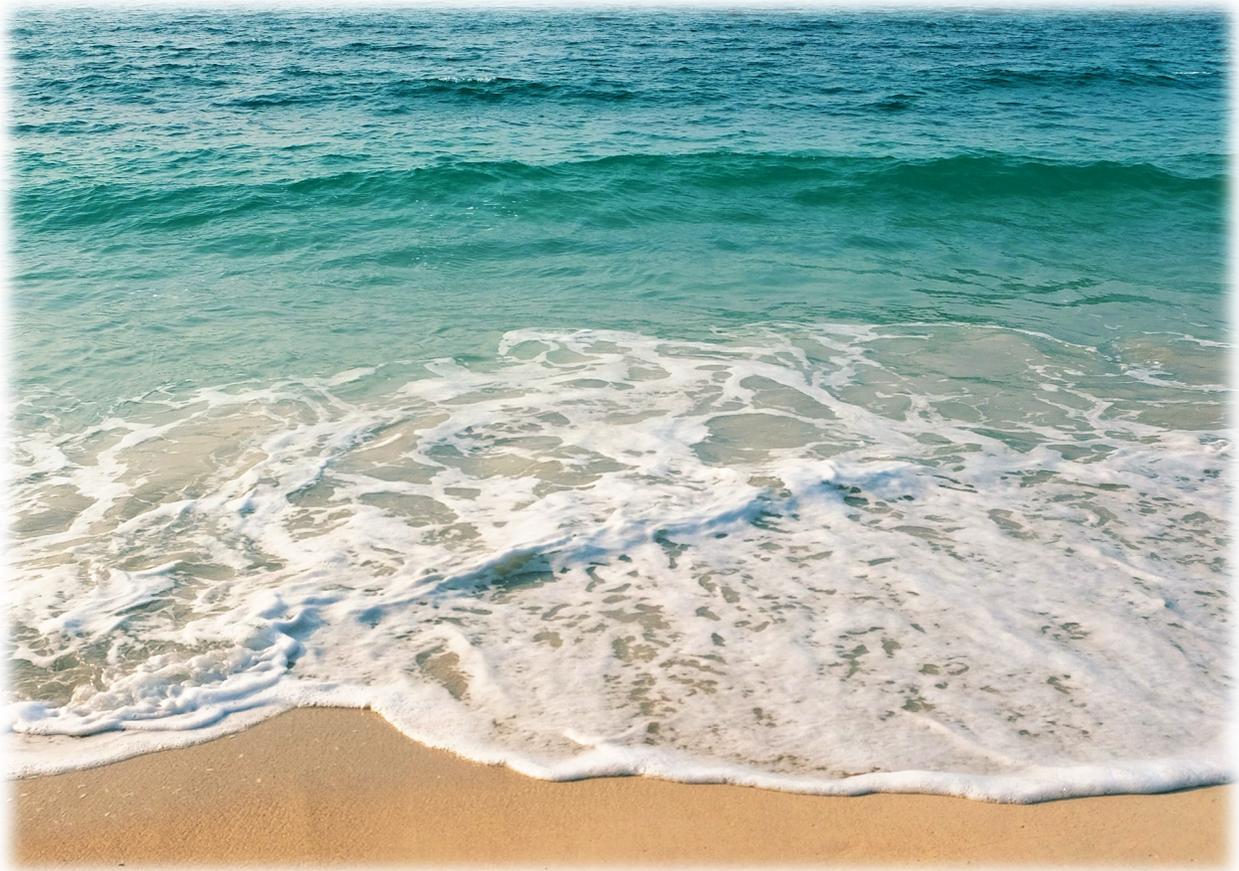


S U M M E R

N E E D S

N E W S L E T T E R



Update From The President

Hi all. It has been a crazy couple of months since our last newsletter. Starting in January of 2020 we began preparing for a new illness that seemed unlikely to cause a major disruption in the United States. As we are all too aware this illness did in fact hit The US and the rest of the world, and has disrupted everyone's way of living.

At the NEEDS Center a great deal of our time and effort has been taken up with addressing this crisis, and putting safeguards in place to keep the people we support, and all of their staff members as safe and healthy as was possible. Despite our best efforts we were not able to completely avoid Covid-19, at the time of this newsletter we have had 4 of our homes have cases of Covid-19 and nearly 20 of our our staff members. Thankfully all people associated with the NEEDS Center who became ill with Covid-19 have all since recovered.

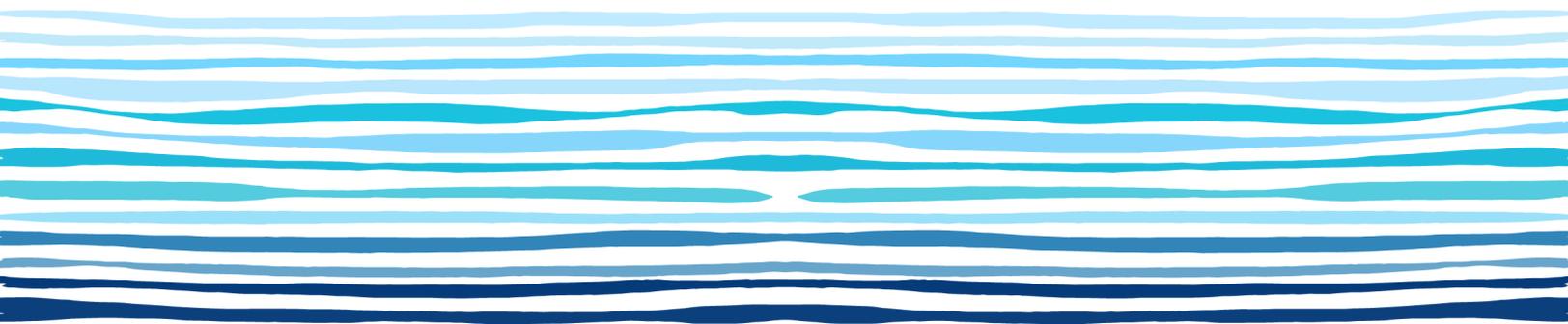
During the past few months we have seen first-hand what an outstanding dedicated group of Program Specialists, and Program Coordinators we have at The NEEDS Center. When this crisis hit, our staff members stepped up even more than usual, and have truly been an inspiration to me, and the other members of our Administrative team. We could not be more proud of them, and the work that they have done during this difficult time.

