



## VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

### **Open Letter to Scarsdale Community**

*COVID-19 Update: April 16, 2020*

Dear Scarsdale Residents,

As recently stated by Fordham University President, Father McShane, we are in “a moment of peril and a moment of great goodness.”

I will start with the peril that we still face. We are hearing that we have reached the apex of positive COVID cases – which is very encouraging. However, we are also hearing discussions of future easing of the restrictions that have had success in constraining the spread of the Coronavirus. It is still important for us to continue to be diligent to battle the virus as victory is not yet won. As Governor Cuomo expressed this week, “We are controlling the spread of the virus, [but] progress will be incremental.” He continued, “The worst is over, if we continue to be smart.”

Our path to normalcy may begin as early as the end of next month, but this is a path, not an immediate resumption of regular activities. Governor Cuomo just announced that the shutdown has been extended through May 15. However, the pandemic may not be over until there is a proven vaccine or treatment. It is important that we continue to listen and follow instructions to protect against a relapse or second wave of infection. We have worked collectively to make real progress and our collective efforts will determine our course until an effective vaccine or treatment is available.

Moving on to the great goodness we have seen. The generosity of spirit that we have seen has been nothing short of extraordinary and remains necessary to continue to save lives and help those in need. Scarsdale is a very generous and thoughtful community, so please keep doing what you have done throughout this pandemic.

Our first responders have been on the frontlines in service to this community since the very beginning of the outbreak. We recently learned that a number of our firefighters and a police officer have tested positive for COVID-19. The Village is ensuring that all of our first responders, as well as essential and non-essential staff, are taking all of the necessary measures to protect themselves. We are grateful for their service to this community during this crisis. Their selflessness and willingness to continue to serve Scarsdale is heroic. We are wishing them a speedy recovery and thank them for all they are doing to keep us safe.

The following sections highlight a few ways in which we may help each other through this trying time.

## **Plasma and Blood Donations**

Please consider donating plasma if you have recovered from the Coronavirus. Mount Sinai and White Plains Hospital/Montefiore have regional locations that will be accepting plasma donations, and you may volunteer to have your blood tested for high levels of antibodies. If you are interested, please contact Mount Sinai or White Plains Hospital/Montefiore.

Blood donations have been dramatically reduced due to social distancing and the cancellation of blood drives. Many people have asked how they can help and this is a very straightforward way in which we all may contribute. Those interested in donating blood may reach out to: AABB ([www.aabb.org](http://www.aabb.org)), America's Blood Centers ([www.americasblood.org](http://www.americasblood.org)), American Red Cross ([www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org)), Armed Services Blood Program ([www.militaryblood.dod.mil](http://www.militaryblood.dod.mil)), or Blood Centers of America ([www.bca.coop](http://www.bca.coop)). Thank you to all who donate for your life saving generosity.

## **Needed PPE**

There is real ongoing need for personal protective equipment (PPE) at medical centers and for first responders. Please consider donating any PPE you may be able to share with our first responders, including Scarsdale Police, Fire, and Volunteer Ambulance Corps; White Plains Hospital; or other medical providers. Residents may also donate goods, services, or space to New York State's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency by emailing [icanhelp@westchestergov.com](mailto:icanhelp@westchestergov.com).

## **Mental Health and Mindfulness during Crisis**

Governor Cuomo announced last week that New York State has partnered with [Headspace](https://www.headspace.com/ny) to provide New Yorkers with free meditation & mindfulness resources at [www.headspace.com/ny](http://www.headspace.com/ny).

New Yorkers may also call the COVID-19 Emotional Support Hotline at 1-844-863-9314 for mental health counseling. New York State has been actively engaged in providing mental health resources to assist residents struggling during this highly unsettling time.

## **Health Insurance**

New Yorkers without health insurance can apply through [NY State of Health](https://www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov) through May 15, 2020. Residents must apply within 60 days of losing health insurance coverage. New York State of Health may be accessed at [www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov](http://www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov).

## **Social Distancing**

Please be diligent in social distancing when outside of the home. Governor Cuomo announced the State is: (i) requiring that "any individual who is over the age of two and able to medically tolerate a face-covering shall be required to cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in a public place and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social

distancing,” and (ii) increasing the maximum fine for violations of the state's social distancing protocol from \$500 to \$1,000 to help address the lack of adherence to the protocols.

It is critical for management of the pandemic that we strictly adhere to social distancing – for our own benefit and for our friends and neighbors, especially those who are most at risk. Also, inform your children of the importance of social distancing. Thank you for your diligence – whether on line at a store or walking. It is up to each of us.

### **Safe Roadways**

Please exercise caution when using our roadways for walking, running, cycling and driving. As the weather is improving, more people are out walking, running and cycling. When driving, please slow down – we know there is little vehicular traffic out there, but it is important to slow down and save lives. When walking or running, please follow NYS law and use a path or walk/run facing traffic.

### **Small Business**

Westchester County’s Economic Development Department has partnered with [Volunteer New York](https://www.volunteernewyork.org/vvc) to help small businesses navigate applying for federal aid. Potential volunteers and businesses seeking assistance should visit: <https://www.volunteernewyork.org/vvc>.

### **Village Budget**

On Tuesday evening, the Village Board held its annual budget hearing. Immediately following the hearing, the Village Board proposed a \$210,000 reduction in the FY 20-21 Village budget. The Village decisively took quick action to: (i) identify potential revenue shortfalls, and (ii) identify sources of funds to cover potential shortfalls. The Village then quickly moved to seek data-driven opportunities to reduce the FY 20-21 budget to provide relief to Village taxpayers. The \$210,000 budget reduction is coming from the library budget, as the opening date of the library has been pushed from August to October. As a result of the change in the opening date of the library, the library will not have its first full year of operations until the FY 21-22 budget.

The revised proposed budget will result in a 1.46% increase in Village taxes, or about \$95 on the average home in Scarsdale. The proposed budget will be posted on the Village website and will be on the Board’s April 28 agenda for proposed adoption. NYS requires that all Villages adopt budgets no later than May 1. The Village Board has pledged to continue to seek appropriate budget reduction opportunities in the coming months as we have more clarity on the economic impact of this pandemic.

### **Village Election Rescheduled**

Yesterday, Governor Cuomo announced that Village elections would be held on June 16. Please be on the lookout for more announcements about the polling location, voting hours and

permitted absentee balloting. Scarsdale has three open Trustee seats, as well as the Village Justice. Please exercise your right to vote.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The Village remains committed to providing essential services and preparing for the difficult weeks ahead. The Village will be ready for the time in the not too distant future when we return to a new normalcy that is rooted in the past while incorporating learnings from the current adjustments we are all making.

While we know the uncertainty of the weeks ahead weigh heavily on our hearts and minds, we have hope and can take comfort in the strength of our community and its resilience. Be well and please stay home. Let's keep each other safe and, even though we can't be physically together, we will get through this together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MS', is positioned above the printed name.

Marc Samwick  
Mayor