

LEXINGTON HAPPENINGS



SPECIAL BULLETIN: COVID-19 UPDATES

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 2021

#RISINGTOGETHER AT LEXINGTON!



- Charles Clicquenois has spent months hard at work writing his life story – sharing stories about his experiences as a safety officer, his personal growth as a person with a disability and his journey to greater independence. Recently, he was the special guest at a surprise book signing party held in his honor to mark the successful completion of his lifelong dream. Congratulations, Charles, on such an amazing accomplishment!
- Abby Tavolaro's artwork is featured in an art show at Johnstown Public Library through the month of August! Her drawing and painting are on display alongside the work of other talented Fulton County artists. Congratulations, Abby!
- The men and women of Stratford recently had the pleasure of seeing Will Miles perform in person, after many months of enjoying his music virtually over Zoom! Everyone loved singing and dancing along at the outdoor concert. Thank you to Will for providing regular entertainment for many Lexington homes throughout the pandemic and beyond!
- The Bridge Street team enjoyed a special volunteer project recently! They all worked together to assemble rosary packets, containing rosary necklaces and informational cards, to be mailed all over the world. Thank you to the staff who made it possible for them to participate in a project that was very meaningful to many of them!
- Robert and Leon had a wonderful afternoon feeding the fish at The Crossings of Colonie!
- Kim, Debbie and Dea from 154 First Ave. enjoyed a great day trip to Lake George earlier this month! They played arcade games, shopped, had a delicious lunch and enjoyed the beautiful day on the lake. Thank you to Dea for making the day possible for them!
- Jeff and Cody enjoyed a trip to Via Aquarium and Dino Discovery in Rotterdam, followed by pizza for lunch! They had a blast seeing the aquatic animals, petting stingrays and learning about dinosaurs. Thanks to Heather Garcia and everyone else who made this fun day possible!
- Cobleskill Day Hab did a rock-painting project, and earlier this month they decided to share their artwork by taking a trip to The Crossings park and hiding the painted rocks for others to find!

MESSAGE FROM SHALONI



Dear Lexington staff members,

I hope you are well, as are your families.

COVID continues to be a threat to our communities – on August 22 and 23, Fulton County had the highest positivity rate in NY State, which was five times the 62-county average for those two days. The 7-day positivity rolling average for Fulton County is 6.1%, Schoharie stands at 3.6% and Albany County at 3.9%.

When COVID-19 infiltrates our communities, it comes into Lexington.

We currently have several instances of COVID positive cases in the Lexington family:

- Prospect – an unvaccinated staff member tested positive on August 24; the house is now on COVID precautions.
- Cutter – there is a positive unvaccinated staff – there has been no exposure in the home, no quarantine.
- Family Services – there is a positive, unvaccinated staff who was exposed to two unvaccinated people we support – we are monitoring and so far they have no symptoms.
- Schoharie Supportive Housing – there was a positive vaccinated person we support who was hospitalized but is now doing much better. There was exposure to unvaccinated staff who also tested positive.

It's now more evident than ever that vaccinations will protect not only you and your family, but also the people we support. There is evidence now that people who have been vaccinated can still contract COVID-19, but the chances of these individuals requiring hospitalization or dying is minimized with the vaccine. Hospitals in COVID hot spot states, like Florida, Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana, have become overrun with COVID cases – and not surprisingly, these states have some of the lowest vaccination rates or have not encouraged mask usage and other COVID-19 protocols and preventative measures.

We are strongly encouraging those on our staff who have not been vaccinated to do so. In our communities, many chain pharmacies have COVID-19 vaccines and our public health departments are also offering vaccine clinics. See the contact information and details for this later in this newsletter. If you still have reservations or questions about the vaccine, please contact anyone on our medical team, or we can get you in touch with medical personnel who can answer your questions. Your doctor, who knows your health background best, can also be consulted for information on the vaccine and whether or not you should get it.

You may have seen that former Governor Cuomo has mandated COVID-19 vaccinations for all healthcare workers in New York State, including staff at hospitals, long-term care facilities like nursing homes and other congregate care settings, by September 27. Locally, both St. Mary's Hospital and Nathan Littauer Hospital are already mandating this for their staff members. We have not yet received any definitive guidance on this from OPWDD, but we expect them to issue answers shortly. As I've said before, Lexington will not mandate vaccinations, but the directive may be issued by OPWDD. More details about this issue to come.

We are proud of the fact Lexington continues to be at the top of The Arc NY Chapters in terms of vaccination numbers of our staff and people we support. Please continue to use the tools, procedures and policies we have put in place for the last several months to keep COVID from the agency. We need to get back to the basics of fighting this virus – symptom screening, hand washing, disinfection, mask wearing, social distancing and getting vaccinated are key to keeping everyone in the Lexington family safe and healthy.

Thank you for everything you do for your co-workers, the people we support and the entire Lexington family.

Sincerely,

Shaloni

LEXINGTON'S MISSION: We empower people with autism and disabilities to live their best lives, every day, by partnering with their families, our employees and our community.

