

LSS Statewide Updates 4-7-20

Adoption:

Much of their work is now happening remotely/ via technology. For example, there are currently 86 people scheduled to attend a webinar “intro to adoption” class which they generally have done in person; these are all families/ couples/ individuals interested in adoption, who are moving forward even now! Social workers are now video conferencing with families to provide post-adoptive support for those with newly-placed children.

- one family which was ‘stuck’ in Ecuador in the midst of corona-virus travel uncertainties is now home, and fully intact, and under home isolation for at least 14 days! This family is thrilled to all be together, and home!
- another family which was ‘stuck’ in China- with their newest family member, who is a 14-year-old girl with Down’s Syndrome- is now home, and fully intact, and also under home isolation for 14 days! This family is thrilled to all be together, and home!

Older Adults:

LSS meals continues to serve adults EVERY DAY in MN. However communal dining sites have closed due to the virus many are now drive-up sites, where meal recipients can receive their meals in a “no touch” way, given straight to them in their cars. The staff and volunteers are trying to check in by telephone with everyone who usually receives meals to be sure that their nutritional needs are being met. Currently, many who usually come to the communal dining sites (LSS Bistros) are now receiving delivered meals, even as many of the delivery folks are choosing to stay home because they themselves are older adults, which has increased the need for more drivers! This is a great opportunity for faith communities to get involved! **IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, they have sent out 3200 meals!!!**

Since LSS has learned to do “telecare” well in the past few years for various lines of service (ranging from financial counseling to caregiver support to behavioral health), this was a relatively easy transition.

People with Disabilities:

For a majority of our residential care facilities for adults with disabilities, we usually do not have full staff there from 8-5, when many of the individuals generally go to “work sites” or day programs of some sort. Since the crisis has started, however, those work sites have closed, and now the individuals in our care are home 24/7. This means that our staffing needs have increased exponentially, and since we are still short-staffed in this area anyway, we are having to pay for LOTS of additional hours of staff time, and some of those with overtime pay.

>>>this means that **we are currently paying about \$24,000 more per day in staffing costs in our disabilities work** than we had in our budget... and while much of this is likely to be reimbursed through per diems from the state, those payments will not arrive for some time, and might not cover 100% of the costs.

So we’re hiring as quickly as we can for these services, (it helps that the governor’s order included a provision that we can hire with online background checks right now and don’t have to wait

for the fingerprinted tests, because the state fingerprinting services are closed right now), but the lag time in hiring and training is slow, and these are difficult positions to fill in the best of health conditions, so... the needs are urgent and truly essential.

Locally:

The CFCL is closed to visitors and staff for the most part are working from home. Connecting with youth in the community by phone or video conferencing. With that being said our 2nd floor case manager is continuing to check in on youth and Renaissance is still staffed 24/7. With County services being limited we have suspended our Supervised Visits program. Additionally, the Crisis Nursery is working to continue to support families with limited contact hours. Our programs and staff have quickly adapted to support youth and families in our community from a virtual platform. With an unknown timeline of this virus LSS will continue to adapt to meet the needs of the community.

Benefit for Youth Update:

We at LSS, like all of you, continue to be hopeful that the measures we are taking now will help to limit the long-term impact of COVID-19. Rather than gathering in person, we will gather online for a 30 minute virtual Benefit for Youth event this year sometime in May that will highlight LSS youth serving programs across the state, in addition to the work happening in our community. I know I speak for many when I say I hope we are able to gather soon! Please stay tuned for further details in the weeks to come.