

LEXINGTON HAPPENINGS



SPECIAL BULLETIN: COVID-19 UPDATES

FRIDAY, MAY 22

MESSAGE FROM SHALONI



Dear Lexington staff members,

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

I feel fortunate to tell you that we have no one currently positive at Lexington; there are two people we support and one staff member that have been tested for whom we are awaiting results. While this is good news, we must remain very vigilant in our efforts at Lexington and I ask that you do all you can to protect yourself and your families. The continued rise in cases at the Fulton Center in Gloversville, among residents and staff, is something we must take very seriously. We cannot become complacent and think that because we are currently virus free we can let our guard down.

In this issue of Lexington Happenings, we have included a letter from the Fulton County Public Health Director, Laurel Headwell, to apprise you of the situation. She has confirmed that testing of Fulton County residents indicates that 199 have tested positive for COVID-19 as of May 20. The majority of the cases are from the Fulton Center with 109 residents and 22 staff testing positive so far. Please keep the residents and staff of the Fulton Center in your thoughts and prayers especially as many Lexington staff members have connections with people affected there.

The effect that this outbreak has on our community cannot be overstated. If you are in the community this weekend, please make sure to know who you are seeing or having contact with and please take all recommended precautions to social distance and wear face coverings. We know that Memorial Day weekend is normally a time of celebration and gatherings but we can't let these rituals endanger our progress or the health and safety of our employees and the men and women we support.

Reopening – What does that mean for Lexington?

The Mohawk Valley Region has been cleared to open for Phase 1 businesses and of course as an essential business, we are open even though many of our programs and services remain changed. We continue to operate under an OPWDD mandate regarding closure of day programs and limitation on outings and visitors unless medically necessary. While we await their guidance we are starting to plan and imagine what these services may look like at Lexington. Some of the areas we are currently working on are:

- 1) Determining how we will be able to ensure social distancing in our office areas so that more employees are able to return to their work location.
- 2) Determining how we will be able to transport people we support from one location to another while ensuring social distance.
- 3) Determining how we will be able to provide day program services in a way that does not increase risk of exposure to the people we support and each one of you. Our day programs are not organized by the homes that people live in. Opening day programs even in a limited way will expose people we support to those who do not live with them and multiple staff. As you know, it will be challenging to ensure that each person we support wears a mask and stays socially distant from others.

- 4) Developing a plan to gradually increase socially distant community activities, starting with activities that may occur outdoors or in a controlled setting such as at one of our larger buildings.
- 5) Determining if there is a way for each person we support residentially to have a private bedroom.
- 6) Assessing the health risk of each person we support so that we can have individualized plans based on health risk.

These issues are extremely difficult to solve. As is the Lexington way, please help us with your input and be patient as we try to address each of these challenges. Please remember that our top priority is the health and safety of the people we support and each one of you. We cannot compromise on that.

I had a conversation yesterday with the father of someone we support at our Pinewood residence in Albany. He expressed tremendous gratitude and appreciation for the Pinewood team, especially during these challenging times. The words he used were, they are “fantastic” and “beyond expectations.” He shared that as he and his wife have aged, they often wonder how their son will be after they have left this world. Although they haven’t been able to physically visit with him for the last couple of months, the staff has made sure that they stay connected on FaceTime. He said that because of the Pinewood team and their support and care for their son during this pandemic, he and his wife now feel confident that their son will be okay even after they are gone. Kudos to the Pinewood team who are going way above and beyond, despite not having any staff from the day programs to help them, for giving this type of confidence and peace of mind to parents.

What I know for certain is that every one of our teams, every one of you, gives your all for parents and family members to feel this level of confidence. As hard as it has been and may continue to be, I want you to reflect upon the opportunities that this unprecedented time has provided us to have this type of impact on the men and women we support, their families and our co-workers.

Thank you for your support to everyone we are responsible for at Lexington and to each other. Please take care of yourselves, your family and the Lexington family.

With gratitude,

Shaloni

NEWS FROM FULTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR LAUREL HEADWELL

Fulton County Public Health Director Laurel Headwell has confirmed that testing of Fulton County residents indicates that 199 residents have tested positive for COVID-19 as of May 20. Of those, 78 have recovered from the virus. Sadly, 17 residents of our county have died from complications of COVID-19. As previously reported, the County Public Health Department was notified on April 24 of a substantial outbreak of COVID-19 virus at the Fulton Center of Rehabilitation and Healthcare. Numerous residents and staff at the nursing home have tested positive and the outbreak remains the largest location of positive-tested persons in the county. As of May 20, 109 Fulton Center residents and 21 Fulton Center staff have tested positive. Monitoring of all those affected is ongoing. Fifteen Fulton Center residents have passed away from complications associated with COVID-19.

Within the last 8 to 10 days, extensive testing of residents and staff at area nursing homes has taken place. In addition, on May 10, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.30, requiring all nursing homes and adult care facilities throughout New York State to conduct regular testing of their employees to aid in preventing and tracking the spread of the COVID-19 virus, particularly among the elderly. These recent testing regimes have helped to identify the leading sources of infection and to project where the virus is most prevalent. Since late April, spread in the Fulton County community at large has been small, including the number of persons requiring precautionary or mandatory quarantine, which is currently 31.

Even as some portions of the economy are allowed to re-open, Director Headwell would like to remind everyone that it is more important than ever to take precautions to stop the spread of the virus. Everyone can take steps such as frequently washing hands, maintaining 6 feet distance between people, staying home when ill and wearing face coverings in public to prevent the spread. KEEP A MASK ... KEEP A DISTANCE ... KEEP YOUR HEALTH!

