



A U T U M N

N E E D S

N E W S L E T T E R

Update From The President

Hi all,

2020 has certainly brought many challenges with it. COVID-19 has brought many challenges to The NEEDS Center, the people we support (and their families and friends), and our staff members at all levels. While it has not been perfect so far (knock on wood) we have been dealing with this situation relatively well.

After months of heavy restrictions, we have begun to move toward a (new) sense of relative normalcy. As you will see in the Newsletter our Day Programs have re-opened (albeit with less people attending), we have slowly and carefully begun accessing the community again, and our staff have done a tremendous job of ensuring that the people we support are happy and healthy. Visits with family members started back up over the summer, and have gone very well. So while this has been far from a typical year, we have a great deal to be thankful for, and continue to do our best to provide outstanding services and supports.

We have ample supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (Masks etc.) and are doing our best to be prepared for whatever else 2020 has in store for us.

You will see several highlights within this newsletter, and I hope that you enjoy reading it.

We hope everyone is staying well throughout this crazy time.

Jim Sperry, President and CEO

The NEEDS Center

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New Developments

We have been working with Cape Cod Village (a separate Non-profit organization) over the past several years to open 4 homes in Orleans, MA. The second of these 4 homes was due to open in April, but due to the pandemic this opening was delayed. We are happy to report that this home was able to open in August, and is currently home to young lady. She will soon be joined by her new housemates (over the next month or so). Our plan is to open Cape Cod Village houses #3 and #4 as soon as possible. When all 4 homes are opened 16 adults will have their new home, and we are very much looking forward to making this a reality.



NEEDS Combats Racism



The people we support from Oak Ridge recognize the racial crisis our country is facing. Along with staff, they come together in unity to show support for the battle against racism. “We are all different, which is great because we are all unique. Without diversity, life would be very boring.” – Catherine Pulsifer



Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Memo from the Diversity & Inclusion Committee,

In May 2020, The NEEDS Center established its Diversity & Inclusion Committee and appointed Sophie So and Patcheco Vincent as co-chairs. Sophie began with the NEEDS Center in 2019 as a PC in-training and assumed the role as PC of the Oak Ridge program in March 2020. Patcheco is one of the NEEDS Center's longest tenured PC's who helped establish the Rand St. program in 2015. In addition to several trainings completed through the NEEDS Center, both Sophie and Patcheco have recently attended an extensive training program focused on the stages of establishing and strengthening a diverse and inclusive work force.

To date, the Diversity & Inclusion Committee has held two meetings that were open to all employees in response to an agency wide survey focused on the overall inclusiveness of the NEEDS Center's practices and procedures. We had staff from all levels participate in the open discussions, and we will continue to have these meetings regularly. Topics that have been and will continue to be discuss include, Racial and Social injustices, personal and professional interactions with law enforcement, and shared staff experiences within the Human Services field.

The overall goal of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee is to be a resource of support and education for all NEEDS Center employees. We hope that through open and honest discussions, we can share ideas and continue to improve on many facets of our work environment. There are flyers located in all of our programs which includes the contact information. Please feel free to reach out to us with issues related to the committee. We hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Sincerely,

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee



Walden's Staying Cool



The people we support from Walden figured out a trick to beat the heat – make snow cones! Everyone enjoyed a cool treat (maybe more than one)!



Reunited At Last!



Back in July when Massachusetts began to ease certain restrictions many of the people we support were reunited with their loved ones! It took what felt like forever but we were so happy to see so many smiles on the faces of the people we support!



I Want To Ride My Bicycle



DSP Of The Year 2019



Congratulations to River Road's Assistant Program Coordinator Linda Faria on her DSP of the Year nomination for 2019! Keep up the great work Linda!



Back To Day Program!

The month of August has been a busy one here at the NEEDS Center. On August 3rd, we resumed day program operations at our Rowley location and on August 31st we resumed day program operations at our Tewksbury location. We also still continue to offer remote day program! Things continue to go well at our Rowley Day Program, over the first month of re-opening things have gone very smoothly, and we anticipate being able to expand our census around October 1st. We continue to have regular COVID-19 testing as a major tool for us in keeping COVID out of our programs and away from all of our staff and the people we support.



Rowley Pop Up Testing

The NEEDS Center recognizes the importance of Covid-19 testing in order to protect the people we support and our staff. For this reason, we have coordinated pop up testing monthly at our day program in Rowley, MA. We strongly urge staff to continue to get tested to best protect themselves and the people in their lives outside of work. Only together can we overcome the covid-19 virus.



