



STILL HOPES

Episcopal Retirement Community

November 4, 2020

Dear Still Hopes Resident Family Member,

We now will speedily approach America's top two All American Family Holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas. 2020 is going to be an especially frustrating year for us to "enjoy" these traditionally high energy, high family contact, holidays. This, because of the seemingly never ending COVID-19 pandemic.

I know and appreciate that each of you (actually, I can assuredly say each of US) desire normalcy and we long for that to begin now, so we can hold/attend our traditional Thanksgiving Holiday meals and other traditions, the way we always have. Right behind that we will all want the same outcomes for the Christmas Season. The fatigue we all now suffer, regarding the protracted period of keeping vigilant and safe from even our own family members, along with the simple fact that we want to live our lives as the social humans that we are, can at this critical time, put Still Hopes' Residents at a heightened risk of having a very bad outcome, and that after we have worked together so diligently, so firmly, and had, thus far, a really stellar outcome for your Still Hopes family member and our staff.

With much sadness and disappointment, I feel compelled to ask you all to please, please, stay this course of safety and diligence. We have indeed suffered through this entire summer and now well into fall, and in all likelihood will suffer into the winter, from being isolated from the hugs and kisses and the closeness that we all love and want so much to both give and receive from family and friends. Falling down on this important and daily work to stay safe and to be diligent about keeping six feet of distance (some experts are saying that as the humidity drops, and as our pulmonary systems become drier as a result, we need to increase that distance by a goodly margin), or failing to stay masked during even these distanced encounters, first puts each of you at risk for yourselves, but second, it also puts your family member and their friends and neighbors at risk.

While the positivity rate from testing in both Lexington and Richland counties had been dropping, there is now a bit of a surge in active cases near to us. We see this happening here at Still Hopes, with additional staff members missing in action from having been exposed, or actually having contracted the virus. We must remember that this is still the same deadly virus it has always been, and just because we decide to be close, even around only family and friends, that is not a good way to keep your loved one safe.

My request is, first, that you make your plans, or change your already made plans, and have your family member who resides at Still Hopes, enjoy the Thanksgiving Holiday here with their resident neighbors. Still Hopes is working now to create a Thanksgiving feast, using real plates, real silverware, and real glasses, inside the Palmetto Dining Room, offering up a smorgasbord style plate of food, along with a great selection of delicious desserts. Your loved one can stay right here with their neighbors and enjoy a really special celebration, like they have not seen since March. Then, either before or after your own Holiday meal, plan an outdoor, socially distanced and masked visit here on campus with your family. Next, I ask that if you feel you absolutely must have your loved one spend Thanksgiving away from Still Hopes, do plan so they can maintain the 6+ feet of social distancing at all times, and always have everyone wear their mask correctly, over both the nose and the mouth. Assure that they can avoid even "fist bumps" and "elbow bumps," as those cannot occur with 6+ feet of distancing. Don't hug and kiss your family member and don't let them hug and kiss you either. I know they are your family and that they aren't sick, but many people who have this virus never know it. Those people still give it to others who can and do die from it. Don't let your loved one be one of those people.

Encourage them to wash their hands often, and when around others help them do it even more often. 20 seconds of soap with warm water, and that does NOT include the rinse time. Only completely dry hands, after washing, are safely able to touch things, so provide plenty of completely clean drying cloths and encourage all to dry their hands completely. Try to keep them in a well ventilated and loosely filled room, not bunched up in a room full of people. The more people, and the longer they stay in that setting, the greater the chance they will contract the virus if anyone there is shedding live virus. Remember too, that if you will have guests who have just come from an institutional setting full of people, like University, or if you will have guests who have recently traveled through large airports, they cannot know if they have been exposed, or if they carry virus with them asymptotically. For the record, that risk seems to me, to be too great for you to consider placing your cherished elder in, after they have put up with the semi-isolation and social distancing this long in order to preserve a future with you and their other family members.

Each of our apartment and cottage residents have also received a similar letter from me, asking for their strong consideration to stay here for their Thanksgiving meal, and having you come by for an outdoor, socially distanced, and masked, visit. Our staff members are also getting a letter encouraging them to keep their distances and to remain vigilant for a while longer. The way we have been as safe as we have been thus far, is by asking and compelling ALL of our residents and staff to be mindful and considerate of the entire family. Thankfully, this is pretty easy for our staff, as they all love working with our residents so much. I believe the same is true for how our residents care about our staff as well. This part of our culture is what helps to make us strong for this battle.

So... bottom line is that we have come too far, and done too well, to simply relax our vigilance for the brief joy of a single Thanksgiving and/or a single Christmas, in 2020. We need to stay well for the many Thanksgivings and Christmases yet to come. It is time to stand strong and tolerate this unpleasant condition for just a while longer, so we can all look back and be thankful that we kept vigilant and all of us came through with our futures intact. It is then that we can hug and kiss and hold hands (even snuggle if you're so inclined ☺), and then we will truly have a reason to be thankful and joy will abound. It may well be that you want to plan a special Thanksgiving Holiday that happens as soon as everyone in your family has been vaccinated for COVID-19. I could certainly get interested in hosting that kind of Thanksgiving Holiday!

Thank you for considering this very important decision to stay the course; to allow your family member who lives at Still Hopes to stay close to home for the Holidays. I respect each of you and want only what is best for your family member who lives at Still Hopes. And, while I'm saying Thank You, let me thank you all for the wonderful cards, letters, phone calls and texts of support and encouragement. I am so proud of this community of people and both proud and humbled to be its servant leader. Your words of encouragement are strength to my soul for this unprecedented journey we are on together.

Final comment: We are working right now to deliver out a plan for inside apartment/cottage visits. The plan will have some stipulations, so it won't work for a large gathering, but we do know you want to visit and we nearly have that plan ready to share.

My prayers of peace for this journey,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danny Sanford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Danny Sanford, CEO