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To All Staff at Sertoma Centre,

It is so good to feel that we may be at the tail end of the COVID pandemic. And it's exciting to start having more normalcy in our personal lives and in the lives of the consumers we support. It seems like an appropriate time to reflect on how we operated during the pandemic as well as share how we intend to move forward.

#### Reflecting Back

*As an organization, we were fortunate to receive funds and increased rates to support our mission. These funds allowed us to continue to meet staff payroll and keep most of our programs open throughout the pandemic. They provided the operational support in the following ways...*

- Additional paid time off for staff quarantines and other COVID related time off
- Paid on-call hours for stand by shift coverage
- Purchase of PPE and COVID related safety enhancement practices
- Hazard pay for staff working in COVID positive programs or community-based settings
- Specialized pay rates and bonuses for staff supporting the "live-in" model in residential services
- One-time PTO payouts to direct staff providing staff coverage who met a threshold of unused hours
- Overtime costs due to staff shortages for COVID related time off

*In addition, we were fortunate to receive COVID-related grant funding to support consumer-related services and supports. This included the following...*

- Increased day program rates to cover reduced staffing ratios for in home programming/social distancing
- Program materials and supplies (kits)
- Smart phones/tablets and minutes for consumers in long-term care settings
- Rental assistance and/or shelter
- Suicide prevention activities

#### Moving Forward

As we look forward, we recognize there are still challenges ahead, but there are also new opportunities to explore. One of the most significant challenges we face is the staffing crisis across the industry. We continue to advocate with our trade associations and the State to increase staff pay rates across all division of services. As we work toward building our FY22 budget we expect to include staff increases that are competitive and show our appreciation for the essential work of the organization (information on the budget and staff pay increases will be coming out at the end of July/beginning of August).



We are also exploring how to offer services as we continue to re-open and reinvent. Here are just a few highlights from our programs.

#### Community Programs

- CILA consumers are back at day programming
- Adding more onsite services and will offer services meeting more specialized needs
- The Community Life and Social Skills (CLASS) program is our first program fully integrated in the community
- Service Coordinators have been facilitating virtual groups
- Employment services focused on outreach efforts for referrals

#### Residential

- Converting the Hillside residential home to ICILA
- Supporting an “aging in place” model for consumers in our Greenwood residential home

#### Community Mental Health and Counseling

- Adding more onsite services
- Received major Crisis Services grant from the State
- Applied for a SAMHSA grant to better restore site-based services
- Expanding psychiatry services by 16 hours in late fall

Thank you, whatever position or department you may be in, for your commitment and work during the height of the pandemic and as we move forward to find the “new normal”. You continue to be the Heroes that make Sertoma Strong and able to meet the challenges and find the opportunities to continue our mission of supporting individuals with disabilities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gus van den Brink'.

Gus van den Brink  
Executive Director