VIRTUAL

NEEDS

North East Educational and
Developmental Support Center

5K



Doug Flutie Jr.
Foundation for Autism

September 12 – September 21

JOIN THE TEAM

100% of donations received go
directly to The NEEDS Center

RUN | WALK

HOW YOU WANT!
WHEN YOU WANT!
WHERE YOU WANT!

JOIN HERE:

CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP

for issues signing up contact Shannon Brown at sbrown@needsctr.org

+ Healthcare Corner +

WHAT DOES AND DOESN'T SPREAD THE COVID-19 VIRUS

The virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads from person to person in respiratory droplets released when someone with the virus coughs, sneezes or talks.

But it can also spread from a person who has the virus to any surface he or she touches, which may make you wonder about everyday situations. How risky is it to go to the grocery store? Could there be germs on that takeout container from your favorite restaurant? What about the water you drink?

Experts don't have all of the answers about potential ways the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads, but here's what's known so far:

Food containers and packaging

There's no evidence of anyone contracting the virus that causes COVID-19 after touching food containers and food packaging. Many restaurants are now offering no-contact takeout and delivery to lessen the risk of transmission.

Still, if you're concerned, it's reasonable to follow general food safety guidelines. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after handling takeout containers, and then transfer food to a clean dish using clean utensils. Wash your hands again before eating. After disposing of containers, clean and disinfect any surfaces that had takeout containers on them.

Grocery store produce

It's possible that the new coronavirus might linger on fruits and vegetables that have been handled by a person with the virus. Whether this could make you sick with COVID-19 isn't known.

Best practice is to follow food safety guidelines and wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating them, by running them under water. Soap isn't needed. You can scrub produce that has a rind or thick skin with a clean produce brush. Also wash your hands well with soap and water as soon as you get home from the grocery store.

Clean and disinfect any reusable bags that you carried to and from the store. Most cloth bags can go through the washer and dryer; other bags can be cleaned using a disinfectant wipe or spray.

Consider wearing a mask while grocery shopping, when it can be difficult to maintain social distance from other shoppers. In some areas or at certain stores, wearing a mask may be required.

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WHAT DOES AND DOESN'T SPREAD THE COVID-19 VIRUS CONT...

Household surfaces

In a study by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), researchers found that the virus that causes COVID-19 can live up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to three days on stainless steel and plastic surfaces. Regularly clean and disinfect commonly touched household surfaces — such as tables, countertops, doorknobs, light switches, toilets, faucet handles and sinks.

Drinking water

The virus that causes COVID-19 hasn't been detected in drinking water. Water treatment facilities have processes to filter and disinfect water before it goes into your home.

Close contact with people

Especially to people who don't live in your household, don't get too close. Keep the rule of social distance in mind: Try to stay 6 feet (2 meters) away from others. Respiratory droplets from the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread to a person 6 feet or closer after someone with the virus coughs, sneezes or talks, which can put you at risk if you're within that 6-foot circle.

Dogs and cats

There have been reports of some pets, including dogs and cats, being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 after close contact with people who had the virus. Often, the animals showed no signs of being sick.

The virus that causes COVID-19 mainly spreads from person to person. Experts don't consider animals to be a significant way that coronavirus spreads. But this is an area of ongoing investigation.

Treat your pets as if they were people, keeping them at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from other people and animals outside your household and staying at home when possible.

Mosquitoes and ticks

There's no evidence to suggest that the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads through mosquito or tick bites.

other body fluids, such as urine, vomit, breast milk or semen, could be ways the virus might spread.

By following social distancing and your local public health guidelines, such as staying at home when you can and wearing a face mask when you must go out, you help to lower your risk of infection. You also help protect other members of your community.

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WHAT DOES AND DOESN'T SPREAD THE COVID-19 VIRUS CONT...

Swimming pools, hot tubs and water playgrounds

There's no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads through swimming pools, hot tubs and water playgrounds.

Still, it's a good idea to keep physical distance between you and people you don't live with — at least 6 feet (2 meters) if you can — when you're at a public pool or water park. Set the face mask aside when you're in the water, as a wet mask makes breathing difficult. But wear a face mask when you're not in the water to help minimize the potential for virus spread. Stay home if you're feeling ill.

Stool, urine and other body fluids

Respiratory droplets are the main source of spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. The virus has also been detected in the stool of some people who are sick with COVID-19.

