



Supporting Individuals with Disabilities
SINCE 1954

COVID-19 Update: 12:00PM on Wednesday, March 25, 2020

As our community (and the world) works to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, LARC staff are working around the clock to help people and families stay safe. We believe these challenging times require us to continue to focus on the needs of those we serve to best support their successes each and every day.

Like many businesses, LARC's business model has been forced to change in response to COVID-19. Our Adult Day Training (ADT) services are in their second week of temporary closure in a parallel action to the Lee County School District's effort to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and **will remain closed through April 14th**. This was not an easy decision but one we are confident is best for our participants, staff and families. A disruption to LARC services means a disruption a person's routine, social network, community interaction, training and paid work to the people we serve. We do not take this lightly, which is why we want you to know what we are doing every day to *keep moving forward*.

- With Board approval, we are using cash reserves while working tirelessly to navigate state and federal funding that will support this vulnerable population through this difficult time.
- LARC's group homes are operational with restricted visitors and are employing a shelter-in-place strategy.
- Our Community Support Services team continues to serve participants who live independently in the community, counseling for appropriate limitations on community activities, visitors, social distancing and seeking to assure health and safety needs are being met.
- LARC staff is staying in contact with ADT program participants during the closure, and are providing materials for learning when desired. Staff is also exploring potential internet-based interactions for those interested and capable – more details to come.
- LARC has not laid off any staff as a result of COVID-19 as staff are the "secret ingredient" that make LARC an asset to our community and those we serve. We value our staff greatly and are appreciative of their dedication to their work.
- Our day program facilities are closed, and only very limited staff access is being granted for business-critical activities; others are working remotely.

These times pose challenges for all segments of our community, and we all need to determine how and where we can pitch in to support others. If you wish to support LARC and the work we are doing, here is a list of ways we could use assistance:

- Cash donations: As with many businesses, we're starting to see the financial implications the coronavirus will have on our organization and those we serve. Currently LARC's cash reserves are being used. Any monetary donation, large or small, is greatly appreciated and will help us to *keep moving forward*.
- Meals for our group homes: Our two homes house two "families" who are used to going out for a meal and interacting with the community. If you would like to support your favorite restaurant and send a meal to one of our homes, please contact Angela Katz at angelakatz@larcleeconomy.org for more information. This can be a fun way for residents to feel as if they are "dining out" and support our local businesses.

- Wish List items: The people we serve are struggling with much needed supplies. For many individuals, their benefits barely cover their monthly expenses. If they are unable to work or unable to afford to purchase items they normally do not use (or at least not in quantity), this is a hardship. If you can donate items, such as Brita Water Filter Pitchers, Tylenol, toilet paper, anti-bacterial wipes, hand sanitizer, individual craft kits, word search books, or puzzles, please contact Angela Katz at angelakatz@larcleecounty.org and we will make arrangements to get them safely from you. We also have a wish list on Amazon:
https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/5FF0J8CKAJG?ref=wl_share

Should any LARC employee, program participant or LARC visitor come in personal contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or personally begin exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19, we ask that you follow the CDC guidelines and protocols and report this information to your LARC supervisor and/or LARC management immediately at 239-334-6285 x231. Please leave a message; messages are being retrieved daily.

We do not know what will come in the next weeks or months, but I do know together we will all come through this crisis as we pull together with compassion, generosity and fortitude.

A community of people built LARC in 1954, and it is a community of people who continue that legacy today. Thank you for believing in LARC, for believing in people's abilities and for helping us to *keep moving forward*.

Stay safe!

Best regards,

Kevin Lewis, Executive Director

*For more information about COVID-19 and what you can do to keep healthy and safe, visit the Centers for Disease Control at cdc.gov.