please visit [www.thearcny.org/about/scholarship-awards](http://www.thearcny.org/about/scholarship-awards) or click the scholarship name. For questions, email [scholarships@thearcny.org](mailto:scholarships@thearcny.org).

<u>ARTHUR W. PENSE</u> <u>SCHOLARSHIP</u>	<u>JAMES F. REVILLE</u> <u>SCHOLARSHIP</u>	<u>JONATHAN WEINGOLD</u> <u>SCHOLARSHIP</u>	<u>JOSEPH T. WEINGOLD</u> <u>SCHOLARSHIP</u>
For physical or occupational therapy degree program students. One presented annually.	For full-time college students in a program related to I/DD, such as behavioral sciences, social work, healthcare administration and management, psychology or nursing. Two presented annually.	Presented annually to four full-time Arc Chapter employees who wish to further their education with the intention of contributing to the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities.	For students enrolled in a New York degree program leading to a special education certification. Two presented annually.

## EMPLOYEE OPPORTUNITY: LEXINGTON DSP APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

In collaboration with SUNY and FMCC, Lexington is pleased to announce that employees have the opportunity to apply and enroll for available slots as an apprentice within the Lexington Apprenticeship Program for Direct Support Professionals! This is a unique opportunity for employees to strengthen their career and increase their skill level while doing hands-on DSP trade training and job-related college courses through SUNY FMCC.

Upon completion of additional qualification requirements, employees currently working in a full-time direct support professional role may qualify to participate. Students will earn a Certificate in Individual Studies for DSPs, college credits and an Apprenticeship Credential in the DSP Trade from NYS DOL. Please visit the [Lexington Apprenticeship Program Overview Posting](#) for a full overview of the program.

To be considered for this program, please complete the online [Apprenticeship Program Application Form](#) by no later than **July 31, 2020**. To learn more, please contact Meredith Fritch, Lexington's Human Resources Generalist & Benefits Specialist, at (518) 775-5422 or [fritchm@thearclexington.org](mailto:fritchm@thearclexington.org).

### COVID SAFETY PRECAUTIONS—NEW YORK STATE TRAVEL ADVISORY

Effective June 25, New York State issued travel restrictions addressing any travel to states currently experiencing higher COVID-19 infection rates. Please review the list of states below where these restrictions apply as of this week:

Alabama	Delaware	Idaho	Missouri	North Carolina	Tennessee	Wisconsin
Alaska	Florida	Kansas	Montana	North Dakota	Texas	
Arkansas	Georgia	Louisiana	Nebraska	Oklahoma	Utah	
Arizona	Indiana	Maryland	Nevada	Ohio	Virginia	
California	Iowa	Mississippi	New Mexico	South Carolina	Washington	

If you have traveled from and spent more than 24 hours in one of these states, you must comply with the following:

- Report this travel to your supervisor and, as needed, ask them for guidance.
- Seek diagnostic testing for COVID-19 as soon as possible upon arrival back in New York (within 24 hours) to ensure you are not positive. Failure to get tested in a timely manner upon your return will require you to quarantine as noted below.
- You must furnish your negative test result prior to returning to work. For any shifts missed while test results are pending, available vacation and/or personal time will be used or time will be unpaid if none is available.
- You will need to be retested approximately 7 days after your first test, and again furnish a copy of the test result upon receipt.
- It is possible that your work assignment may need to be temporarily adjusted while awaiting the results of the second test, depending on the circumstances of your responsibilities.
- You will need to monitor temperature and signs of symptoms, wear a face covering when in public, maintain social distancing, and clean and disinfect workspaces for a minimum of 14 days.
- To the extent possible, you are required to avoid extended periods in public, contact with strangers and large congregate settings for a period of at least 7 days.

Should you choose not to comply with the above requirements, you must remain out of work in self-quarantine for at least 14 days. During this time, your vacation and personal time will be charged for your unscheduled hours. If you do not have vacation and/or personal time to cover these hours, your time away from work will be unpaid.

## HR NEWS AND INFORMATION

### EARN A BONUS FOR RECOMMENDING EMPLOYEES!

The Employee Referral Bonus recognizes your efforts to help Lexington hire the best new employees.

If you know of great people who are looking for jobs, have them apply at Lexington! If we hire a person you referred, you could earn up to a \$500 bonus. Give an application to a friend or family member or have them apply online at [www.lexingtoncenter.org](http://www.lexingtoncenter.org). Make sure they list your name as the referral source!

### HERE ARE SOME EMPLOYEES WHO REFERRED NEW HIRES IN JUNE:

Shawn Carpenter  
Cristina Cook

Kelly Morrison  
Morgan Mraz

Bryisha Nixon  
Melissa Richardson

Stacey Roca  
Mikalla Sartin

Alison Sposato



### EXTRA \$250 REFERRAL BONUS

Lexington holds monthly drawings of \$250 for employees who refer new direct support staff! Each referral is entered, even if they aren't hired. For more information, contact Heidi Smith at [smithhei@thearclexington.org](mailto:smithhei@thearclexington.org) or (518) 736-3965. The June winners were Bryisha Nixon (Krumkill), Elizabeth Dudar (Wohlgemuth) and David Hazzard (Indian Road). Congratulations!



### EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES (1, 5 & 10+ YEARS)

#### JULY 24 TO AUGUST 6 | CONGRATULATIONS!

**Bonnie Downes**, Employment Resources, 7/26, 35 years

**Jennifer Ackernecht**, Day Hab, 8/6, 30 years

**Audrey Carlson**, Med Services, 8/1, 15 years

**Jessie DeMaria**, Residential, 8/1, 15 years

**James Post**, Transportation, 8/1, 15 years

**Daniel Becker**, Residential, 8/3, 5 years

**Maria Betts**, Psychology, 8/3, 5 years

**Gregory Garguilo**, Self-Direction, 8/3, 5 years

**Janet Steenburgh**, Maintenance, 8/3, 5 years

**Alexandria Woods**, Residential, 8/3, 5 years

**Amber Alnutt**, Day Hab, 8/5, 1 year

**Timothy Delos**, Residential, 8/5, 1 year

**Mariah Morrison**, Residential, 8/5, 1 year

**Bryisha Nixon**, Residential, 7/29, 1 year

**Mercedez Ortell**, Residential, 8/5, 1 year

**Alexandria Poyfair**, Residential, 8/5, 1 year

**Sebastian Skelton**, Residential, 8/5, 1 year

### JULY RETIREES—THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEARS OF SERVICE!

**Robert Kemper**, Maintenance Technician | Years of Service: 16 years | Retirement Date: July 7, 2020

### NEW RN/LPN REFERRAL BONUS PROGRAM!

The Human Resources Department has added a new bonus program for employees who refer RNs/LPNs who are subsequently hired by Lexington! You can earn up to \$750 in bonuses through this new program. For more information, please [click here](#) or contact Heidi Smith at [smithhei@thearclexington.org](mailto:smithhei@thearclexington.org) or (518) 775-5439.

## PAUL NIGRA CENTER FOR CREATIVE ARTS

Lexington employees get a 10% discount at the Nigra Arts Center! Just enter the code **LEXEMPLOYEE** at checkout to redeem. We offer free classes to the people we support. If your house, program or someone you know wants to take a class, please call (518) 661-9932 or contact Maria Nestle at [nestlem@thearclexington.org](mailto:nestlem@thearclexington.org) to sign them up. The center is located at 2736 State Highway 30 in Gloversville. For full listings of the classes and events offered, visit [www.pncreativeartscenter.org](http://www.pncreativeartscenter.org).



### VIRTUAL CLASSES AT THE NIGRA ARTS CENTER

The Nigra Arts Center is offering free, interactive arts classes and other social activities through Zoom! To see the full July calendar, which includes bingo, painting, photography, crafting, baking, yoga, music, dance, gardening and more, please visit [thearclexington.org/s/July-2020-Nigra-Arts-Center-Virtual-Arts-Calendar.pdf](http://thearclexington.org/s/July-2020-Nigra-Arts-Center-Virtual-Arts-Calendar.pdf). Pre-registration is required. To sign up, please call (518) 661-9932 or email [lozierh@thearclexington.org](mailto:lozierh@thearclexington.org).

### THE NIGRA ARTS CENTER IS OPEN!

The Nigra Arts Center is once again open to the people we support! Come enjoy the grounds, view our new art show after July 30 and check out our gift shop! In-person classes will resume soon. There have been some changes in protocol to keep everyone safe and healthy in our new normal. To see a video outlining the new procedures and showing you what to expect at your visit, please go to <https://bit.ly/3jLFbGO>. We can't wait to see you again!

### COME VIEW OUR NEW ART SHOW!

The Nigra Arts Center's 2020 New York State Summer Art Show opens on July 30! The show includes a huge display of work from artists across New York State, a special exhibition from featured artists Cheryl Horowitz and Terry VanGenderen, and a showcase of award-winning photographers featured in *Adirondack Life* magazine. All are welcome to come see the show **weekdays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. between July 30 and September 25!**

### RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Previous resources can be found at [thearclexington.org/wellness](http://thearclexington.org/wellness) or [thearclexington.org/family-connections](http://thearclexington.org/family-connections).

- **United Concierge Medicine: The Virtual ER**—Lexington's Telemedicine provider (1-844-484-7362).
- **COVID CARE: A Way Forward to Opening Up Social Circles**—Click the link for a comprehensive guide on what to consider as you start to navigate more social and public situations in the new normal of COVID-19!
- **Healthy Summer Entertaining**—From the **Lexington Activity & Resource Center** on **Workplace**: Click the link for some simple and healthy recipes to serve your family at summer picnics and cookouts!

### UPDATES LIKE THESE ARE POSTED ON LEXINGTON'S WORKPLACE COMMUNITY!

If you aren't on Workplace, contact Meredith Fritch at [fritchm@thearclexington.org](mailto:fritchm@thearclexington.org) for an invitation. Select how and when you receive notifications for new posts by clicking your profile icon, clicking "Settings," then "Notifications."

### LEXINGTON HAPPENINGS DIGITAL ARCHIVE

The online digital archive of Lexington Happenings, which includes active links to all the resources and documents highlighted, can be found at [thearclexington.org/lexington-happenings](http://thearclexington.org/lexington-happenings)! If you have questions or would like to submit information for a future newsletter, please contact Megan Balser at [balserm@thearclexington.org](mailto:balserm@thearclexington.org) or (518) 661-9932.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

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