

March 20, 2020

Dear YWCA Members

I hope that you are all healthy and surviving this public health crisis. We wish you continued health during this difficult time.

Last Thursday, March 12, we learned that the official recommendation from the city was only for sick people to stay at home. It appeared that we would be able to remain open. Friday night, after everyone had left for the day, the Superintendent announced Newburyport Schools would close for the next two weeks beginning March 13 and re-open March 23. That Sunday, the Governor announced that schools would be closed until April 6th and gyms would also need to close until that time.

We responded to the Governor's mandate by closing all but our full day, licensed preschool program (which, at the time, the Governor encouraged us to keep open). On Wednesday, the Governor mandated the closure of the preschool program with its last day March 20.

YWCA's affordable housing programs continue to operate with reduced staffing. We are continuing to support our 65 tenants who are some of the hardest hit by the closures, layoffs and food shortages. We are in constant contact with them to provide emotional support and are working diligently to coordinate with other agencies in the community to expand and strengthen services including drive through food pantries and delivery options for food, on-call case management and assistance with other emergency needs. We want to give a huge thank you to all the hard working staff and volunteers who are helping with this community wide endeavor. We will continue to send out information about what you as community members can do. Due to the quarantines and contagion, some of the assistance might be in monetary donations to non-profits and food pantries who are going above and beyond to continue their work, food pantry donations and may even include being an on-line/phone support person to someone who is isolated at home. Other potential support may include being an on-line/phone support person to someone who is isolated at home.

Our small administrative team has been working frantically to comply with the constantly changing landscape and only today have we been able to take a step back and bring you up to date on where we stand. We thank you for your patience.

As of today, March 20, 2020, we have been given no indication that we will be unable to open on April 6, 2020. While it is probably widely optimistic that we will re-open on that date, we continue to use this as our target date..

Therefore, we have made the following decisions:

Wellness Plans: We have continued to bill for wellness plans and will continue to do so unless we learn that we are unable to open April 6th.

Swim Lessons: We will provide lessons over April Vacation week and will seek to provide the full number of lessons. We will align our future lessons to coincide with the school calendar.

School's Out: Our monthly tuition is based on the total number of days care is provided throughout the entire school year, divided into 10 equal payments. We assume that we will

provide the full number of days of service. If that is not the case, we will adjust our May tuition payment. If it is clear that we will not re-open on April 6th, will we cancel the April 15th automatic payment.

YWCA Children's Center: We were open for service during the week of March 16th through March 20th. Our automatic payment system will charge parents for the week of March 16th and the week of March 22nd. We will delay the first tuition payment when we re-open.

Engaging Communities Luncheon: This event has been postponed. We have a tentative reschedule date of September 23, 2020.

Census Day: Now that we are all home, we can complete our census on line. By now you should have received your letter in the mail with instructions on how to complete the census on-line. If not, you can still do so by going to 2020census.gov and following the links. You do not need the pin number to complete the census if you do not have one. Obviously, all census day activities are canceled and it is not clear at this time if they will be rescheduled.

Please be aware that we only have two administrative staff members currently working. We will respond to individual inquiries to the best of our ability.

We thank you for your patience during this crisis as we seek to position the YWCA to re-open as soon as we are given permission to do so.

A note of gratitude to our staff who have complied with the Governor's requirements. It has placed a huge financial and emotional strain on them and we appreciate their response to this situation. We are hopeful that they will all soon be able to get back to work to help fulfill the mission of the YWCA and support our community. We miss you all very much.

And a note of thanks to all of you who continue to support the programs and mission of the YWCA. We look forward to working with you once again soon.

Sincerely,
John Feehan
Executive Director