
Pittsford Schools

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Dear Families and Staff,

It has been nearly a month since our schools closed and we were thrown into what has become our new way of learning and living. I am proud of the way our community has reached out in both big and small ways to support one another. While we have been physically apart, we have found ways to come together to support critical needs. We've filled the shelves of the Food Cupboard, donated personal protective equipment (PPE) to local healthcare workers, and supported our families in need with grocery gift cards. I could not be more proud of our community.

Crisis often reveals character. Showing and developing character is a choice. During this crisis, our community's character has been on display in a very positive and generous way. In a very small window of time, you donated approximately \$30,000 for families in need of food. Your choice to contribute has not only put food on the tables for families who otherwise would not have eaten, but reinforced a tremendous sense of communal compassion through giving. Your choice to do something positive during this pandemic spreads hope, raises optimism and illustrates that we are indeed taking care of one another.

Based on your overwhelming contributions, I have asked the Town Supervisor Bill Smith, Mayor Bob Corby, PCSD staff, Urban Suburban administrators, Rotary Club, Pittsford area clergy, and our Pittsford Education Foundation to help identify as many families in need of support as we can.

Since this request for donations, just a few days ago, we have provided support in the amount of \$6,000 to approximately 40 families. We will continue to distribute your contributions on a weekly basis for as long as sustainable.

During my travels and conversations with families, they have all expressed a great appreciation for being part of our Pittsford community. Repeatedly, I have heard words of gratitude from those you have helped and a deep appreciation for being the shining light during some very dark times. In the event you know someone in need, please send an email to Dr. Patricia Vaughan-Brogan, our Director of Student Services, at Patricia_Vaughan-Brogan@pittsford.monroe.edu. Know that confidentiality and maintaining dignity are top priorities while distributing funds.

During this time of uncertainty and change, I have also been so impressed with our students who have done their part to maintain social distancing, have put their all into distance learning, and supported our first Community Virtual Event by submitting more than 200 pieces of artwork to

our Virtual Art Show on Facebook last Wednesday.

Social distancing isn't easy for adults and is even harder for children who thrive on social interaction with peers. I encourage our students to continue reaching out to one another virtually and to do those things that feed their soul. Get outside, create something, maintain schedules, set goals, nurture a passion, learn a new skill, and find time for family fun. If your child needs help managing the stress and anxiety of this new temporary reality, don't hesitate to reach out and seek help. There are many resources available on the PCSD website at <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/domain/2086>.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress during the COVID-19 outbreak. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger. Below are some resources and links to information on how to help yourself and others during this pandemic

- **Ways to Help:** If you are looking for ways to help support local organizations and needs, visit the "How Can I Help" section of our COVID-19 website at <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/domain/2115>
- **Blood Drives:** The Red Cross is asking people to consider donating blood to mitigate a blood shortage-urgent need. To find local blood drives and schedule an appointment to donate blood, call 1-800-RED CROSS or visit www.redcrossblood.org.
- **Food Contributions:** The Pittsford Education Foundation continues to collect contributions for food gift cards at <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/domain/1753>, and the Pittsford Food Cupboard is accepting food and monetary donation. Information can be found at <http://www.pittsfordfoodcupboard.net/>.
- **NYS Office of Mental Health COVID-19 Emotional Support Line 1-844-863-9314**
- **Home Learning/Community/Health-Mental Health Resources:** Updated COVID-19 information and community resources are posted on an ongoing basis at <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/COVID-19INFORMATION>. Families can find resources related to information about COVID-19, telemedicine, food banks, free Wi-Fi, social/emotional wellbeing/coping strategies, and materials translated into Chinese and Spanish.
- **Health Insurance:** NY State of Health opened a Special Enrollment Period last month for people who are uninsured through NY State of Health. If you lost employer coverage, you must apply within 60 days of losing that coverage. Because of a loss of income, New Yorkers may also be eligible for Medicaid, the Essential Plan, Child Health Plus, or subsidized Qualified Health Plan coverage. Visit: www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov for help finding a health care plan. For additional questions, contact the Marketplace directly at 518-486-9102 or NYSOH@health.ny.gov.

Gathering as a community via our virtual art show brought hundreds of students and even more community members together on Facebook last week. Seeing the beautiful artwork and our

community support touched my heart and shined such a bright light on how we are still together despite our physical distance. We posted a poll on Facebook and Twitter to see what you wanted our next Virtual Event to be, and the results are in!

- **Lip Sync Fun: 61%**
- Knock-Knock Jokes: 30%
- Magic Tricks: 9%

Our Next Virtual Community Event will be Lip Sync Fun. It will go live on Facebook on Wednesday, April 15 at 7 p.m. So start practicing! To participate, follow the below steps:

- Pre-record your video (1-2 minutes max.)
- Save it as an MP4 File
- When the Virtual Event Goes Live on Wednesday, April 15, at 7pm:
 - o Upload your video as an MP4 file to the Facebook comments section

As I conclude my weekly update to you, I'd like to remind you that abiding by the guidelines recommended by the CDC, Governor Cuomo and the Monroe County Department of Health is more important than ever right now in our fight against COVID-19 and our goal to flatten the curve, protect our loved ones and return to a new normal. Please remember to maintain social distance, not participate in group activities, and if possible, only venture out to go to the grocery store, pharmacy, or engage in solitary outdoor activity. As a reminder, our school grounds, fields and playgrounds are closed. Our security guards will be patrolling campuses and fields to ensure people aren't gathering or participating in activities where a distance of six feet is not maintained. The Town of Pittsford has instituted Park Wardens for the same purpose at Town Parks.

Health officials urge us to remember that the quickest way for the pandemic to subside is to stop the spread by limiting contact with others than our immediate family. We are thankful beyond words to those who are essential workers and don't have this luxury. The best way we can thank and support those workers is by doing our part to flatten the curve.

Please continue to love and support one another, and remember that, while we are physically apart, we are in this together and making a significant difference through our shared mission to keep one another healthy, lift each other up and help those who need it the most.

Sincerely,

Michael Pero
Superintendent of Schools