

BeechWood Update

July 2020



A Message to Our BeechWood Community

from Fanny Miller, Exec. Dir.

I hope this message finds you all safe and healthy. So much has happened in the last few months, impacting all of us dramatically in one way or another. The BeechWood offices and Sabathani Community Center were closed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and most of our in-person services, groups, meetings, and special events were suspended. Many changes in service delivery and office operations became necessary to ensure the safety of our BW community. Then in May, the physical and emotional landscape of our neighborhoods and nation was further affected by the killing of George Floyd and ensuing riots, vandalism, and protests. This created an additional challenge for us to embrace.

Throughout these difficult times, however, our dedicated staff and board members were able to continue their work by collaborating with program

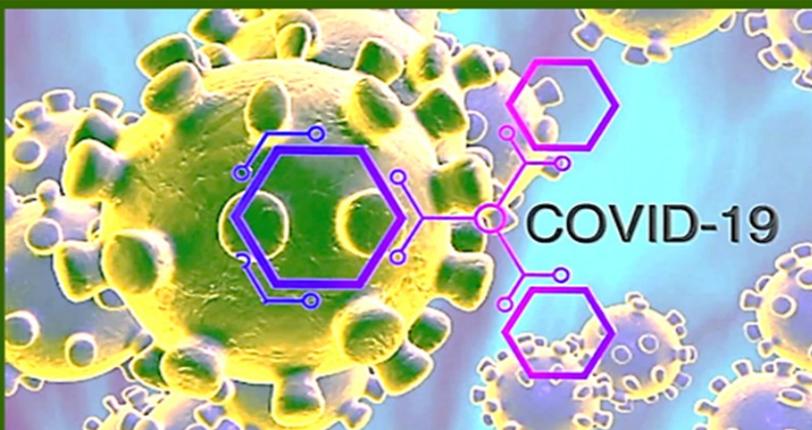
participants and each other to find different and creative ways to continue providing services as well as meet the other needs of the organization. I have been continually amazed at how resilient our BeechWood community has been in discovering new ways to work together toward positive outcomes—program participants, staff, and other stakeholders alike.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone in our BeechWood community as we do our best to approach the fear, grief, and obstacles created by current events with hope and the opportunity for growth and change. Thank you as well to our new and existing donors for your generous contributions toward our office move and the additional financial challenges related to the pandemic.

~ Fanny

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

- Margaret J. Wheatley



Staying Healthy *and* Staying Connected!

BeechWood – Service provider of ILS (Independent Living Skills), ARMHS (Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services) and Mental Health Therapy.

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The BeechWood programs and staff have remained active since the COVID-19 shut down; services were modified to accommodate new restrictions, and appropriate safety protocols were established. Although the BeechWood offices and Sabathani Community Center are still closed to the public, a small number of BeechWood staff have access to our offices and are maintaining limited on-site operations. All in-person group meetings and events are still suspended until further notice.

HOW HAS BEECHWOOD ADAPTED SERVICES AND GROUPS SINCE COVID-19?

Our BeechWood staff and program participants have been finding new ways of working together effectively and safely.

Examples from our ILS program:

- **Julia** wanted to get out into the community to grocery shop during COVID shelter-at-home. So ILS and Julia decided to set up a Metro Mobility ride to take her to and from the store, and ILS agreed to meet her and shop together while safely maintaining social distance and wearing masks.
- **Monica** wanted to set-up video calls on her phone so that she could meet her medical and other service providers virtually, but did not have the tech skills to do so. ILS met with Monica at the entrance to her apartment building, where she handed off the phone to ILS to set-up in their car while Monica waited in the lobby. Monica and ILS also worked together to find same-day grocery delivery options online and set-up the associated Metro Mobility appointment.
- **Gert** wanted to organize her apartment during the COVID shutdown. Since an in-person visit by ILS was not possible, they made plans to work together over the phone for an hour or so each week to do so. Not only did this help Gert in organizing her living space, but decreased her isolation and provided an opportunity to socialize. They continue to meet weekly on the phone while Gert changes the linens on the bed, clears off the table, and otherwise work together to figure out ways to sort items and organize her apartment.
- **Laurie** is blind and shopped online for a Toastmaster graduation dress. Since Laurie couldn't meet ILS in-person, Laurie met with ILS on video after receiving the dresses; she tried on each dress and ILS described how they looked on her. They also began doing paperwork on video every week by Laurie holding the paperwork close to the screen so ILS could read it and assist her in filling it out.
- **ILS Specialists** are now able to work with clients both remotely and in-person based on staff/client preferences and ability to adhere to all new safety protocols.
- **The Bingo Buffet & Lunch Club** monthly on-site groups are still on hold; however, the ILS team is exploring virtual equivalents with games and other activities. Please contact your ILS Specialist if interested.

Examples from our ARMHS program:

- **All 1:1 ARMHS services** are being delivered remotely.
- **The weekly ARMHS groups** moved online during the stay-at-home order, with members and staff joining in video meetings by computer or phone. The group has been learning and engaging mind-body practices that work as coping and self-regulation skills. Skills such as Soft Belly have been utilized. We have also facilitated discussions of current events, including the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and the following uprisings. This weekly group continues to serve as a meaningful touch-in for members and staff. Contact your ARMHS Practitioner for further information.
- **ARMHS Medication Education & Health Assessments** - Our on-staff nurse is now providing these services remotely. She will discuss your current prescriptions, their related side effects, interactions, etc. Contact your ARMHS Practitioner for further information.

