



VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

Open Letter to Scarsdale Community

COVID-19 Update: July 24, 2020

Dear Scarsdale community,

On Friday, July 17, at 4:00 pm, the Westchester County Emergency Operations Center was quietly deactivated. I don't recall seeing a press release, and the Google search I just completed as I write this letter today returned no relevant result for "Westchester County Emergency Operations Center deactivated." It seems likely that many, if not most, Westchester County residents were not aware that the EOC, as it is referred to, was active in the first place. That is the nature of many important governmental services – work taking place by dedicated staff behind the scenes that many residents may not be cognizant of, but benefit significantly from.

We should all be aware, however, that the [Westchester County EOC](#), a public safety-oriented command and control center staffed during emergency events, remained in operation for 130+ days, serving as our partner in response to COVID-19, having answered literally thousands of phone calls and emails while also processing over 1,000 requests for resource support from Westchester communities, including Scarsdale. They have performed exceptionally throughout our pandemic experience and their efforts have helped us to manage our local response more effectively. We owe debts of gratitude to County Executive Latimer for his leadership during this crisis and to his staff for their on-the-ground activities undertaken to protect and serve Scarsdale and other Westchester municipalities.

Our local emergency services, including the [Scarsdale Volunteer Ambulance Corps \(SVAC\)](#), Scarsdale Police Department, Scarsdale Fire Department, and Department of Public Works, have worked tirelessly to support our community's needs during the pandemic, as have many other Village departments. Please note that I strongly encourage Scarsdale residents to help [financially support SVAC](#), a volunteer organization funded through donations, as this crisis has truly highlighted the pivotal role they play in the community's suite of emergency services.

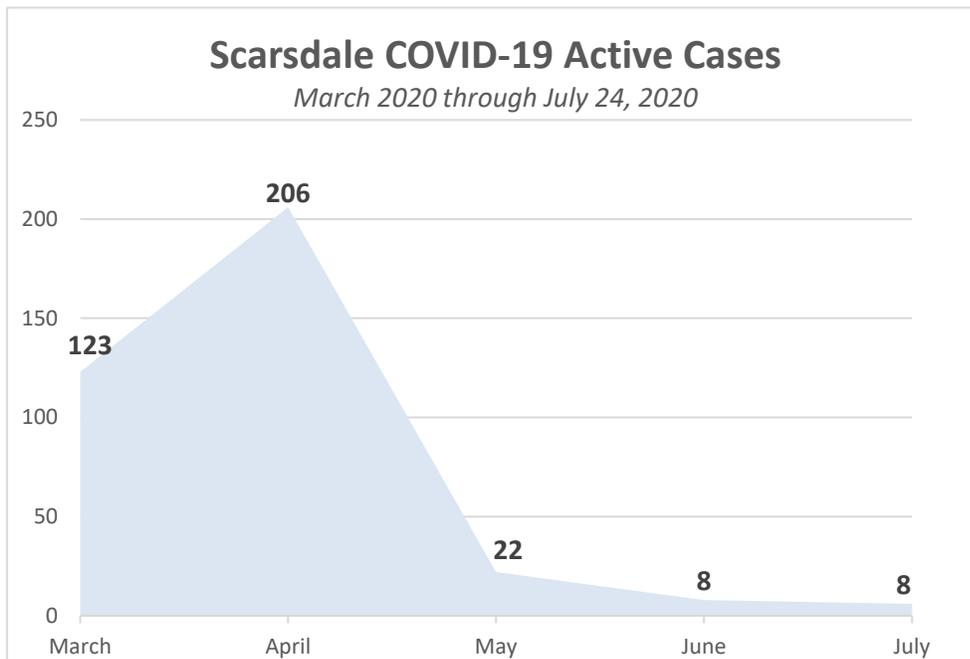
Not only have our local emergency services been busy delivering outstanding service and value, but the staff members have also sacrificed on a personal level. Although emergency personnel undergo extensive training, utilize appropriate safety protocols, and are prepared, as best they can be, to immerse themselves in human tragedy, they are nonetheless exposed to physical and emotional risk in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as they navigate against a backdrop of uncertainties. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its sustained nature and dynamic public health landscape, amplifies the uncertainties inherent to standard emergency operations.

Despite such circumstances, unparalleled in our national experience during our lifetimes, our emergency services demonstrated exemplary performance in service to the community while successfully maintaining continuity of operations throughout this continuing public health crisis. On behalf of the Village Board, I extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for their commitment to our community's collective well-being.

Their mission in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has substantially diminished, provided we all maintain vigilance in continuing to adhere to the relevant public health guidance and legal mandates so as to help avert a local resurgence of the disease. Importantly, the [growing list](#) of states – now 31 of them – included in the [New York State Travel Advisory](#) represents not only an effort to protect New York residents from a resurgence in COVID-19, but also a stark warning of the urgent need to continue to be attentive by making personal choices and taking necessary actions in support of the guidance and mandates that protect ourselves and others from COVID-19 exposure.