Likewise the parents and guardians of the people we support have been an immeasurable support to all of us here at The NEEDS Center. Everyone has rallied together, and made a stressful situation a little less so. Parents and Guardians have done a number of things to help us including:

- Providing meals to the homes
- Donations of Money and Supplies
- Provided signs and other tokens of appreciation for our staff members
- Provided moral support (which was at times badly needed)

Difficult times can either bring out the best or worst in people, and I must say we have seen nothing but the best from everyone associated with the NEEDS Center especially the parents and guardians, and for that we are extremely grateful.

Continues on next page



Update from the President Cont...

We have had to put in place a number of precautions across the NEEDS Center, and many of these are still in place. In the coming months we plan to loosen many of these restrictions, as we attempt to return to a more normal way of life. At the same time we will all need to stay vigilant in regards to Covid-19 and be prepared to act should there be a second wave of infections at some point in the future.

Despite the pandemic and the change to our way of living the individuals we support have done quite well throughout the entire process, and that staff members as mentioned previously have been phenomenal.

There will be more information on our steps to deal with the pandemic, and other non-Covid related topics as well in the rest of this newsletter.

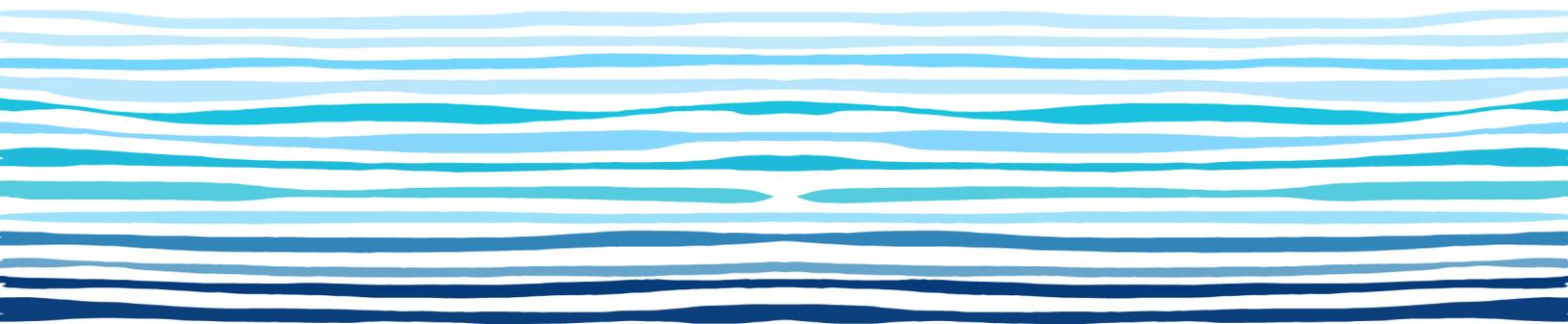
We hope everyone is staying well throughout this crazy time.

Jim Sperry, President and CEO

The NEEDS Center

jsperry@needsctr.org

978-216-0315



Our Staff Are Heroes!

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, our staff have gone above and beyond to care for the people we support. We are thankful for your dedication and selflessness! You are truly our heroes!



Racism in America

NEEDS Center's President and CEO, Jim Sperry comments on the current racial crisis that is facing our Country.

Unfortunately racism is alive and well in the United States. Just over the past few months while we have been struggling to deal with a new virus and illness there have been a number of troubling situations that have occurred.

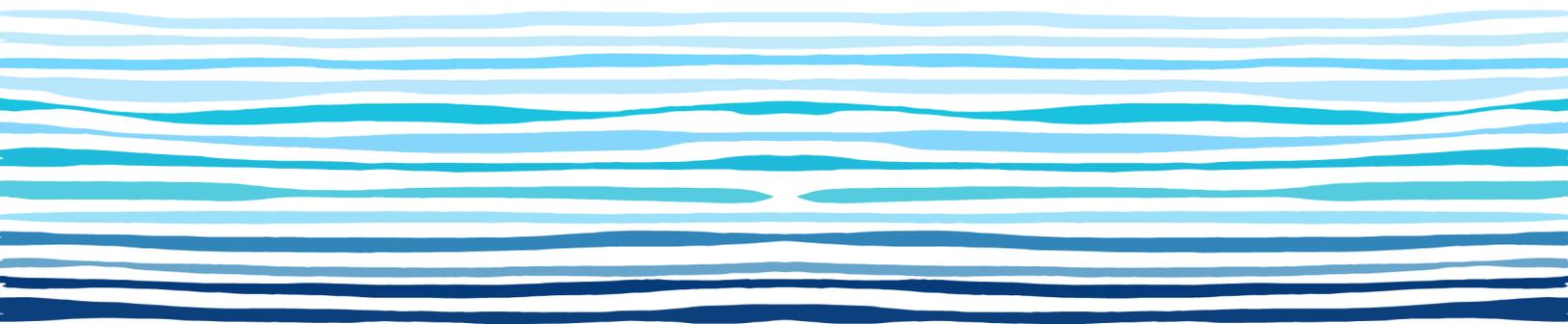
- A man was murdered while jogging. The police had video of the murder, and did not make any arrests until the video became widely publicized.
- A man had the police called on him while bird watching in a park, because he asked a woman to leash her dog. The woman reported to police that her life was being threatened.
- A man was murdered by police officers because a store clerk suspected he had passed a counterfeit \$20 bill.

The common denominator in each of these situations was that in each of the cases above the person was Black/African American. Each of these tragic situations has been called out for what it is, blatant racism. There have been a number of demonstrations regarding the most recent murder of George Floyd, some peaceful, some not.

We at the NEEDS Center have a wonderful group of staff members, many of whom are Black/African American. We know many of you have had to face this type of racism throughout your lives, and we are sorry that this has been the case. If there is anything that we can do to help any of you in this time please don't hesitate to ask, and please also know that we support and appreciate all of you.

