

# LEXINGTON HAPPENINGS



## SPECIAL BULLETIN: COVID-19 UPDATES

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 2021

### #RISINGTOGETHER AT LEXINGTON!



The themes of the past few weeks at Lexington have been getting outside, enjoying nature and connecting with people! Here are some examples:

- Thanks to the Foundation, Evergreen IRA in Schoharie received a delivery of new plants and flowers for their yard. Richard was ecstatic and started digging in before everything was even unloaded! He had a great time planting all the flowers and teaching Jamie about gardening!
- Last week, five household units joined us at the Nigra Arts Center, 465 N. Perry Street and Opportunity Drive for the final Experience event of the summer! Visitors from each house got to mingle while enjoying delicious cookout food and a tournament of lawn games. Thank you to all the volunteers who made this and all the Experience events so fun and meaningful for the people we support!
- Lexington Community Supports partnered with Glove Cities Rotary, the Salvation Army and Parker's Flowers to create a community garden! Maria LaPorte, Bre Marshall, Niki Christman and a community volunteer worked together to clear debris and plant the raised bed garden. Community Supports weeds and waters the plants. This week, they had their first harvest, which will benefit the Salvation Army pantry!
- Recently, Lori Scanlon, Jennifer Monroe and Amanda Bowman coordinated a virtual visit between Eva Butler and Jennifer's daughter, Mariah, who is learning ASL in college! This was a great opportunity for Eva to chat via sign language with someone new and teach her some new signs.
- Schoharie Day Hab was recently visited by a pet therapy bunny named Layla! Her caregiver helped Layla visit with everyone who was interested in petting or holding her. Jonathan especially enjoyed holding her and was instrumental in helping Adam engage with her as well!
- Thank you to Mike, Zach, Richard, Sandra and Helen for working hard to spruce up the landscaping in front of 43 Harrison Street!
- Connections Day Hab does a great job prioritizing volunteer work and giving back to the community! For the past couple weeks, the team has been working on making dog toys out of recycled materials for dogs at animal shelters. Thanks to everyone for their hard work!
- This summer, staff Anthony Willmann, Hailey Beddig and Kathy Perry worked together to make Bucky's dream of a garden come true! Kathy went shopping with Bucky for all the supplies he needed, Hailey put the garden bed together and Tony helped Bucky plant everything. Thank you to Tony, Hailey and Kathy for making this happen for Bucky—he is excited for the upcoming fresh vegetables!

## MESSAGE FROM SHALONI



Dear Lexington staff members,

I hope you are well as are your families.

Since I last wrote to you in an issue of this newsletter in July, the COVID-19 landscape in our communities, and at Lexington has changed ... again.

As of this writing, we have 3 COVID-19 positive cases of staff members. Thankfully, they all had very mild symptoms and, to date, there is no indication of spread to others.

Although the news is good that no one is seriously ill from these recent positive cases, it is a scary reminder that the virus is still with us and in our communities. Many of the positive cases that are in our communities, across the country and across the globe are from the Delta variant, which accounts for about 83% of our nation's COVID-19 cases and is significantly more contagious and spreads faster than any other strain, according to the CDC.

Although everyone at Lexington has worked hard to get to Lexington immunity – currently 74% of total staff and the total number of people we support are vaccinated – the number of people vaccinated in the communities we serve are some of the lowest rates in the state. Because the community spread is so virulent and positive cases are rising, our medical team has advised that we tighten our COVID-19 protocols to require masks for staff when they are indoors, both at Lexington and in the community. We are also asking you to be vigilant and use all safety precautions when out in the community, both while working at Lexington and in your personal lives. Mask wearing, social distancing and hand washing are still some of the best ways to ward off this virus.

If we can keep COVID-19 at bay with these updated precautions, we hope to not have the dire consequences we had earlier this year. We appreciate your efforts to help us keep COVID-19 from the people we support and from each other.

Thank you to those who are supporting the residential department to help recruit new employees and earning a double referral bonus for their help, who are adopting houses and supporting staff and people who live in our residences, and who are helping recruit staff through our Summer Recognition Programs ... however you are helping, it is greatly appreciated and doesn't go unnoticed.

Please keep yourself, your families, your co-workers and the people we support safe and healthy. We value and appreciate each and every one of you and are so thankful to you for all you do.

Thank you,

*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

Taking into account the newest OPWDD COVID-19 guidance released last month, our current policies and procedures, and the rising number of COVID-19 cases in our communities, we have revised guidance included below and effective immediately. If you have questions about any of this information, please reach out to your supervisor. Here are some highlights, specific to staff. Please reference the chart for specifics about other staff guidance, as well as guidance for people we support and visitors:

### PPE GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

- **When indoors at all Lexington locations:**
  - Vaccinated employees are required to use a Lexington-issued face mask when 6-foot distance cannot be maintained.
  - Unvaccinated staff are required to use a Lexington-issued face mask at all times and keep 6-foot social distancing to the extent possible.
- **When outdoors:**
  - For fully vaccinated staff, mask use is not required.
  - Unvaccinated staff are not required to wear a mask when 6-foot distancing can be maintained.