The Fulton County Public Health Department encourages the public to utilize the New York State Department of Health *COVID-19 Tracker* at <https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/> for data on Fulton County and the entire state.

#RISINGTOGETHER AT LEXINGTON!



Thank you to everyone who continues to think of creative ways to have fun and stay connected throughout the long lockdown! Here are some more stories from the Lexington community:

- It is more important now than ever to stay in touch with friends, whether it's through phone calls, cards and letters, video chats or even socially distant face-to-face encounters. Jeremiah is a great friend to Stewart and comes to visit him often through the windows of his home! Stewart always looks forward to seeing and talking to Jeremiah—these visits never fail to make his day! Thank you, Jeremiah, for putting in the extra time to maintain a wonderful relationship with Stewart.
- The team at 15 Lex, including day hab staff, residential staff and the people they support, decided to share some good cheer with their Albany friends! Last week, they sent over baskets filled with treats, essentials and even some hand-crocheted ear savers made by DSC Kayla Fishbough. Thanks to this team for their thoughtfulness!
- On Saturday, Lexington Director of Transportation Jim Post organized a car parade for the people we support! Staff and individuals at 19 houses gathered outside to see a caravan of racecars and vintage vehicles driven by local car enthusiasts. This event, which required a lot of timing, planning, gathering, communication, coordination and weather watching, brought a lot of joy to many people who love cars and miss going to see races. Everyone had a blast making signs and waving at all the cars! Thanks so much to Jim, the community participants, Bonnie Reuss and Artie Rumrill for all the work they put into this fun, outside-the-box activity for the people we support!
- The women who live at 24 continue to show off their creativity! In honor of the upcoming Memorial Day weekend, they painted patriotic flower pots and decorated them with ribbons and buttons. Then they planted some beautiful spring flowers in their new outdoor décor!
- The team at 34 Northeast is making the most of it with a new fashion statement! They all got custom t-shirts to commemorate #QuarantineSquad2020. Thanks to the staff who ordered these shirts—they lifted everyone's spirits! Pictured is Brooke Caraco modeling her new shirt.
- Helen Bush recently celebrated her 94th birthday! Despite the fact that she and everyone else is stuck at home for the time being, her Lexington family worked hard to make sure she had a great day. Happy Birthday, Helen!

TRI-CITY FOOD CO-OP ORDERS

Tri-City Food Co-op is offering deliveries for Lexington employees on June 17 at 21 Rapp Rd, Albany, June 23 at Oppenheim Day Hab, 405 Co. Hwy 114, St. Johnsville, and June 25 at 465 N. Perry St., Johnstown. If you placed an order, please pick your items up at Rapp Road 3:15-3:30 p.m., ODH 3:15-3:45 p.m. or in Johnstown 3:30-4:45 p.m. on the respective dates. For questions, please contact Lynette May at mayl@thearclexington.org or (518) 661-9932.

NEWS MEDIA POLICY

Because of the attention that the unfortunate COVID-19 breakout at the Fulton Center and rising number of cases in Fulton County is bringing to our communities, the news media in our area may be looking for information about this issue. Because of this, we wanted to remind you of our News Media policy, available in the Employee Guidebook:

- All inquiries from the news media should be referred to the Executive Director.
- An employee should not speak to the news media as an official spokesperson of the Agency without prior clearance from the Executive Director.
- Any deviation from this policy will be considered an infraction of the Agency's regulations.

For questions or more information, contact Terry Swierzowski, Director of Communications, at swierzt@thearclexington.org or Wally Hart, Division Director, Business & Community Development, at hartw@thearclexington.org.



DONATIONS OF PPE FOR EMPLOYEES

We are incredibly grateful to every business and individual who has provided us with homemade cloth masks, surgical masks, gowns, face shields and other items that are critical to helping us keep our employees and the people we support as safe and healthy as possible. Some recent donations include:

- Lily Tran — Cloth masks

VIRTUAL ARTS 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 May calendar, which includes bingo, sign language, cooking, painting, photography, jewelry making, gardening, yoga, dance and more, please visit thearclexington.org/s/May-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.

DRAMA GAME CLUB

The Article 16 Clinic and Clinical Department are excited to offer the Drama Game Club, facilitated by Vickie Morrison, SLP, and Gillian Aluin-Kemp, SLP! Every Friday 9:30-10:30 a.m., they meet via Zoom to have fun, communicate and use their imaginations via creative drama games, role-playing and more. All are welcome to join! For more information and details on how to participate, please visit thearclexington.org/s/Drama-Game-Club-Flyer.pdf.

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES (10+ YEARS) | MAY 16 TO 22 | CONGRATULATIONS!

Christopher McGregor, Family Services, 5/17, 10 years

Cathy Racine-Sparks, Family Services, 5/17, 10 years

RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Resources highlighted in previous weeks can be found at thearclexington.org/wellness or thearclexington.org/family-connections.

- **United Concierge Medicine: The Virtual ER**—Lexington's Telemedicine provider (1-844-484-7362).
- **Special Olympics NY Virtual Program & Resources**—Special Olympics NY is offering wellness and fitness videos, webinars, content, challenges and more in a six-week online program! Click the link for more information.
- **Headspace**—From the **Lexington Activity & Resource Center Workplace Group**: Headspace is offering free collections of meditation, sleep and movement exercises to help you reduce stress and improve your wellbeing!