



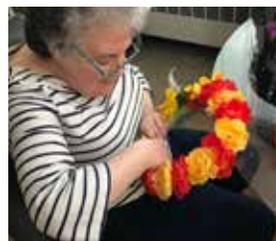
KenCrest

Your Dreams. Our Mission.



Spring 2020

Although the frost has melted away and the flowers have begun to bloom, this spring has been a truly unique season for the KenCrest family. Nevertheless, we've continued to blossom throughout our locations and embrace our new normal with enthusiasm. You could say we've become 'eggsperts' at staying safe at home!



With Gratitude

KenCrest is overwhelmed with gratitude as we have seen the whole community come together to support our essential work over the past few months. It has been inspiring to see the creative ways our extended KenCrest Family and many new friends are supporting one another:



- There is an ever-growing army of sewers that are donating their time and talents by making cloth masks for our staff and those we support.
- Our staff provided bedding and comfort supplies to their fellow staff who are temporarily living in the homes.
- Online shoppers answered our calls to purchase needed supplies on our Amazon Wish List like thermometers, PPE, cleaning supplies, and games and craft supplies to help us combat cabin fever.
- There is a corps of more than 50 volunteer drivers making no-contact deliveries of groceries, personal protection equipment, and other supplies to over 160 Community Living Homes.
- A local musician, David Cunningham of the band Go HAM, dedicated a special Friday night live online concert to KenCrest. Staff and those we support enjoyed a night of music and dancing while maintaining social distancing guidelines. David raised over \$700 for KenCrest during the concert.



We are honored to share that KenCrest has received a PHL COVID-19 Fund grant for \$50,000 to support our emergency response, made possible by a collaboration between the Philadelphia Foundation, the City of Philadelphia, and the United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey. KenCrest has also received additional emergency response grants from the Montgomery County Foundation and the Gundacker Foundation.



We thank all the families, friends, foundations, corporations, and individuals that have stepped up in big ways to support us as we respond to this crisis. If you would like to contribute, or learn more about how you can help, please visit www.kencrest.org/help-during-covid-19.



Superheroes Among Us

As a human services provider, KenCrest is proud to be an agency filled with essential frontline workers—not just the staff we employ, but those we support as well. Throughout KenCrest’s Employment program, 30% of the individuals we support in job coaching are essential workers who still continue to report to their places of employment during the coronavirus pandemic. They are hospital workers, grocery clerks, retail associates, and food/hospitality servers—each one a superhero in their own right.

One particular superhero whom we support, Emmy, is a part-time employee at Wawa. While Emmy’s schedule hasn’t changed much, many of her daily responsibilities at work have. Prior to the pandemic, her main position was keeping the coffee bars clean and restocked with the many coffee compliments patrons use regularly—stirrers, sleeves, creamers, sugar, etc. When Wawa shifted away from their self-serve bar, Emmy’s tasks pivoted with them. Now she spends much of her time helping to keep the countertops, touch screens, doors, and other frequently touched surfaces sanitized for visitors and her fellow team members. While working in such a high-traffic establishment during this season could be daunting for most, Emmy embraces every day with a brave smile and a mask to keep it safe.

We are truly grateful to Emmy, our Direct Support Professionals and Employment Specialists, and all the amazing individuals with disabilities who are a part of the essential workforce. The greatest heroes among us don’t wear capes!

Advocacy Update

This past winter, the Pennsylvania General Assembly was debating whether to keep two of the four remaining state centers open. During this time, Senator Katie Muth visited the KenCrest Mt. Kirk Community Medical Home to see first-hand how individuals with intellectual disabilities and complex medical needs can be successfully supported in the community. Though she originally supported keeping the centers open, the Senator said that her visit to KenCrest changed her way of thinking and she ultimately voted to close the centers and transition people with disabilities into the community.





Community Champions 2020

Although we could not celebrate Community Champions as we had planned this year due to the coronavirus, we still want to honor the winners, honorable mentions, and sponsors for their amazing contributions to our organization. Long before we entered this time of crisis, our Community Champions were there to lead the way with their ideas, time, and talents.