These situations remind me of one that occurred a couple years back while working at the NEEDS Center. I was showing one of our managers one of our new buildings, and he was following me to the location. When we pulled into the parking lot, a police cruiser pulled him over. Soon after a second cruiser arrived on the scene. I naively assumed that he may have had a brake light out or something of the nature, as he had not been driving any differently than I was.

Continues on next page



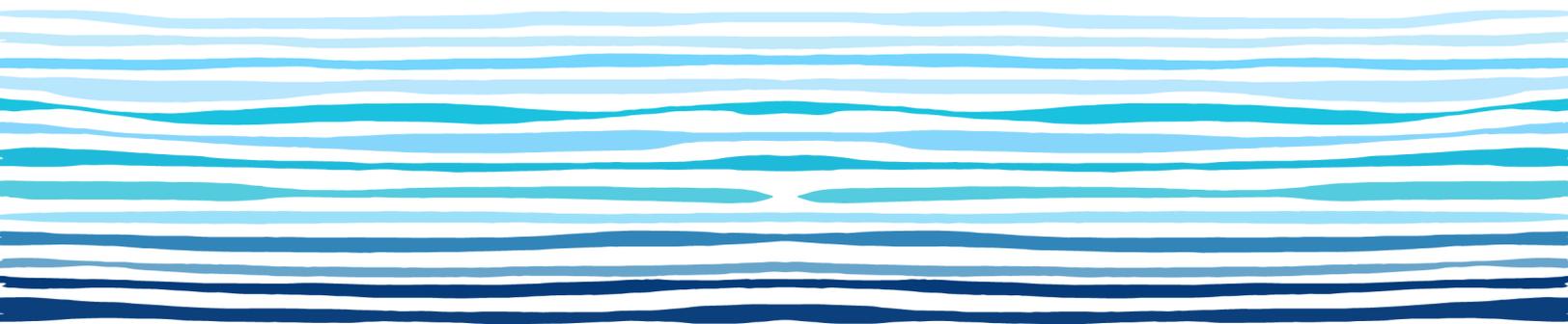
Racism in America Cont...

After the situation resolved itself (it took 15-30 minutes) we talked about it, and it was clear that the only reason he had been pulled over, and I had not was that I am White, and he was not. The reason given was that the officer “did not recognize the car” – in no way a valid reason for pulling someone over. We talked about the situation, and he reported that this had happened to him kind of frequently. Looking back on this one situation has driven home to me that these types of racially motivated situations probably occur for many of our staff members more frequently than one would think, and it would probably not have taken much for this situation to have gone badly off the rails, and I am thankful that it didn’t – probably because the manager stayed calm (calmer frankly than I would have if I had been pulled over because the officer did not recognize my car.

In closing – we are sorry that many of you face this type of discrimination, and if there is anything we as an organization can do to support you please let us know. We will try.

Sad times all around, but as best we can let’s try to keep our focus on our work, and in keeping the individuals we support and one another safe and healthy.

- Jim



Combating Racism

NEEDS Center recognizes the racial crisis that is facing our country. To continue to support our wonderful staff we are taking steps to help combat this issue. NEEDS Center has organized a Diversity & Inclusion Group.

More information will follow in the future.

**In a racist society,
it is not enough to be
non-racist. We must
be anti-racist.**

|
Angela Davis

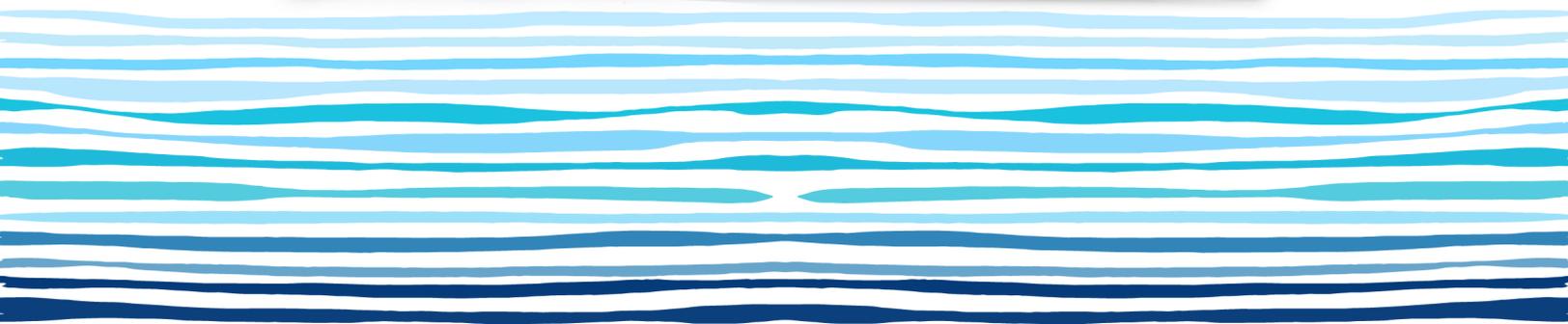
Thank You For Your Generosity!

If the COVID-19 pandemic emergency has taught us anything, it is that people stand together and support one another in times of crisis. We received many generous donations and are appreciative of all those who helped the NEEDS Center! Thank you!



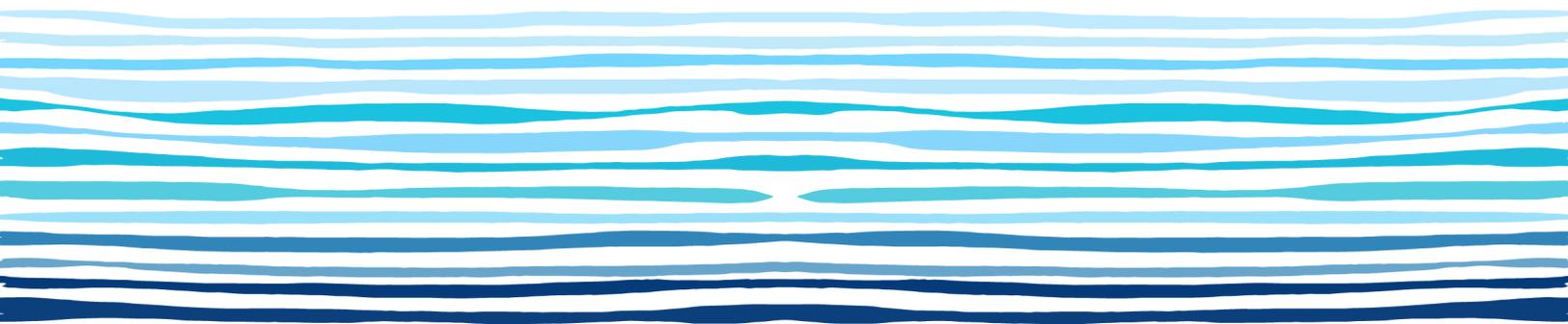
Thank You For Your Generosity!

