



THE HAWTHORNE HERALD

"A Behavioral Approach to Lifelong Care ®"



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While the doors may be closed at our day habilitation center, our programs are continuing remotely for all participants who reside in the community with their families. Day habilitation staff use Zoom video/audio meetings, Skype, FaceTime, email, and phone sessions to work with individuals and small groups on the goals and valued outcomes for each participant. Additionally, staff delivered individualized programming

binders and supplemental activity guides to each person's home in March and continue to send emails regularly with advice, activity suggestions, and online resources for families to assist them during these tough times.

Day habilitation participants who reside in HFI group homes are receiving in-person programming at the house, Monday to Friday from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, using existing HFI day habilitation staff already familiar with the residents. Staff is continuing the individualized programming that was already in place, based on each person's goals and valued outcomes.

Marie Bednarczyk (RN), our Interim Coordinator of Health Services, in conjunction Medical Director Dr. Fazio, are assisting families and staff as needed with questions and concerns regarding medications, medical care, and COVID-19. The nursing staff remains in contact with day habilitation staff who are providing remote and in-person programming and provide guidance as needed on health and nursing issues.

To support individuals and families experiencing behavior challenges at home and in our residences, our BCBA and RBT staff continue to be available on-site, for the group homes, and remotely, for those individuals residing in the community, to immediately address any behavior issues that have occurred, and provide suggestions and feedback regarding how best to respond. Staff provides individual and group sessions remotely or in-person on a regular schedule.

We truly miss having everyone together at our day habilitation program and look forward to the day when we can return safely, we are committed to ensuring that our program participants receive excellent programming, stay connected with staff and peers, and continue to live productive, healthy and engaged lives with their families or housemates.

PRO'S ON PE

W e e k l y , students at H C D S , participate in a

Zoom Physical Education class. Lead by PE Department head Steve Pinto; classes cover topics related to physical fitness, health, wellness, and at-home activities.

Students were surprised by a special guest, Major League Baseball (MLB) player Joe Panik.



Panik was a 2014 World Series Champion with the San Francisco Giants. Last year he was the second baseman for

the New York Mets and is currently a member of the Toronto Blue Jays.

Panik led the students in basic fitness stretches, worked out with them, and answered questions during rest periods and after. He talked upon health, nutrition, and of course, baseball. He spoke about the importance of teamwork, communication, and much more! Panik mentioned, "you can have all of the best players, but if everyone is going in their own direction and not working together, we as a team would not have success." This comment resonated well with all the students and staff who joined in.

Ongoing, the PE Department will be hosting special guests, such as Eric Holtz, Owner of GameOn13, and Olympic Head Coach for the Israeli National Baseball Team and, Dan Fiorito, the Head Coach of the Staten Island Yankees. Fiorito is a former teammate of Aaron Judge, Gary Sanchez, and other current New York Yankee players.

**A Message
from the
Fiscal
Intermediary
Department**

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the Fiscal Intermediary Department has been hard at work. The FI Department started working remotely from home as the Agency decided this was necessary following the State recommendations set forth.

During this time, we continue to approve expenditures & time-sheets, attend Life Plan meetings and Circle of Support meetings via Telehealth, review documentation, and reach out to Broker and Care Managers when warranted and onboard new staff. FID has been reviewing plan amendments and continue to send them to OPWDD for approval. Communication has continued with individuals and brokers by phone and email.

At the beginning of March, Self Hire Comm Hab/Respite staff were still providing services in the individuals' homes, but once updates from the State of NY and the severity of this virus spreading, most Comm Hab staff stopped working. Towards the end of March, 2020, OPWDD set forth Guidance for Telehealth services for Comm Hab staff to be done remotely via approved applications (Skype, FaceTime, Instant Messenger, etc). At this time, the FID reached out to families and brokers to review their Staff Action Plans so any service that could be done remotely could be implemented. The FID was included in the Circle of Support meetings to discuss, discussions with brokers and families by phone so that it could be agreed upon on what services could be provided by Telehealth. Changes and updates were also made to staff action plans, and Life Plans if needed. We have approximately 20-25 staff providing services via Telehealth at this time.

The FID worked with Administration to obtain PPE after reaching out to families/staff, putting a list together of staff who are and will be providing services face-to-face. PPE was then mailed via USPS to those staff. The list is updated as more Comm Hab staff choose to work.

FID sent out numerous emails to all Representatives/Families, Staff and Brokers with updates in regards to COVID-19: DSP's being deemed essential staff, tele-health updates and guidance, PPE sent to staff providing in-person services, updates from HFI with a link for a free YAI behavior management while at home and link for OPWDD COVID-19 updates and links for support during COVID-19.

The department has received positive feedback from families and brokers for the information sent out and for being available by phone, email at this critical time of self isolation. We will continue to be available to everyone during these tough times.



A Message from Our HCDS Coordinators

HCDS recognizes and applauds the exceptional work that our teaching faculty, staff, and parents are doing to support our children's education at this unprecedented time of crisis and disruption.

We continue to conduct outreach and offer distance learning with each family while being as flexible as possible. We want to ensure that the continuity of learning continues through a variety of platforms including online (Seesaw), (ClassDojo), live individual video sessions, peer to peer video sessions (group), emails, outreach phone calls from staff and our school nurse, work paper packets mailed home, along with other available options.

The overall feedback that our parents have been providing has been positive, despite the challenges that each of our families are facing. We appreciate hearing the positive feedback that you have been sharing at meetings and other forums. While we understand that remote learning is not an ideal teaching approach for our students, we continue to appreciate the participation that our parents and students have been engaging in throughout this process.

We would also like to highlight the continued efforts that our teaching faculty are providing. We recognize that it's not easy to balance your teaching responsibilities along with the personal situations that each of you are dealing with daily, and we appreciate all that you do.