



Town of Clifton Park

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Town of Clifton Park Response to COVID-19

Everyone in our community has felt the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We may know someone who is personally struggling with the virus or someone who has lost employment. Widespread and immediate school and workplace disruptions for many people and for others the sadness associated with isolation. The difficult challenge resulting from our way of life being altered in an instant. Each one of us in our town has played a key role in keeping each other safe and secure. The Town of Clifton Park, its employees, volunteers, and friends have all worked to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens have been served and their most immediate needs met.

As schools and businesses began to close or reduce staff as of March 16th, the Town of Clifton Park was also required to reduce our workforce by 50%. Working within the New York State mandate, we carefully ensured that all departments within Town Hall continued to operate. Every workday this year each Town department has been open to serve our residents. For the period of time the doors to Town Hall were locked during the day due to the workforce reduction mandates, Town employees were answering calls and taking meetings by appointment. We have been working to support our residents by phone, appointment, social media and website updates, throughout the pandemic. Supervisor Barrett has conducted a series of public online meetings on various topics that included expert guests. Disseminating information to our community was never more important as it has been in 2020. Our Senior Van staff continued working every day to ensure people were able to maintain important appointments and urgent medical needs. They have been a vital part of our Town services and our Seniors have expressed their gratitude for this continued service during the pandemic.

We have experienced an outpouring of generosity from our community. Our calls to action have received an overwhelming response. We have had more than 130 volunteers donate their time to grocery shopping, running errands, and delivering meals for our Seniors and vulnerable residents. Our staff and volunteers have reached out to over 2000 Seniors and at-risk residents through our Town's R.U. OK? Program and utilizing our Senior Center Membership list. This has allowed us to remain in contact with people who may not have any local family, may need help accessing basic services, or just need to hear a friendly voice during this long period of isolation.

Our Town knows no limits when working together to solve a problem and this was never more evident than when we held three food drives for CAPTAIN Youth and Family Services. The first drive on March 21st was extremely successful and we followed up with another drive on April 10th as the stock at the Pantry began to dwindle. These drives collected over 12,000 pounds of food for the CAPTAIN Food Pantry which has helped fill over 350 food orders for local families since Mid-March. A third drive ensured the Pantry would be able to serve all requests during the worst of the pandemic. Sadly, another result of COVID-19 is food insecurity for so many additional families within our community. We are proud to have helped facilitate these drives and encourage residents to continue to donate to CAPTAIN.

Prior to the pandemic, many people enjoyed dining at the Ravenswood Restaurant in Clifton Park. Going forward, however, the Ravenswood, and owner Scott Schreifels, will be remembered for their generous donation of almost 1,000 dinners to Clifton Park Seniors during the most isolating weeks of the Stay at Home order. We thank Scott and his team at The Ravenswood, our team at Town Hall and especially the many

volunteers that made deliveries of the dinners. The dedication to this generous program impacted lives from a financial need as well as a social perspective.

Protecting our most vulnerable citizens has always been top of mind during these last few months and acquiring protective equipment like masks has been an ongoing challenge. Supervisor Barrett and his wife Li donated \$2,000 of personal funds to purchase N95 masks for the Town, Clifton Park/Halfmoon EMS, Ballston Lake EMS, Sheriff's Department and others very early in the pandemic when acquiring masks was the most difficult. The Town, partnering with the Clifton Park IDA and Chairman Supervisor Schopf, purchased 180,000 masks when this important protective measure remained very difficult to procure. Our team at Town Hall conducted five public mask distributions on the Common to ensure as many people as possible in our community had the protection they needed. We also delivered thousands of masks to the Senior Housing complexes in Clifton Park. Many of the 1500 members of the Clifton Park Senior Community Center also were provided masks. Businesses received mask donations from the IDA as they prepared to reopen, which eliminated an expense at a time when masks were much more expensive when compared to current prices. A grant program administered by the IDA, is assisting small businesses manage the additional expenses due to new safety equipment and protocols. \$150,000 has been allocated from IDA funds to offset COVID expenses as businesses reopened and began to operate under difficult conditions. Dozens of Clifton Park businesses have benefitted from this innovative program.

Finally, we want to say Thank You to all our volunteers as well as all the residents of Clifton Park for your dedication to helping one another and protecting yourself and neighbors as we navigate the many challenges 2020 has offered. Supervisor Barrett stated in March, the pandemic and NY Shutdown is not a time for governmental employees to take a step back and do less. It's a time for us to step forward and do more. In the most difficult of circumstances, public employees have the opportunity to display their value. We will accept the challenge and advance additional measures to serve our community. Expanding services, protecting the most vulnerable, supplying difficult to attain personal protective equipment and supporting our community in any way possible is our mission. It is our sense of community and caring that will see us through this difficult time.

Be sure to visit our Town webpage at CliftonPark.org regularly for more information or "like us" on Facebook to keep up to date on the great happenings in the Town of Clifton Park.

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