

May 4, 2020

To Lifespire Staff,

We are entering into our seventh week of NY PAUSE. We are in agreement with the Governor; we as New Yorkers need to do everything within our abilities to stop the spread of COVID-19.

I want to again thank every DSP, front line staff and the nursing department who have worked courageously and tirelessly to support the individuals we serve in residential.

We have won many battles - many of our individuals and staff have contracted COVID-19 and survived. Sad to say, though, we lost eight individuals and three staff. Like all of you, my heart grows with grief for their families and friends. Ketty Beaulries was the first staff we lost, Terrance Jones was next, followed by Norma DeGuzman. We have lost friends.

This global pandemic has created a new reality marked by grief and loss. We have stayed home, cancelled sports events, concerts, weddings, travel plans, school and school graduations in the wake of COVID-19. Any type of loss can cause grief, not just death. Many of us and our family members are experiencing grief. Three of my adult sons returned home due to job loss. There is financial anxiety with the economy also on pause.

Many people are worried about loved ones who are first responders, essential staff or elderly parents. Social distancing and quarantine are making some of us very lonely and sad. Nothing like COVID-19 has been experienced in the world. All of us are concerned about the future.

In the weeks to come, Dr. Howard Traub will be facilitating grief counseling with those who want to participate.

I am in awe of the dedication and loyalty of our staff to Lifespire's mission. Alone we cannot solve all the obstacles which face us, but I know that together we are stronger and wiser.

As many of you know, Lifespire is disinfecting and deep cleaning all our sites. This upcoming week we will be disinfecting more sites. We have also purchased and installed air purifiers at Staten Island CSC, John A. Cook CSC, Michael Rappaport CSC, Sunset Park II CSC, Bronx CSC and this week we expect to finish Fresh Start CSC. There is a back order of air purifiers and the expected delivery is the beginning of June. We intend to put air purifiers in every activity room, cafeteria, bedroom and dining room.

In anticipation of COVID-19 coming back as a second wave, we will begin stockpiling PPEs: surgical masks, KN-95 masks, gowns, gloves and face shields.

There have been discussions by the governor to increase testing for COVID-19 for first responders and essential staff. Essential Workers in New York State can make an appointment to be tested at one of several drive through or walk in testing sites by calling the COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-364-3065 or online at covid19screening.health.ny.gov.

I am so proud of all of you! Jerry Bucher and Luis Avellaneda, I do believe wear capes! They are our super heroes. I am equally amazed how positive, upbeat and encouraging staff have been, whether it is at a residence, a day program, or at the main office.

We have the best staff in the city! Thank you for your continued commitment to the people that we support.

With humble gratitude,
Tom