One of the people we support named Zach received a stimulus check from the government during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Zach and his father Jim talked about what the check was and why he received it. After discussing it and thinking it over, Zach decided he wanted the money to go to the people at the NEEDS Center so they may continue to take care of the people they support. Zach requested the check be addressed to BIG MIKE, a moniker for NEEDS Center's Director of Day Services, Michael Sobezenski. Jim and Zach did agree later, the donation which came from Zach's own bank account should probably be addressed to NEEDS Center to decide how to best spend it. Thank you Zach for your very generous donation!



Thank You For Your Generosity!

The NEEDS Center would like to thank the Greater Lowell Community Foundation for their generous grant of \$2,000. This grant was provided to assist us in the purchasing of PPE to protect our staff and individuals. Founded in 1997, the Greater Lowell Community Foundation's mission is to foster community growth and development through funding, leadership and collaboration to transform the lives and organizations they serve. One of the many ways they accomplish their mission is through grant-making to non-profit organizations that serve people in their communities. We are extremely grateful for the GLCF's consideration and generosity during this time!

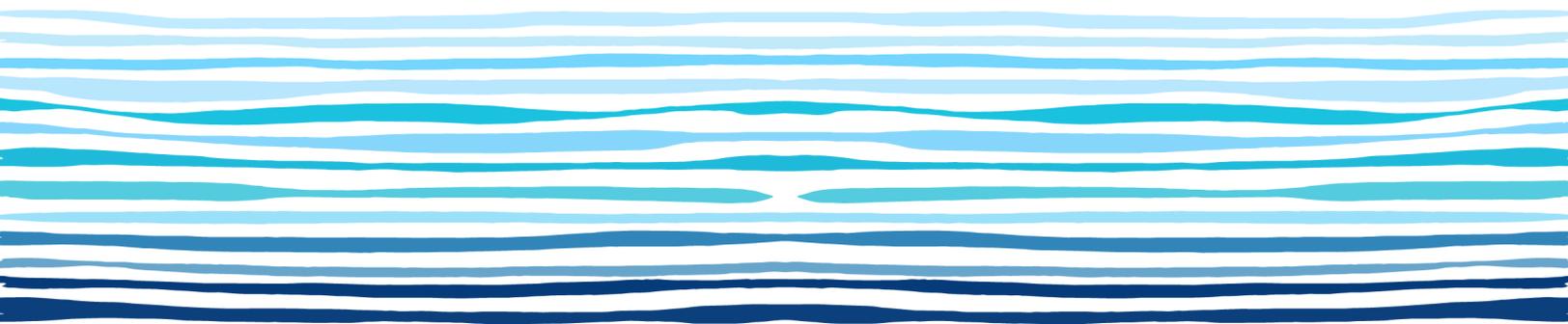


Thank You For Your Generosity!

The NEEDS Center would also like to thank the following donors for their generosity!

Thank you!

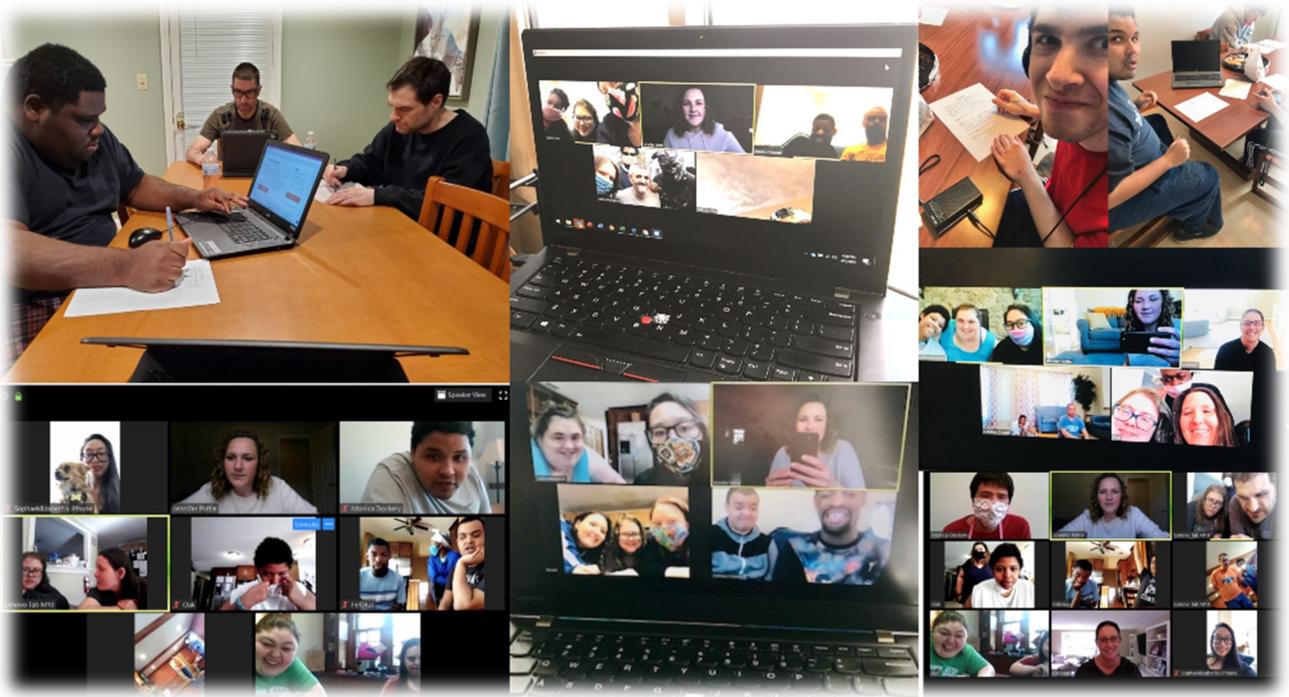
- ◆ Luciano & Gail Anselmetti
- ◆ Richard Barad
- ◆ Paul Benson
- ◆ Billerica Auto Care
- ◆ Conlins Pharmacy
- ◆ Justine Coperine
- ◆ Kristina Coperine
- ◆ Imelda De Young
- ◆ Wei & Patricia Ding
- ◆ Donnelly & Reed
- ◆ Matt & Patrice Dwyer
- ◆ Robert Gottlieb
- ◆ Alan Harchik
- ◆ James Herrick
- ◆ Robert Huxley
- ◆ Bob and Lauren Jones
- ◆ Cynthia Keefe
- ◆ Bob & Tina Kennedy
- ◆ Michele Richard Kennedy
- ◆ King Smith Vincent 39, LLC
- ◆ Roberta Manoogian
- ◆ Jennifer McKeon
- ◆ Cynthia Mckinley
- ◆ Mckitfield, LLC
- ◆ OCI
- ◆ Chris & Maria Raber
- ◆ Marla Richmond
- ◆ Santos Irrigation
- ◆ Rachel Shapiro
- ◆ Robert & Marianne Smith
- ◆ James & Nancy Sperry
- ◆ Peter Sullivan
- ◆ Ryan & Margaret Thompson
- ◆ Peter Tyson
- ◆ Paula Yarbrough
- ◆ Deb Zlotsky
- ◆ Nancy Zlotsky
- ◆ 1390 Main Street LLC