To be clear, COVID-19 remains a public health threat.

However, as the graphic below relates, the incidence of COVID-19 within the Scarsdale community has significantly declined, a positive trend in which we have all played a critical part. Please continue to practice social distancing, comply with the NYS mandate that you wear a face covering in public spaces where you are unable to maintain at least six feet separation from others, and adhere to any applicable self-quarantine mandate triggered by travel to NY from a [designated state](#).



Our safety is in our hands. The best way to remain safe and healthy while helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 is to continue to follow these CDC and the NYS Department of Health guidelines:

- Wear a mask.
- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently.
- Avoid touching your face.

- Practice social distancing (6 feet).

Undertaking these efforts, including encouraging children, teens, and young adults, will reduce the likelihood that rigorous restrictions on businesses and our daily activities may need to be reinstated.

Budget Work Session

The Village Board will hold a work session at 5:30 pm on August 11 to review the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-2020 preliminary year-end budget results and the FY2020-2021 budget for the months of June and July 2020. This review will feature an assessment of COVID-related budget impacts to-date, including the adequacy of currently implemented austerity measures and revisiting of the revenue assumptions embedded in the budget planning that took place early in the pandemic. The status of certain FY2020-2021 capital budget items will also be presented.

Please see future announcements from the Village and/or check the Village website to obtain information on how to attend this important Village Board work session via Zoom.

Supporting Local Small Business Economic Recovery

As with small businesses nationally, Scarsdale's small businesses are suffering in an environment still being shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please do your part to support their recovery by shopping and dining locally. The Village has worked collaboratively with the [Scarsdale Business Alliance](#) to develop and rapidly deploy measures to make local shopping and dining safe, convenient, and enjoyable. Please take advantage of the opportunities we are endeavoring to provide.

Below is a brief summary of some of the current and upcoming offerings:

2020 Annual Sidewalk Sale

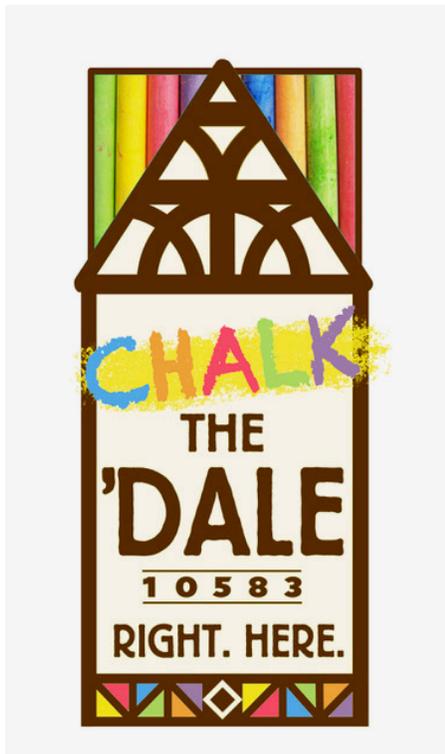


The Annual Sidewalk Sale has always been popular. Attendees know that it is not only a pleasant atmosphere, but it's also a place to see some of Scarsdale's well-heeled (pun intended) canine best friends. This year promises to be among the best Sidewalk Sales ever! Social distancing measures will be in-place and face coverings required, of course.

For the first time, the Sidewalk Sale has been expanded to include not only the Village Center, but also the Heathcote Five Corners and the Golden Horseshoe shopping areas. Additionally, it will run for a full week, from Monday, July 27, through Sunday, August 02.

Read more about the 2020 Sidewalk Sale [here](#).

Chalk the 'Dale



In an effort to help reinvigorate our sense of community in the wake of the worst of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as to assist our small businesses by helping to encourage Village Center pedestrian activity, two rising sophomores at Scarsdale High School, Anna Feldstein and Katie Han, proposed to the Village and Scarsdale Business Alliance a “Chalk the ‘Dale” event. Both the Village and SBA are supporting the event and the details follow.

Who: Any Scarsdale resident, coming either alone or in a group, whether a talented [3D sidewalk artist](#) or simply one with an affinity for doodling. Chalk is supplied, creativity is BYOC.

When: Friday, July 31, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, coinciding with the 2020 Sidewalk Sale hours of operation. Rain date is Saturday, August 01.

Where: On the streets Spencer Place, Boniface Circle, and Harwood Court, with chalk art authorized on streets closed for the Sidewalk Sale. Participants must check-in at the Chalk the ‘Dale station in front of the Post Office before starting.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

As you may have noted, more Scarsdale residents are walking, running, and cycling around the Village this summer.

Please be alert and drive with appropriate caution.

Cyclists, please be respectful of pedestrians on our sidewalks and paths and strive to use streets for cycling whenever possible. Of course, bicyclists must ride in the same direction of vehicle traffic when on the street and obey all traffic control devices.