### COMMUNITY OUTINGS

- Staff members, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear surgical masks when indoors at community locations.

*Lexington Covid Guidelines Reference Chart*

| Mask Use   | Fully Vaccinated (2 weeks post final vaccination)   |   |  | Unvaccinated   |  |   | Mask Type - Minimum Standard  |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Mask Use for Employees</b>  | When indoors, surgical mask is <b>required</b> whenever 6' social distancing cannot be maintained             | Surgical mask <b>required</b> when in vehicle with <b>anyone else</b>   | Mask use is not required when outdoors   | When indoors, surgical mask is <b>required</b> and 6' social distancing to the extent possible | Surgical mask <b>required</b> when in vehicle with <b>anyone else</b>  | Mask use is not required when outdoors and 6' social distancing is maintained | Lexington issued surgical mask  |
| <b>Mask Use for People We Support</b>  | Surgical/Cloth mask <b>strongly encouraged</b> if they can medically tolerate one any time person is not home | Surgical/Cloth mask <b>required</b> when in vehicle to the extent they can medically tolerate one                   | Mask use is not required when outdoors   | Surgical/Cloth mask <b>strongly encouraged</b> if they can medically tolerate one              | Surgical/Cloth mask <b>required</b> when in vehicle to the extent they can medically tolerate one                      | Mask use is not required when outdoors and 6' social distancing is maintained | Cloth mask as tolerated   |
| <b>Mask Use for All non-employee Visitors including Families / Advocates</b> | Surgical mask <b>required</b> for any indoor visit  |   |  | Surgical mask <b>required</b> for any indoor visit   |  |   | Lexington issued surgical mask  |
|  | <b>Frequency</b>  | <b>Group Size</b>   | <b>Mask use in vehicle - People we Support</b>   | <b>Mask use in vehicle - Employees</b>   | <b>Mask use when indoors at community locations</b>  | <b>Destinations</b>   | <b>Mask Type - Minimum Standard</b>   |
| <b>Community Inclusion</b>   | No frequency limits   | No size limits  | People we support <b>strongly encouraged</b> as tolerated  | Surgical mask <b>required</b> whenever in vehicle with anyone else                             | <b>Employees required</b> to wear surgical mask, and People we Support <b>strongly encouraged</b>                      | No restrictions on locations people can visit                                 | People we Support - cloth mask as tolerated; Staff - Lexington issued surgical mask |
|  | <b>Frequency</b>  | <b>On Site Visits</b>   | <b>Visits to Family Home</b>   |  | <b>Symptom / Exposure Concerns</b>   |   | <b>Mask Type - Minimum Standard</b>   |
| <b>Family Visits</b>   | No frequency restrictions   | Visits can occur within designated locations or in single bedrooms, <b>surgical mask required for indoor visits</b> | 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  |   | People we Support - cloth mask as tolerated; Staff - Lexington issued surgical mask |
|  | <b>Capacity Limits</b>  | <b>Mask use in vehicle - People we support</b>  | <b>Mask use in vehicle - Employees</b>   | <b>Ventilation</b>   | <b>Unvaccinated person we support</b>  |   | <b>Mask Type - Minimum Standard</b>   |
| <b>Transportation</b>  | Use normal capacity   | People we support <b>strongly encouraged</b> as tolerated   | Surgical mask <b>required</b> 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 surgical mask |
|  | <b>Screener</b>   | <b>Screening Tool</b>   |  |  |  |   |   |
| <b>Employee / Visitor Screening</b>  | Every agency site should have "Screener" assigned to complete tasks   | 8-2-21 Screening Form and Questions to be used  |  |  |  |   |   |
|  | <b>Capacity Limits</b>  | <b>People We Support Present</b>  | <b>Employees Only Present</b>  | <b>Ventilation</b>   | <b>Ensure Comfort!</b>   |   | <b>Mask Type - Minimum Standard</b>   |
| <b>Indoor Meetings</b>   | 50% normal room capacity  | Surgical mask <b>strongly encouraged</b> for anyone we support; surgical mask is <b>required</b> for all others     | Surgical mask <b>required</b> for unvaccinated staff; surgical mask required for vaccinated staff whenever 6' social distancing cannot be maintained | If window is available, open at least 1, preferably 2 windows 6"                               | <b>** Ask if everyone is comfortable prior to starting the meeting. If not, make space adjustments accordingly. **</b> |   | People we Support - cloth mask as tolerated; Staff - Lexington issued surgical mask |

## SAVE THE DATES!

In September, we will be celebrating staff at Service Recognition events and holding Nurturing Environment Meetings in tents in Fulton and Schoharie Counties. Please mark your calendars for the dates and times below! More details to follow.