Summer Grilling



Technology to the Rescue



Technology has proven to be a very helpful tool throughout this pandemic. It has allowed the NEEDS Center's administrative staff to remotely work from home. We are also utilizing technology in order to allow the people we support to engage in day program lessons from the safety of their homes. Although we miss our community activities, we have found alternatives. The NEEDS Center has created groups for the people we support that allow them to still socially interact with others through remote video chat. NEEDS Center has an exercise group, a healthy living group, a trivia group and more! Despite the pandemic, we are closer than ever.

**“TECHNOLOGY IS BEST WHEN IT BRINGS
PEOPLE TOGETHER.”**

MATT MULLENWEG

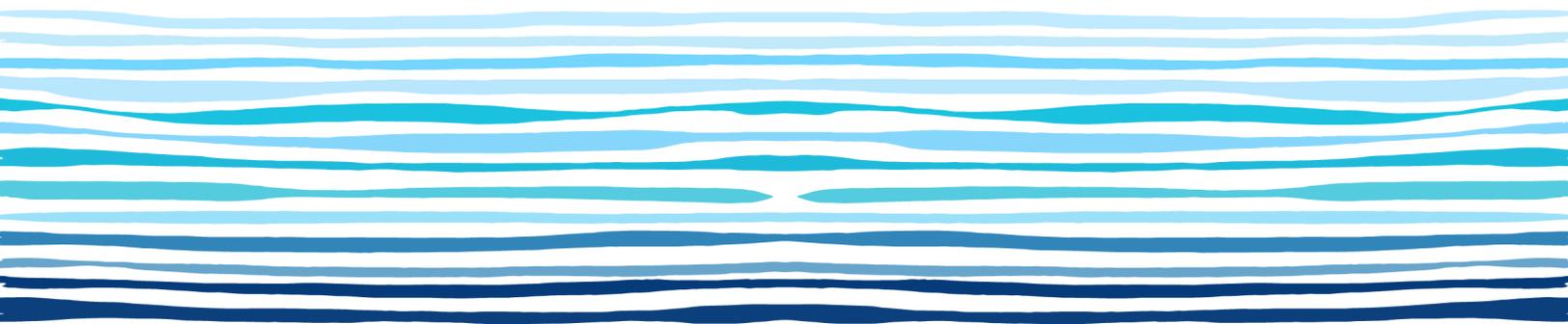
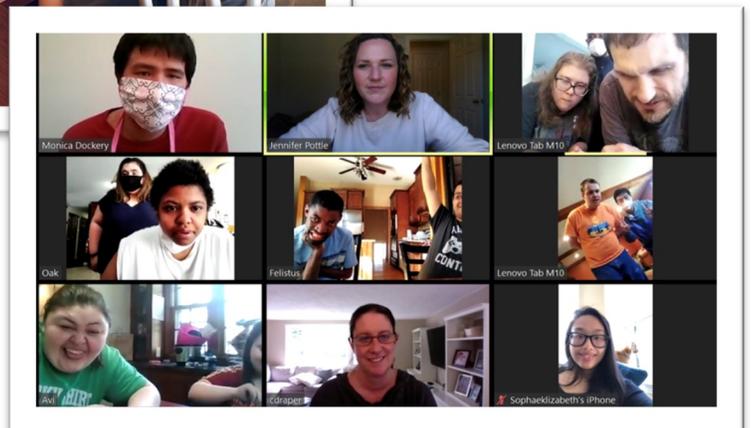
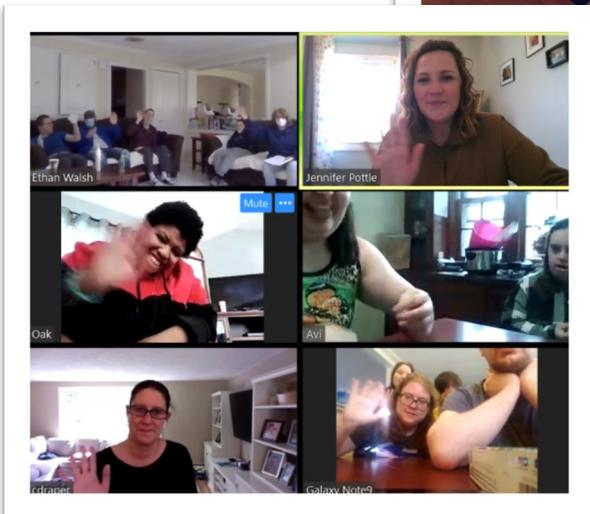
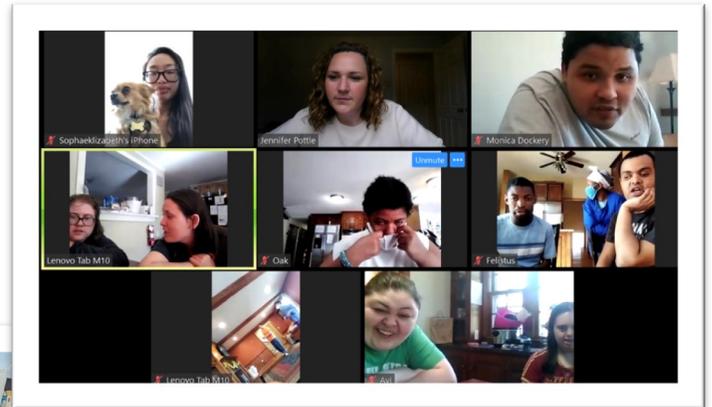
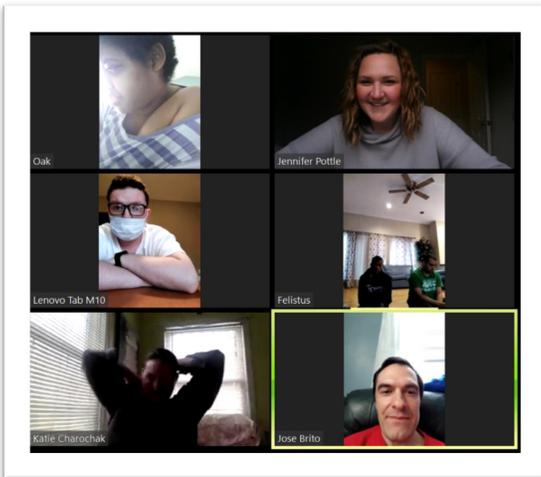
Getting Outside