Experts don't know yet what the risk of transmission from stool might be, but the virus that causes COVID-19 may have the potential to spread through untreated sewage. Also unknown is whether

Source: [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)



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LEARNING ABOUT THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF COVID-19 INFECTION

Most people who have coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) recover completely within a few weeks. But some people — even those who had mild versions of the disease — continue to experience symptoms after their initial recovery.

Older people and people with many serious medical conditions are the most likely to experience lingering COVID-19 symptoms. The most common signs and symptoms that linger over time include:

- Fatigue
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Joint pain

Although COVID-19 is seen as a disease that primarily affects the lungs, it can damage many other organs as well. This organ damage may increase the risk of long-term health problems.

ORGAN DAMAGE CAUSED BY COVID-19

Organs that may be affected by COVID-19 include:

Heart - Imaging tests taken months after recovery from COVID-19 have shown lasting damage to the heart muscle, even in people who experienced only mild COVID-19 symptoms. This may increase the risk of heart failure or other heart complications in the future.

Lungs - The type of pneumonia often associated with COVID-19 can cause long-standing damage to the tiny air sacs (alveoli) in the lungs. The resulting scar tissue can lead to long-term breathing problems.

Brain - Even in young people, COVID-19 can cause strokes, seizures and Guillain-Barre syndrome — a condition that causes temporary paralysis. COVID-19 may also increase the risk of developing Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease.

BLOOD CLOTS AND BLOOD VESSEL PROBLEMS

COVID-19 can make blood cells more likely to clump up and form clots. While large clots can cause heart attacks and strokes, much of the heart damage caused by COVID-19 is believed to stem from very small clots that block tiny blood vessels (capillaries) in the heart muscle.

Other organs affected by blood clots include the lungs, legs, liver and kidneys. COVID-19 can also weaken blood vessels, which contributes to potentially long-lasting problems with the liver and kidneys.

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PROBLEMS WITH MOOD AND FATIGUE

People who have severe symptoms of COVID-19 often have to be treated in a hospital's intensive care unit, with mechanical assistance such as ventilators to breathe. Simply surviving this experience can make a person more likely to later develop post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression and anxiety.

Because it's difficult to predict long-term outcomes from the new COVID-19 virus, scientists are looking at the long-term effects seen in related viruses, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

Many people who have recovered from SARS have gone on to develop chronic fatigue syndrome, a complex disorder characterized by extreme fatigue that worsens with physical or mental activity, but doesn't improve with rest. The same may be true for people who have had COVID-19.

MANY LONG-TERM COVID-19 EFFECTS STILL UNKNOWN

Much is still unknown about how COVID-19 will affect people over time. However, researchers recommend that doctors closely monitor people who have had COVID-19 to see how their organs are functioning after recovery.

It is important to remember that most people who have COVID-19 recover quickly. But the potentially long-lasting problems from COVID-19 make it even more important to reduce the spread of the disease by following precautions such as wearing masks, avoiding crowds and keeping hands clean.

Source: [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)



Thank You For Your Generosity!

We are very grateful to announce that we have been chosen as the recipient for a grant from Essex County Community Foundation. This grant will allow us to continue caring for the people that we support! Thank you Essex County Community Foundation for your generosity! Your support during this difficult time is greatly appreciated by all of us at the NEEDS Center! Thank you!



Your Vote Counts!

GET REGISTERED TO VOTE BY OCT. 24!

Important upcoming dates for Massachusetts elections are:

- Saturday, Oct. 24: Deadline to register to vote in the Nov. 3 general election
- Oct. 17-30: In-person and mail-in early voting for the Nov. 3 election
- Tuesday, Nov. 3: General election

Massachusetts voters now have until 10 days before an election to register to vote. Make sure you, your staff, your colleagues and your clients all have your voices heard! [Learn more about voting and get registered here](https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/). If you are reading a physical version of this newsletter please type this link into your search bar: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/>



Congratulations To Tim!



Tim Sobezenski was the first person hired by the NEEDS Center. Over the past 9 years he has done an outstanding job with our Residential, Day and Home Based Services. In August, Tim was promoted to be the new Chief Operating Officer of the NEEDS Center. Congratulations Tim and thank you for all that you do!



Stakeholders 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. These meetings are currently happening every other week, and have been a good forum to share information (in both directions). We will continue to hold these meetings regularly moving forward.

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! If you have any suggestions for making improvements to the newsletter, please contact Matthew Seidell via email at mseidell@needsctr.org.