We are humbled by the generosity of these people, companies, and organizations that chose to join in our mission. Read on to learn about their contributions to our community. To read the full stories of each Champion, please visit our website: kencrest.org/communitychampions



Peggy Allen

created a group at her church, Reformation Lutheran Church in Media, for people of all abilities that comes together for social events, volunteer projects, and learning new skills and hobbies.



BB&T is much more than a business partner; they volunteered their time and funds to beautify one of our Philadelphia Community Living Homes and shared lunch with the staff and residents.

State Senator Maria Collett

advocates for inclusion and strengthening families in our communities, who most recently voted “no” on SB 906, the Moratorium on Closing State Centers, showing her support of community-based settings for individuals with disabilities.

Gloria Dei Shining Star Committee

has supported the Rev. Harvey Davis Family Fund for over 11 years, providing holiday meals for families in our Early Learning and Birth-to-5 programs.

Steve Horvath, RN,

is a dedicated hospice nurse who served a resident at one of our Community Medical Homes with the utmost dignity and respect. He extended his care and compassion to the entire care team and housemates during a difficult time.



Mary Ellen Mahan donated her time to lead the gardening activity at the KenCrest Masters in 2019, but her main goal was to include the consumers at Seeds of Purpose in every part of the event, from collecting moss and other materials to helping guests build their terrariums the day of the event.

Premiere Dance Studio

is a neighbor to our Seeds of Purpose program, and has developed both a professional and personal relationship with that program. The Studio has hired them to tend to their flowers, donated supplies, and given gifts to those we serve during the holidays.



U.S. Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon

advocates for children, families, and people with disabilities and has sponsored critical legislation to support Direct Support Professionals. Congresswoman Scanlon also joined KenCrest as a speaker at our film screening event of *No Small Matter* in September 2019.



Goldie Smith

has been a Lifesharing provider since 1987, supporting several individuals over this time in a compassionate, caring, inclusive, and loving way.

Silvia Sosa

is a community advocate for families, connecting them to our Early Learning Centers, helping them complete applications, apply for financial assistance, and even attends informational sessions with parents.



Jim & Marta Storm

spent their professional career being educators and now are full-time advocates for meaningful lives and the range of possibilities for people with disabilities outside of state centers.

Congratulations to the following Honorable Mentions who continue to champion kindness and inclusion across our community:

The Rev. David Akers

Debbie Feierman

Greater Philadelphia Diaper Bank

David & Floss Hauschild

Mike Kutler

Edward Minus, III

Vince Naples, Abet Medical

NFP

St. John Lutheran Church, Blue Bell

Sue Stefanski

Patrick Sulecki

We would like to thank our generous sponsors, who, without hesitation, allowed their sponsorships to address immediate needs facing the agency when the event was cancelled.

Guiding Star:

Arlington Heritage Group

Barbara & James Beach

CBIZ, Inc.

Willits Pharmacy Services

Ray of Hope:

Aetna

Fidelity Burglar & Fire Alarm

Carol Hammarberg

Interstate Fleets

JDB Service Group

Netsmart Technologies

Dream Maker:

Abriola Company

Alvare Associates, Inc.

Steve & Leigh Anne Bell

Lance A. Berger & Associates

Sheraton Valley Forge Hotel

McGrath Systems

NFP

Sound of Laughter:

A-1 Construction Specialty, Inc.

A. Abramson Tire Company

Balashine Properties, LLC

Marian Baldini & Larry Filtz

Revs. Alina Gayeuski &

Daniel Smith

Mark Kiczek

Tonia McNeal

Kimberly & Scott Quinn

Reformation Church (Media)

St. John's Lutheran Church
(Blue Bell)

Barbara & Todd Vanett

Open Arms:

Roseann Adamo

Charles J. Becker & Bro., Inc.