To enhance personal safety, pedestrians, joggers, and runners should be moving against the flow of traffic when on the street or street shoulder. Should a motorist become distracted and inadvertently head into your path, your opportunity to avoid injury is greatly enhanced when walking, jogging, or running while facing the oncoming traffic.

Traffic safety is everyone’s responsibility. Please do your part to help keep our friends, family, and neighbors safe as they endeavor to enjoy the outdoors.

Travel Advisory

As related in my last Community Letter, Governor Cuomo has issued [Executive Order 205 – Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in New York](#), which stipulates that anyone arriving in New York following having traveled to a designated state with significant community spread must self-quarantine

for a period of 14 days from the date of last travel within such state. The self-quarantine mandate applies to New York residents and non-residents, alike. The [Interim Guidance](#) provides additional details, including the definition of “travel” as used in the context of the Executive Order.

The [list of states](#) triggering the self-quarantine mandate is updated weekly by the New York State Department of Health using the metrics specified in Executive Order 205. On June 26, the list included eight states. As of today, it includes 31.

If you are planning to travel, please be sure to review the current list of designated states and adhere to any applicable self-quarantine mandate upon your return. Importantly, non-compliance is subject to a civil penalty of up to \$10,000.

It's great news that all Regions in the state have entered [Phase IV](#) of [New York Forward](#); however, please continue to undertake appropriate precautions to avoid a local COVID-19 resurgence ... and

Ad Hoc Council to Combat Racism and Bias

Last month, there was a vigil in Chase Park to honor George Floyd. The speakers shared their very personal, painful experiences of racism in Scarsdale. This is not the Village many of us believed that we are part of. This is not the Village we want to be. We hold ourselves to higher ideals with core beliefs that each of us deserve and demand fair and equal treatment. We strive to become a community that holds diversity, inclusion, and belonging as core ideals.

As I wrote to the community shortly after the vigil, the Village Board and I have worked to form an Ad Hoc Council to Combat Racism and Bias. The authorizing resolution, approved by the Village Board at its last Regular Meeting on July 14, 2020, is available [online](#).

In summary, the Council's mission is to:

1. Create an anti-racist and anti-biased environment in Scarsdale that encourages inclusion and a sense of belonging for all residents – an environment that recognizes the value that each individual brings to our community.
2. Focus on listening and engagement to identify areas of tension in the community (specifically, where and how residents are experiencing discrimination or bias).
3. Use the information gathered to construct actionable recommendations, which may include such elements as educating the community, creating a safe and open place for the community to bring any race or bias issues to seek resolution, and other concrete recommendations derived from the work of the ad hoc Council.

The Council's members are diverse and include a majority of people of color, including individuals representing the Scarsdale Family Counseling, School District, Board of Education, Village staff, and Village Board. Thus far, the Council has held four organizational meetings.

While I remain dismayed by what I have learned recently about racism in Scarsdale, I am genuinely encouraged and optimistic about the enthusiasm and passion of the Council members and the work the Council is going to undertake. I am also encouraged by the outpouring of residents wishing to be involved in this important work. Please know that community outreach is a critical component of the Council's mission and all are welcome to share their thoughts with the Council via email, at listening sessions, educational and discussion opportunities, and more, as such opportunities are announced.

I sincerely believe that we have the opportunity at this time to make lasting change. I recognize that perfection, namely true equality, may not be achievable, but I believe that we can make Scarsdale a community where all are welcome, all are treated fairly and equally, and all can feel that they belong.

Closing Remarks

As we hope to emerge from the dark tunnel of COVID-19 into the light of a new day, I encourage members of the Scarsdale community to congratulate one another on the herculean effort it has taken to endure the darkness, to recognize our collective achievement in adhering to the guidance and mandates that have contributed to our gradual progress toward a new normal, and to remain absolutely steadfast in adhering to the public health advisories and best practices that have yielded positive returns to-date.

I again call your attention to the fact that 31 states now exhibit significant community COVID-19 spread, and it is noteworthy that the potential for resurgence remains with us, as occurred last month in Chappaqua. I am optimistic for the future and believe that a peaceful comfort and strong sense of community are ebbing back into the community following this very stressful period. Talking to one another, sharing experiences, and once again enjoying in-person social interactions are important elements in healing. We *are* New York Strong and *will* overcome the obstacles remaining ahead of us.

Please participate in the opportunities we are endeavoring to provide the community to see and be with other residents in-person. Appropriate social distancing measures are in-place and your friends and neighbors are responsibly maintaining compliance with public health guidance and mandates, as evidenced by the reduced number of active COVID-19 cases in the community.

Take time to attend the [2020 Sidewalk Sale](#) and consider providing an original work of chalk art on the street while there. Shop and Dine the 'Dale!

Also, [Join the Scarsdale Pool](#), where patrons have [enjoyed a fabulous first week to the 2020 season](#). Our public health and operating [protocols](#) provide a safe, enjoyable experience.

Be seen, be heard, and enjoy the fruits of our labors undertaken to overcome COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Marc Samwick
Mayor