Dear Participants, Caregivers, and Friends;

I hope you and your loved ones are all doing well and continuing to stay healthy during this very difficult time. Nothing about this pandemic is easy. It is a situation where we are all having to figure out how to respond, instead of react.

As we begin to see signs and hear reports that COVID-19 is slowing, the desire to return to pre-lockdown “normal life” grows stronger. However, this pandemic has put into place many changes that will not likely fade soon, and we must begin to consider what our “new normal” will be. We must remain cautious and uphold the mandatory health and safety protocols to protect ourselves and others.

These new health and safety protocols have us thinking about what My Second Home’s “new normal” will look like. In order to keep participants, caregivers, and staff safe, we must continue practicing risk reduction.

Our hope is that come early June we will be re-opening, but in a different way, and on a smaller scale.

In addition to enhancing our cleaning and disinfecting efforts, implementing new protocols to promote staff and participant safety, suspending intergenerational programming, and putting a hold on all volunteer services, we’ve made the decision to ease participants back into the program in “waves.” The first wave will include those that will consciously be able to social distance, and understand the importance of the steps being taken to maintain good health among all those re-joining the program at My Second Home. Gradually, we plan to invite a second wave of participants back into the program.

Slowly, steadily, and safely we will add more programming and benefits that were once offered before the pandemic halted our daily routines.

Though the program will be structured differently than before, the dedication and care that you all have come to know and trust remains the same.

This is a challenging time for everyone. Despite the disruption, stress, and anxiety you all may be experiencing, know that we are here for you.

My best to everyone,

Teresa
A Good Diet Can Boost Your Immune System

In a recent “Well” section of the New York Times, Jane Brody reported on our high rates of metabolic disease as an overlooked reason for being high risk of getting Covid-19. Ms. Brody writes:

“High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or pre-diabetes are the biggest risk factors for illness and death from Covid-19. This metabolic syndrome — excess fat around the middle, hypertension, high blood sugar, high triglycerides and a poor cholesterol profile — suppress the immune system and increase the risk of infections, pneumonia and cancers. They’re all associated with low-grade, body-wide inflammation, and Covid kills by causing an overwhelming inflammatory response that disables the body’s ability to fight of pathogens.”

It’s tempting, in this stressful time, to rely on canned and prepared foods, and nutritionally questionable “comfort foods.” Give your metabolic system some support by eating nutritionally wholesome foods.

If it’s difficult or frightening to go the grocery store, consider calling the RideConnect program of Family Services of Westchester. This program, a close ally of My Second Home, serves older adults 60+ who need shopping and doorstep delivery of groceries. The program continues to provide transportation to medical appointments and its volunteers have been taking clients to dialysis and chemotherapy appointments as well. Volunteers will work with a client to obtain a grocery list, do the shopping and then drop the groceries at the doorstep. This also includes making deliveries from food pantries for those in need.

Seniors can ask about these programs by calling (914) 242-7433 or email Karen Ganis: kganis@fsw.org.

Re-Imagining

Governor Cuomo says when we re-open, we must Re-Imagine. We are working to safely re-open in Phase II at the beginning of June. Because safety of our participants has always been our top priority, the program will be different as we cautiously move forward. We won’t be able to offer transportation at first. We won’t bring in musicians, instructors or volunteers in order to minimize risk.

But our experienced staff will be here to offer singing, exercising, arts and crafts, the prayer group, crossword puzzles, history class, trivia, news, reading out loud, and virtual visits to museums, concert halls and our children next door.

Our staff will follow executive orders and wear masks and gloves. If participants can’t tolerate a mask, we will use everyday preventive actions, including:

• Washing hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not practical, we’ll use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
• Providing tissues so they can cover coughs or sneezes, and then throw the tissues in the trash can.
• Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.
• Maintaining at a least six feet between chairs.

Since we’re all in this together, we should all:

• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
• Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
• Stay home when you are sick.
• Get a flu shot for yourself and your family members. This will not prevent COVID-19, but it will prevent you from getting flu, keeping you as healthy as possible.
• Practice social distancing: no shaking hands, hugging, or kissing when greeting people.

Important Contacts

• Medicare 1-800-633-4227
• Alzheimer’s 24/7 Helpline 1-800-272-3900
• Local Westchester Alzheimer’s Association Chapter 914-253-6860 Free referral information, paralegal guidance, and information about support groups in Westchester
• The New York State Office for Aging 1-800-342-9871
• Westchester County’s Department of Senior Programs & Services www.westchestergov.com or call 914-813-6400