### 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

## COMMUNICATIONS TOOLBOX: WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Throughout its history, The Arc's name has gone through many changes. The Arc is the national organization that advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Here is a brief history on The Arc's name:

- 1953 – 1973: National Association for Retarded Children (NARC)
- 1973 – 1981: National Association for Retarded Citizens (NARC)
- 1981 – 1992: Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States (ARC)
- 1992 – Present: The Arc of the United States (The Arc)

As you can see, as the language that we used moved away from the "R" word, so did the use of ARC as an acronym.

In 2017, The Arc New York (formerly NYSARC, Inc.) rebranded following the national organization's brand. In 2018, Lexington decided to fully rebrand itself with The Arc and The Arc New York. That's the year that we put into place our current logo and started using The Arc Lexington as our name.

Here are some guidelines to follow when using The Arc in our name:

- The Arc is not an acronym.
- Do not use ARC in all caps in any circumstances.
- In writing, use The Arc Lexington, not The ARC Lexington and not Lexington ARC – think of The Arc Lexington as a title or a phrase; it should be used as a whole.

If you have any questions or need further information, please reach out to our Communications Department:

- **Terry Swierzowski**—swierzt@thearclexington.org | (518) 661-9932 ext. 110
- **Megan Balsler**—balserm@thearclexington.org | (518) 661-9932 ext. 123
- **Tammy Ruise**—RuiseT@thearclexington.org | (518) 295-8130, ext. 256

## DRIVE-THRU BROOK'S BBQ FUNDRAISER!

**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 a chicken half, 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!

## LEXINGTON ACTIVITY AND RESOURCE CENTER

### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GETTING THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

The CDC recommends that everyone age 12 and over receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccinations remain crucial in the fight against COVID-19, especially since the rise of the Delta variant. Cases are rising nationwide, almost all caused by the Delta variant. Its high transmissibility had led to a sharp increase in hospitalizations recently, and even the vaccinated can spread it. But, all COVID-19 vaccines remain safe and effective against the disease and all its variants, and the vaccinated are much less likely to catch it or be hospitalized. Infections, even with the Delta variant, 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-19 is getting vaccinated!

- The **Schoharie County Sunshine Fair** is offering free vaccinations to all attendees. Pfizer and a very limited amount of Johnson & Johnson will be available. The fair will take place August 10-15, 9 a.m. to midnight, at 113 Sunshine Dr., Cobleskill.
- The **Fulton County Public Health Department** offers limited vaccine clinics. For details, please visit [www.fultoncountyny.gov/covid-19](http://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](http://www.albanycounty.com/departments/health/coronavirus-covid-19/vaccine-information) or by calling (518) 447-7000.
- To make an appointment at any of the state-run sites throughout New York State, visit <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov> or call the New York State COVID-19 Vaccination Hotline at 1-833-697-4829.
- Many pharmacies are offering COVID-19 vaccinations. You can schedule a vaccine at CVS or Walgreens through the stores' apps, available in the Google Play Store or iPhone App Store, or you can contact individual stores/pharmacies for details.

Thanks to those who have already been vaccinated! If you'd like to get a vaccine, please reference the information above.

### COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION SHEETS

To help employees make an informed decision about the COVID-19 vaccine, we have created an information sheet that contains links to credible medical and scientific resources, links to videos and information from the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization and our Public Health Departments. You can access the sheet at <http://bit.ly/2NGINzf>. We have also added fact sheets about the Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccines to the Vaccine Information page on our website at <https://thearclexington.org/vaccine>.

### 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!

### VIRTUAL IN-HOUSE MUSIC

Virtual in-house music is available for any Lexington home! See the August performance schedule at <https://bit.ly/2TJ3hts>. If you would like to schedule music for your house, please contact Tammy Miles at (518) 775-5475 or [milest@thearclexington.org](mailto:milest@thearclexington.org).

### 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>.

### 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](mailto: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](http://www.pncreativeartscenter.org).



## 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 [www.pncreativeartscenter.org/art-shows](http://www.pncreativeartscenter.org/art-shows) and [www.facebook.com/PaulNigraCenter](https://www.facebook.com/PaulNigraCenter).

## KID SUMMER CAMPS ARE BACK AT THE NIGRA ARTS CENTER!

The Nigra Arts Center's popular summer kid camp program for children ages 5-12 is in full swing! Camps promote fun and creativity through STEAM (science, tech, engineering, arts and math) learning. The program, sponsored by **National Grid**, runs through the week of **August 23**, weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Discounts are available for Lexington employees, children from the same family and more! There are limited spots available for upcoming camp weeks—call today if you are interested! To sign up your kids, please contact Lynette May at [mayl@thearclexington.org](mailto:mayl@thearclexington.org) or Maria Nestle at [nestlem@thearclexington.org](mailto:nestlem@thearclexington.org) or call (518) 661-9932. For more details and a parent information packet, please visit [www.pncreativeartscenter.org/camps](http://www.pncreativeartscenter.org/camps).

## RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Previous resources can be found at [thearclexington.org/wellness](http://thearclexington.org/wellness), [thearclexington.org/family-connections](http://thearclexington.org/family-connections) or [thearclexington.org/vaccine](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto:balserm@thearclexington.org) or (518) 661-9932.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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