Although the people we support could not go out into the community for their normal activities, we were still able to get outside and go for walks, play sports, and have cookouts!



NEEDS Trivia Group

With help from modern day technology and Zoom the people we support are communicating with each other more than ever before! Zoom has made it possible for the NEEDS Center to engage the people we support allowing them to participate in fun group activities like exercise and trivia groups. Trivia, although being one of the newer group activities, has proven to be one of the most popular! Trivia questions cover several topics the people we support enjoy like wrestling, Disney, food, and animals!



Staying Inside

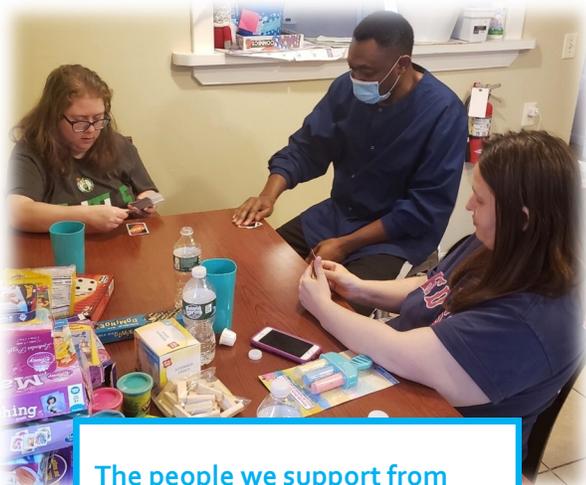
On March 23rd Governor Charlie Baker issued a stay at home order in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. Non essential workers stayed home and so did the people we support. Although staying at home for an unforeseeable amount of time may seem boring the people we support took the time to do some fun inside activities!



The crew from Oak Ridge doing spa facials



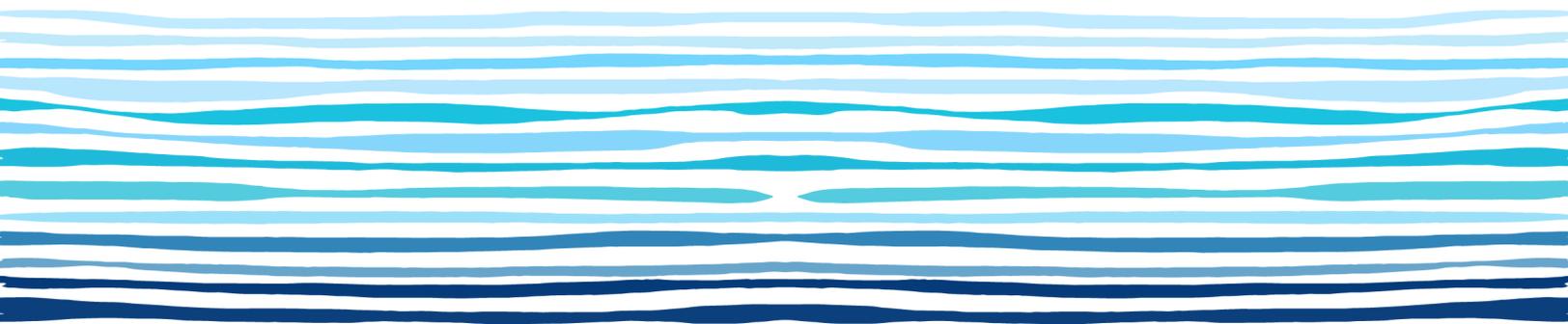
Brian from Timber sucking up the dust bunnies



The people we support from Walden playing board games



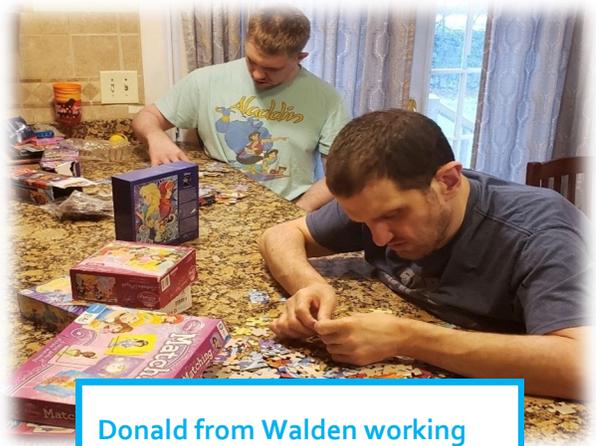
Scott and Abdul from Timber Lane staying in shape



