



September 1, 2020

Dear Pathfinder Families,

Week 25, Day 2 ... Our Pathfinder Playbook Reopening Guide is in full play and has proven to guide us with great success! The foundation of the guide was developed in March by our Senior Team, and has served as the home base to all of the Pathfinder Village protocols developed in response to Regional, State and OPWDD Reopening Guidelines as they relate to COVID-19. Having this solid base has given us the ability to make timely changes, edits, and tweaks at a moment's notice based on the state and our Mohawk Valley Region's phased reopening responses. The Senior Team continues to evaluate our level of compliance and operational effectiveness. They deserve an enormous amount of praise and appreciation for their efforts over the past

6+ months! Our careful approach to re-opening has benefited the entire Pathfinder community and we feel it will benefit you too. The Playbook will be uploaded to the Pathfinder website in the upcoming days for you use as a resource as well. We appreciate your undivided attention and full cooperation during this entire COVID campaign! TOGETHER, we have kept the virus out of our campus!

Unfortunately, other businesses and educational institutions in our region have not approached re-opening as carefully as Pathfinder has, resulting in our highest community outbreak to date. Colleges in Otsego County are the latest victims to the virus. After only days of the fall semester commencing, hundreds of positive cases have surfaced. Governor Cuomo has swiftly responded by deploying a medical team to Oneonta to help contain the surge that has developed in the area. Additionally, three rapid testing sites have opened in the City of Oneonta for residents to utilize for testing, free-of-charge. After careful analysis of these events, it is abundantly clear that the Pathfinder way works. Many of these educational settings did not deploy the level of risk mitigation that we have. Here a few examples of the flaws in their re-opening activities:

1. Inadequate pre-screening of staff and students (including baseline testing).
2. Allowing co-mingling of students and staff.
3. No phase-in approach to in-person operations (all at once campaign).
4. Inadequate oversight of protocol implementation.

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3 Chenango Road • Edmeston, New York 13335-2314
(607) 965-8377 • www.pathfindervillage.org

With public schools opening next week in New York, we expect to see even more COVID-19 outbreaks and clusters in the region; undoubtedly the Governor will place additional restrictions on our communities...two steps backwards, I'm afraid. Despite our success, we continue to struggle in obtaining a reliable testing regimen in the area. It seems each week the testing rules and availability changes. As we enter traditional flu season, reliable testing will be essential to keep residents and staff safe, while maintaining an adequate workforce. As I mentioned previously, I have great concern for our workforce going into the fall, mainly due to schools re-opening and flu season.

On a positive note, our brief, extended, and home visitations continue to go well and your cooperation has made all the difference. Kudos to our RTL's, residential, nursing and administrative staff for managing all the moving parts that make these visits special! Please remember that we ask families to plan visits at least 10 days in advance and make plans that present the least amount of risk and avoid out-of-state travel. These factors present challenging realities that often require enormous PV resources and put our Village at risk. Keep it simple, keep us safe 😊.

On another positive note, one successful change we implemented early on with residential staff was changing from three, eight-hour shifts to two-twelve hour shifts and a three day/four day workweek. A difficult change for many, which involved personal and professional sacrifices, staff rose to the challenge and committed themselves to this new work schedule. Now, six months later, staff is still committed to this schedule! As such, we have offered a monetary monthly stipend, through the end of the year, to those who have committed to this schedule. I am so grateful to our staff who carry out safety and preventative measures every day on top of performing their expected job responsibilities. As I told them, I brag about Pathfinder staff to colleagues, friends and family all the time because I am so proud of all they do on behalf of our residents and families!

Other positive news:

- Pathfinder School is ready for fall classes to begin September 8th. We have three new day students joining our school!
- Day Services at our off-site locations continue to go well.
- Flu shot consents have gone out, please return as soon as possible.
- The response to our workforce campaign, "All in this Together" has been very good. Thanks to all who have responded and for those who haven't yet, please make a commitment to your staff who have kept our Village safe!

- Otsego Academy students are returning for fall semester. Four students will make up our 2020-2021 academic year that starts this week. We are excited for a great semester ahead!



Welcome to Otsego Academy, Nancy!



Welcome back, Brianna!

Thank you to all of you for your continued support. **Be healthy, be kind, be patient!**

Happy Labor Day Weekend (already?)!

Paul C. Landers
President & Chief Executive Officer
planders@pathfindervillage.org
607-965-8377, ext. 102