UPDATE ON COVID-19 GUIDANCE, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR LEXINGTON

Due to the rapid spread of the Delta variant, the rising COVID-19 cases in our community and agency, and new guidance from the CDC, the state and our counties, Lexington’s Medical Team has updated our COVID-19 guidance, effective as of August 18. **This guidance applies to all employees, regardless of vaccine status.** Please see the chart for the specifics of all the guidance.

WHEN INDOORS AT ALL LEXINGTON LOCATIONS:

- When with people we support, all employees must use Lexington-issued KN95 face masks.
- When in non-program areas, all employees must use Lexington-issued surgical face masks.

WHEN OUTDOORS:

- When with people we support, all employees must wear KN95 masks if a 6-foot distance can’t be guaranteed.
- When with other employees, surgical masks are required if a 6-foot distance can’t be guaranteed.

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY OUTINGS:

- KN95 masks are now required during transportation when people we support are in the vehicle.
- Staff members, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear surgical masks when indoors at community locations.

Lexington Covid Guidelines Reference Chart

Mask Use	If indoors in area where services are delivered		If outdoors with people we support	If indoors in locations where services are not provided		If outdoors with others	Mask Type - Minimum Standard
Mask Use for Employees	KN95 required	Mask may be removed for short break only when in separate area of home or program space with no people receiving services	Mask use is required if 6 ft social distance is not maintained	Surgical mask is required	Exceptions include if in office alone or office with protective partitions	Surgical mask is required if 6 ft distance is not maintained	Lexington issued KN95 mask in areas services are delivered / Lexington issued surgical mask for all other areas
Mask Use for People We Support	Mask of any type strongly encouraged , especially when 6 ft distance not possible and for unvaccinated individuals	Mask required when in vehicle to the extent they can medically tolerate one	Mask use is encouraged when outdoors and 6 ft distance isn't maintained				Cloth mask as tolerated
Mask Use for All non-employee Visitors including Families / Advocates	KN95 mask required for any indoor visit			KN95 mask required for any indoor visit		KN95 mask required whenever 6 ft distance cannot be guaranteed	Lexington issued KN95 mask
	Frequency	Group Size	Mask use in vehicle - People we Support	Mask use in vehicle - Employees	Mask use when indoors at community locations	Destinations	Mask Type - Minimum Standard
Community Inclusion	No frequency limits	No size limits	Mask is required unless person is unable to wear	KN95 mask required whenever in vehicle with person supported / Surgical mask required when with coworkers	Employees required to wear mask, and People we Support strongly encouraged	No restrictions on locations people can visit	People we Support - cloth mask as tolerated; Staff - Lexington issued KN95 mask when with people supported, surgical when not
	Frequency	On Site Visits	Visits to Family Home		Symptom / Exposure Concerns	Documentation	Mask Type - Minimum Standard
Family Visits	No frequency restrictions	Visits can occur within designated locations or in single bedrooms, KN95 mask required for indoor visits	All requests for transportation to/from visit require approval from Assoc. Exec. Director	No limit on duration of visit	Report all potential concerns to Nursing Dept	Family Visit Log and Family Visit Attestation no longer required	People we Support - cloth mask as tolerated; Staff - Lexington issued KN95 mask
	Capacity Limits	Mask use in vehicle - People we support	Mask use in vehicle - Employees	Ventilation	Unvaccinated person we support		Mask Type - Minimum Standard
Transportation	Use normal capacity	People we support required unless person is unable	Applicable mask required whenever in vehicle with anyone else	Open two windows a minimum of 3"	Any unvaccinated person should be socially distanced to extent possible		People we Support - cloth mask as tolerated; Staff - Lexington issued KN95 mask
	Screener	Screening Tool					
Employee / Visitor Screening	Every agency site should have "Screener" assigned to complete tasks	8-18-21 Screening Form and Questions to be used					
	Capacity Limits	People We Support Present	Employees Only Present	Ventilation	Ensure Comfort!		Mask Type - Minimum Standard
Indoor Meetings	50% normal room capacity, and 6 ft distancing	Surgical mask strongly encouraged for anyone we support; KN95 mask is required for all others	Surgical mask required	If window is available, open at least 1, preferably 2 windows 6", if available fans/circulators turned on	** Ask if everyone is comfortable prior to starting the meeting. If not, make space adjustments accordingly. **		People we Support - cloth mask as tolerated; Staff - Lexington issued surgical mask

LEXINGTON ACTIVITY AND RESOURCE CENTER

COVID-19 ZOOM Q&A WITH LEXINGTON'S MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Please join Lexington's Medical Director, Dr. Kevin Cope, for a Zoom Q&A session about the COVID-19 vaccines, the Delta variant and more on **Wednesday, September 1, 10-11 a.m.** This session is free and open to all Lexington employees. The participation link will be sent agencywide and posted on Workplace in the next couple days. We hope to see you there!

COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION SHEETS

To help employees make an informed decision about the COVID-19 vaccine, we have created an information sheet with links to credible medical and scientific resources, videos and information from the CDC, the WHO and our Public Health Departments. The sheet can be found at <http://bit.ly/2NGINzf>. There are also fact sheets about the different vaccines at thearclexington.org/vaccine.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GETTING THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

The CDC recommends that everyone age 12+ receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and **the Pfizer vaccine has been granted full approval by the FDA as of August 24!** Vaccines are crucial in the fight against COVID, especially since the rise of the Delta variant. Its high transmissibility has led to an increase in hospitalizations, and even the vaccinated can spread it. All COVID vaccines are safe and effective against the disease and its variants. Infections happen only in a small percentage of people who are fully vaccinated, and those cases tend to be mild. The best weapon against serious disease and death caused by COVID is getting vaccinated!

- The **Fulton County Public Health Department** offers limited vaccine clinics. For details, visit www.fultoncountyny.gov/covid-19.
- In **Schoharie County**, the Public Health Department can be contacted by calling (518) 295-8365.
- **Albany County Public Health** continues to schedule regular COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Details and registration can be found at www.albanycounty.com/departments/health/coronavirus-covid-19/vaccine-information or by calling (518) 447-7000.
- To make an appointment at a state-run site, call 1-833-697-4829 or visit <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov>.
- You can schedule a vaccine at CVS or Walgreens through the stores' apps or contact individual locations for details.

ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED ZOOM ACTIVITY CALENDAR

The Engaged and Empowered day hab program offers daily social groups, activities, wellness exercises, games, crafts, meetings and more to the people we support! See the full August calendar and participation information at <https://bit.ly/377h1Bv>.

SAVE THE DATES!

This fall, we will celebrate staff at Service Recognition events and hold Nurturing Environment Meetings in tents in Fulton and Schoharie Counties. Mark your calendars for the dates and times below! Additional dates will soon be added for Service Recognition to better adhere to COVID health and safety protocols—more details will be included in invitations.

PAUL NIGRA CENTER FOR CREATIVE ARTS | 2736 State Highway 30, Gloversville

- **September 13 and 14:** Nurturing Environment Meetings—all employees are invited to attend!
- Fulton and Albany staff will be recognized at the following, by invitation only (invitations to follow):
 - **September 21:** Service Recognition Events for those with service of 1, 5, 10 and 15 years
 - **September 22:** Service Recognition for those with 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 & 45 years of service
 - **September 23:** Service Recognition Events for those with service of 1, 5, 10 and 15 years

SCHOHARIE | 121 Opportunity Drive, Schoharie

- **October 5:** Nurturing Environment Meetings—all employees are invited to attend!
- Schoharie staff will be recognized for 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 & 40 years of service, by invitation only (invitations to follow):
 - **October 4:** Service Recognition
 - **October 6:** Service Recognition

CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS ZOOM CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES

Creative Expressions offers a selection of art classes, games, musical performances, outings and other activities via Zoom and in person every month! To view the August calendar and get the participation information, please visit <https://bit.ly/3fgF4Cu>.

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 to sign them up. The Arts Center is located at 2736 State Highway 30 in Gloversville. For full listings of the classes and events offered, visit www.pncreativeartscenter.org.



DRIVE-THRU BROOK'S BBQ FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT THE NIGRA ARTS CENTER

Tuesday, August 31 | 3:00PM until sold out | 127 E. State Street, Gloversville

Lexington is hosting a drive-thru Brooks BBQ fundraiser to benefit the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts! Come to the Burke parking lot on Tuesday, August 31, for a delicious chicken dinner from Brooks BBQ. The dinner includes half a chicken, a baked potato, coleslaw and a roll. The cost is \$12 for a dinner or \$8 for a chicken half only. The fundraiser will run from 3 p.m. until sold out. Thank you for your support!

COME SEE OUR CURRENT ART SHOW

The Nigra Arts Center's 2021 New York State Summer Art Show, featuring work by Creative Expressions artists and Transitions students, is on display until **September 9!** Come see the beautiful art **weekdays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. or Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.** The show is also available to view as a virtual tour at pncreativeartscenter.org/art-shows and facebook.com/PaulNigraCenter.

WEBER GRILL RAFFLE TO BENEFIT THE NIGRA ARTS CENTER

All are welcome to enter the raffle to win a deluxe Weber Genesis II gas grill, just in time for summer barbecuing! Tickets are on sale at the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts, 2736 State Highway 30, Gloversville. They cost \$2.00 for one or \$10.00 for a sheet of six. You need not be present at the drawing to win! Thank you to Ruby & Quiri and Michael Hutcherson for generously donating this grill as a fundraiser for the Nigra Arts Center!

RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Previous resources can be found at thearclexington.org/wellness, thearclexington.org/family-connections or thearclexington.org/vaccine.

- **United Concierge Medicine: The Virtual ER**—Lexington's Telemedicine provider (1-844-484-7362).
- **Project Connect Pandemic Helpline**—A 24-hour helpline to support people with disabilities, their families and members of their support teams. Click the link for details about what services are offered or call the helpline any time at **888-847-3209**.
- **Information on COVID-19**—News, info and resources regarding COVID-19 at coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home.
- **What to Expect After Getting a Vaccine**—Visit <https://bit.ly/345yGrG> for information on what to do and expect after getting vaccinated.

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! If you have questions or would like to submit information for a future newsletter, please contact Megan Balsler at balserm@thearclexington.org or (518) 661-9932.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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