Staying Inside Continued



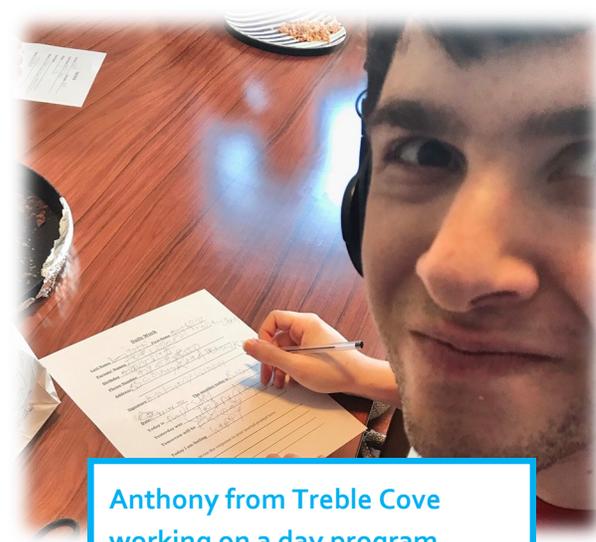
Avi from Parsonage posing for a photo in her room



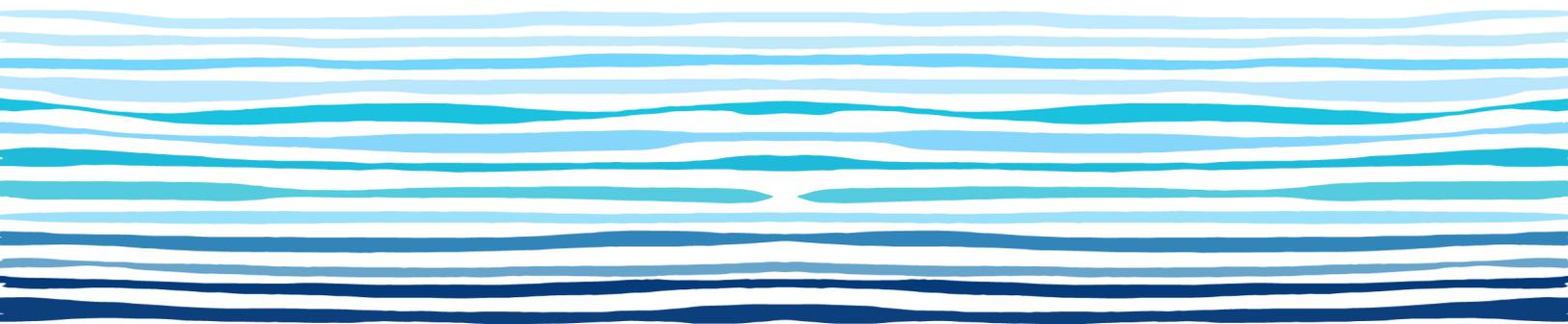
Donald from Walden working on a puzzle



Stephanie from Lakeshore getting her nails done



Anthony from Treble Cove working on a day program activity



+ Healthcare Corner + COVID19

Over the past few months, the NEEDS Center has been busy with many aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. From securing and building our personal protective equipment inventory daily, to ensuring the health and well-being of each individual and staff member at the NEEDS Center. It has certainly been a busy time for everyone. We are happy to report that all our staff and individuals who were diagnosed with COVID infection have recovered well.

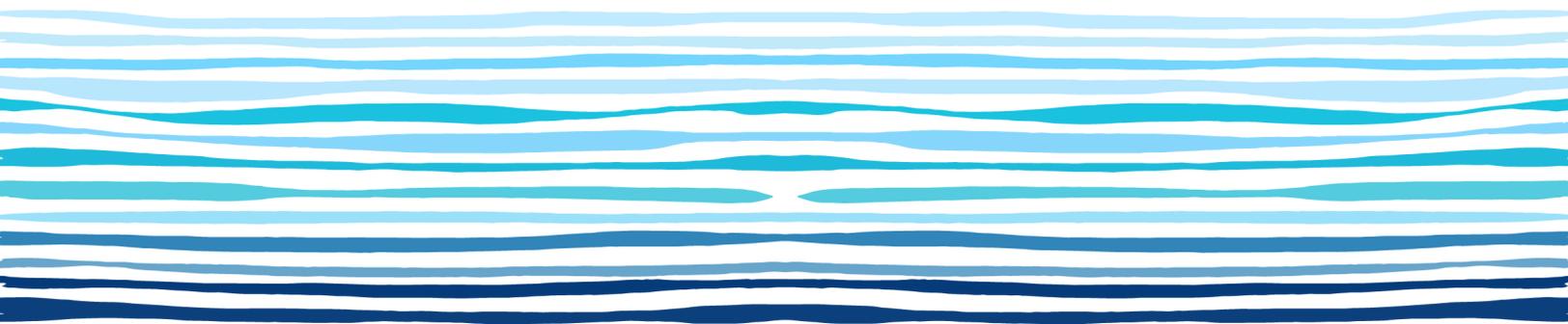
In the upcoming months, our agency will be moving to a new way of doing things, as we all adjust to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 infection. There are still so many unknowns with this virus.

As more businesses and workplaces open up, and people try to get back to the old way of life, it is important to remember that although the virus has infected less people recently, the chance of becoming infected is still very real, and can be very serious for some.

Although many things will be changing, there are a few things that we will continue to be mindful of for the foreseeable future:

- Handwashing
- Mask wearing
- Keeping 6 feet apart from others
- Covering our sneezes and coughs
- Temperature monitoring

Staff members continue to work with each individual to ensure ongoing education surrounding COVID-19. Our staff members have displayed a level of professionalism, dedication, and perseverance that we are so very proud of, and we expect those strengths to grow stronger over the next few months!



