



Greetings, People Serving People families.

On behalf of the leadership team, we hope this note finds you healthy and well. We are living in uncertain times as COVID-19 spreads across our community. Thankfully, at this time we have **no known cases in our building.**

At People Serving People, we exist to see families thrive – your family and the families of our staff. We are in for some difficult days ahead and we know from experience that this is a time for us all to pull together and show up to support one another.

Our **top priority in this pandemic is the health and safety of our people – parents, children, staff, and those we have close relationships with in our lives.** We also want to continue providing shelter and the supports families will need to get through this. We are writing to share some important information because we need your help.

#### **What we know from science.**

The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is real and potentially fatal. It is different from the common cold or flu because it is more contagious and easily spreads from person to person. COVID-19 is more dangerous for our elders (people over 60) and people with underlying health conditions. According to the CDC, this includes:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised (undergoing cancer treatment, smoking, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, prolonged use of corticosteroids, etc.)
- People with severe obesity
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

#### **MYTH: COVID-19 doesn't affect black folks or people of color.**

#### **BUSTED: Wrong! Viruses don't discriminate. Black folks and people of color get it!**

In fact, COVID-19 is devastating Black and Native American communities across the country. Communities of color in New Orleans, Detroit and Milwaukee are harder hit by this virus as it further exposes the health disparities caused by systemic racism and inequity. According to Insight News, just next door in Wisconsin, “as of this past Friday (March 27) of the state’s 14 COVID-19 deaths, 8 of the victims were Black. That’s 57 percent of all Wisconsin deaths in a state where the Black population is just 6.7 percent.”

COVID-19 DOES NOT come from people who are Asian. The number of racist attacks on Asian American has increased; please help correct this misinformation when you hear it. Also, while children seem to be less impacted by COVID-19, they can still carry and spread the virus. It’s important to talk to your children about not touching common area items unless necessary.

#### **What we are doing at People Serving People.**

People Serving People is not too different from nursing homes, senior care centers or group living spaces in that we have a lot of people – close to 300 right now – living and working in one building. That means we have to take a lot of care to keep our spaces clean and sanitized and our people healthy.

You’ve probably noticed that things are different at the shelter these past few weeks, and things will continue to change. All door handles, elevator buttons, and stair rails are cleaned by Housekeeping staff three times a day. The dining hall, playground, and lounges are closed. We have temporarily suspended Groups, the Clinic has a new procedure, there are less children in the Early Child Development Program, and our frontline staff are wearing gloves, in some cases masks, and

maintaining 6 ft. of social distancing. The meal delivery process is constantly evolving. **All of these changes are to protect you, your family, our staff and our community.**

We recognize these changes may be difficult or demoralizing for you and they may feel like personal slights. Please know that the changes we are making at the shelter are about our collective health and safety.

### **What we need from YOU.**

We all crave relationship and connection – it’s hard when you can’t hug someone or give them a high-five. Consider other ways to check-in with friends and family: through phone calls, text messages, Facebook messenger, Snapchat video call, or try a Tik Tok interpretive dance!

And to slow down the spread of coronavirus, **we ALL need to practice social distancing.** That means –

- Keep a distance of 6 feet between you and others in the lobby, outside, in hallways – everywhere.
- Don’t go into each other’s rooms
- Don’t share drinks, food, cigarettes or a cell phone
- Check in with other families about their health and symptoms before babysitting

COVID-19 symptoms start showing up between 2-14 days after exposure. In this moment, **these are the things you can do to protect the people and relationships in your lives from a potentially devastating illness.**

Basic ways to stay healthy:

- Keep calm and keep washing your hands (for 20 seconds with soap)
- Sneeze or cough into your upper sleeve or elbow
- Stay in your room if you are sick
- Throw away tissues after you use them and wash your hands
- Wipe down strollers, cell phones, and frequently touched surfaces
- Take care of your mental and chemical health
- Breathe. Remember that you are resilient. We will get through this.



COVID-19 symptoms include a high fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you or a family member is experiencing these symptoms, stay in your room and call the Healthcare for the Homeless during clinic hours (9am to noon, Monday through Friday) at 612-396-6157. If the clinic is closed, call 612-348-5553.

**We are in the middle of a public health emergency and a global pandemic – this is serious.** With strong health and hygiene routines, organizational precautions, and a lot of love, care, and compassion for one another, we will get through this.

Be well and stay well,



Rinal Ray  
Associate Executive Director



Jake Gale  
Senior Director of Operations