John Busillo

Matt Busillo

Herta Clements

Ray Cushman

D'Agostino Carpets

Melissa DiSipio

Fantozzi Construction

Bryan Forcino

Frank & Gail Guthridge

Janet Himmelreich

Josie Jones

Robin Madison

Harry Mazurek & Susan Shilcrat

Rhonda Mirarchi

Catherine Nold

Joy & Robert Reiss

Mike & Pam Schuessler

Ethel Serianni

Kellie Smith

James & Marta Storm

Lisa & Patrick Sulecki

Building Community During COVID-19

Like the thousands of human services providers across the US, KenCrest has felt the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in a multitude of ways. From heartache to hope, our extended family has grown closer (figuratively) during a time where distancing has become the default. Throughout KenCrest's residential division, our teams have put their creativity, collaboration, and communication skills to the test to keep everyone engaged and connected to the communities and routines they know and love.



When our Community Participation Day Programs closed in early March, our team quickly jumped into action to mobilize resources and keep the individuals we support engaged in their homes. Gina Cincotta, KenCrest's Activities & Curriculum Coordinator developed a special website for staff in our residential divisions that is full of projects, crafts, and games that everyone could participate in using items that are readily available at their locations. With the support we receive from many wonderful donations, Gina organizes weekly activity kits for the community homes and Lifesharing families, each with a myriad of options based on individual support plans that include everything from chess boards, card sets, and jewelry making sets, to crayons, coloring pages, and picture books.



As those we support combat cabin fever, staff are doing their best to ensure everyone in our care stays close with their families through phone calls, video chatting, letters, cards, and other ways to celebrate when they can't be in close proximity.



Building Community Continued



Drive-by birthday party parades have become one of our favorite events to date, as KenCrest has celebrated over ten birthdays with party processions both big and small. One of our party parades made the news during Easter weekend as KenCrest celebrated the 18th birthday of Tracy, who resides in one of the Children's Transitional Care homes. With over 30 cars led by the Philadelphia Police Department, 50 members of our community decorated their vehicles with signs, balloons, streamers, and pinwheels to wish the birthday girl well!



Aside from birthdays, the community has rallied around KenCrest in other wonderful ways like creating greater opportunities for inclusion. In some neighborhoods where KenCrest operates homes, neighbors have invited staff and residents to participate in special solidarity events including banging pots and pans from their porches, joining in sing-alongs, rocking their favorite Philly team sports gear, and ringing bells. Even through dark moments, at KenCrest we're always reminded to focus on the light of our extended family and community that continues to lift us up to shine brightly.



Teleintervention Success Story: *Melani and Brandon*

KenCrest has received several updates from our Early Intervention therapists and instructors about the success of the teleintervention therapy that we've implemented in lieu of face-to-face sessions during the COVID-19 lockdown. Read on for Brandon's recent success story, and check out our Facebook posts for other great teleintervention successes.

KenCrest Special Instructor, Julie Zettlemoyer, has been working with Melani and her two-year-old son, Brandon, since January via our Early Intervention program. Brandon's primary issue is speech delay, and Julie meets with Melani and Brandon every Thursday to introduce techniques for practicing sounds, moving from one activity to another, and modeling behavior.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, these sessions have not been able to happen face-to-face as they had been in the past. But thanks to technology and teleintervention capabilities, the weekly meetings between Melani, Brandon, and Julie still take place.

"We've had three teletherapy sessions so far using FaceTime, and it's been really great," said Melani. "I get so much benefit out of this...it's really been a godsend to me. I was nervous when I heard the sessions would stop, but with the teleintervention, I'm so pleased that we can catch up once a week. I love that we can still stay connected since we can't meet face-to-face."

Julie gives Melani tips on how to move Brandon from one activity (like bath time) to the next (bed time) without him becoming upset. At Julie's suggestion, Melani said she's been bringing down her tone of voice and using a timer to simulate a countdown to help Brandon understand that they will be stopping one thing and moving on to the next, and Melani's seen improvement in his responses. Brandon's also been using more words as Melani will repeat the word Brandon tries to say until he can say it on his own without prompting. One of his most recent successes is not only being able to say "milk," but going to the refrigerator when he wants milk.

"I'm so thankful for the tips and techniques that Julie has shared over these last few weeks with me," said Melani. "It's great to be able to talk about the challenges with Brandon now that we are home all of the time. It's even better to see the progress he's making as he communicates and interacts with us more."



**KENCREST'S MISSION IS TO SUPPORT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BY:
exploring possibilities, mobilizing resources,
and empowering dreams.**

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