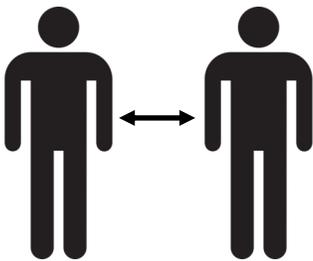
+ Healthcare Corner +

COVID19



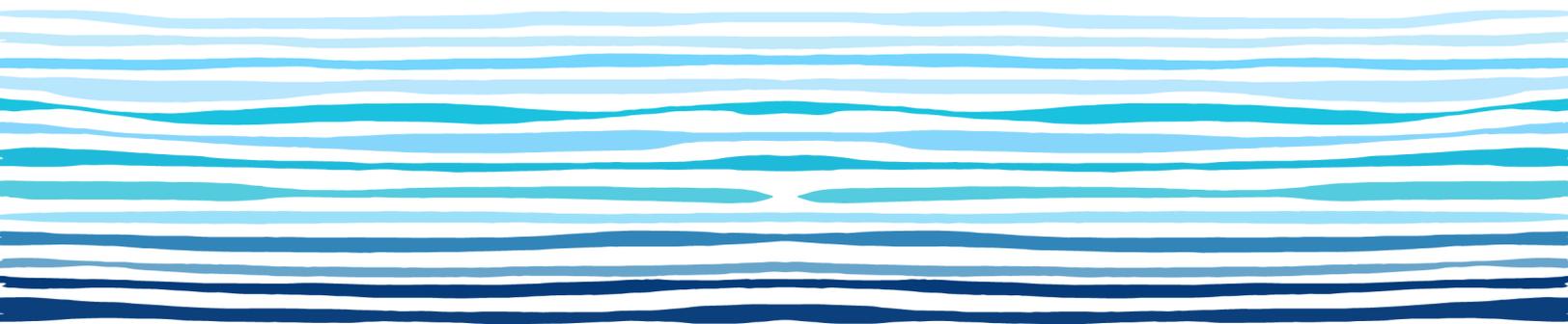
WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



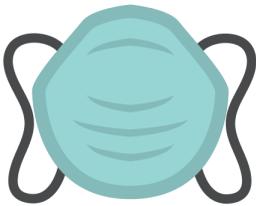
AVOID CLOSE CONTACT

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home.
- If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home.
- Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
- Do not gather in groups.
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.
- Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.



+ Healthcare Corner + COVID19

COVER YOUR MOUTH & NOSE

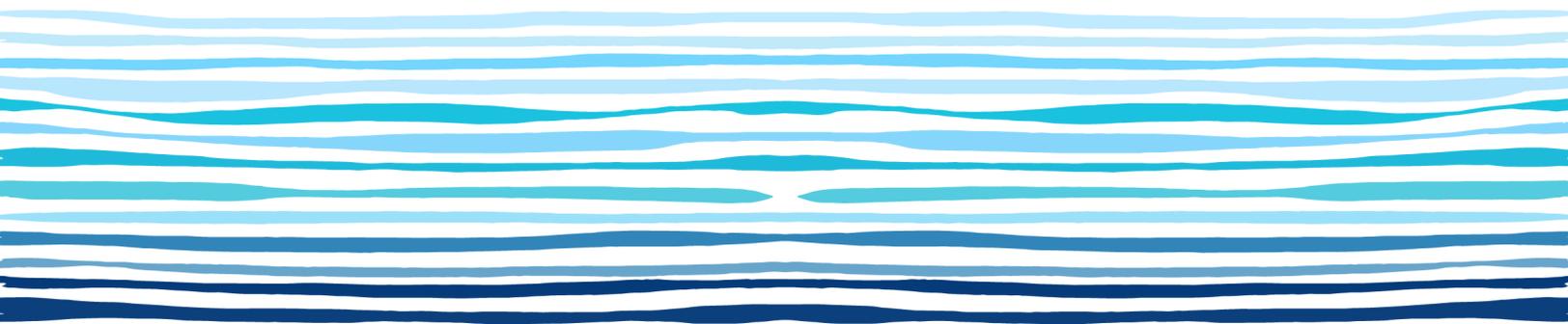


- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.



COVER COUGHS & SNEEZES

- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



+ Healthcare Corner +

COVID19



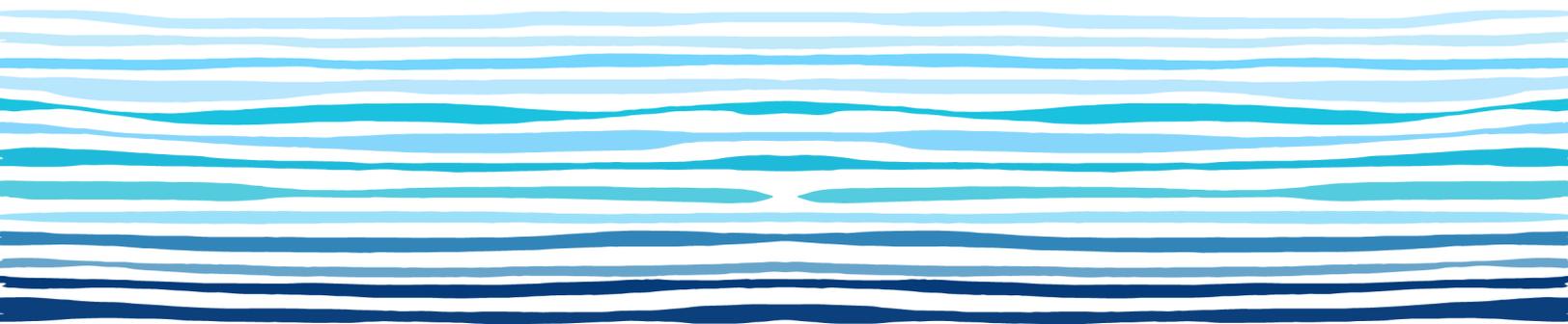
CLEAN & DISINFECT

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.



MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
- Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.



Stakeholder Meeting

Over the past few months we have moved away from our regularly scheduled Stakeholder meetings, and these have been replaced by regular on-going virtual meetings that have been open to all parents and guardians. These meetings have been an opportunity to share information, and to address any concerns from both the Parent/Guardian Perspective as well as those from The NEEDS Center. We will likely continue with some form of Virtual meeting opportunities in the future as they seem to be a good forum (even when this situation has passed) for people to get together and share information. More to follow in the future.

Summary

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the NEEDS Center Newsletter. In closing, thank you to all of the people we support, their staff members, and their family members. We are fortunate to be working with such a great group of people!

