



April 27, 2020

Greater Niagara Frontier Council Family,

A lot has transpired since we first took steps to halt all in-person Scouting activities and Council operations due to the COVID-19 outbreak on March 15th. We have seen the indefinite closure of schools and most businesses, members of our community have tragically fallen ill, and almost all events and activities in Western New York have been cancelled or postponed. Yet, **throughout these challenging times the Scouting program has continued to support our local youth** (albeit in new and exciting ways).

Our local Scouting program has responded to the unfamiliar times we live in by being creative and rethinking the way we deliver program as evidenced by:

- Creation of "Scouting at Home" resources for units, scouts, and families (see all that we have to offer at: www.WnyScouting.org/covid19info)
- Development of on-line Merit Badge Courses
- Continuation of our Scouting for Food program in a virtual format
- Daily and weekly Scouting challenges and programs posted to our Facebook page
- Our first ever "Virtual Council Camporee" scheduled for May 15-17
- Many of our Packs, Dens, Troops, Patrols, and Crews are meeting virtually
- Creation of a new "Scouting at Home" recognition program for Scouts and units
- Virtual boards of review and community service projects
- Development of a new plan and format to deliver a quality summer camp program

As many families are struggling to adapt to the new environment, **Scouting has provided a sense of normalcy and purpose**. We have much to be proud of in our response to these challenges and are confident that our efforts are strengthening Scouting, families, and our communities.

Based on recommendations from healthcare professionals and government agencies, the Council, is extending our suspension of all in-person Scouting activities through May 31, 2020. This includes all in-person unit meetings and activities, district and council events, the use of our camps, and the Scout Service Center (including the Scout Shop). **While the Scout Service Center remains closed, our staff is set up and working remotely and is available to provide support to you.** Please feel free to call us at (716) 891-4073 and leave a message in the appropriate staff members voicemail box, send an e-mail directly to a staff member (full list is on our website), contact your unit commissioner, or e-mail us at gnfc@wnyscouting.org.

While it remains unclear when restrictions will be lifted and people will begin to go back to work, school, and some sense of normalcy, **we remain committed to ensuring that the Scouting program is a beacon of hope for all**. With that in mind we encourage you to continue to:

- Have virtual meetings with your dens, packs, patrols, troops, and crews
- Encourage your Scouts to continue working on advancements
- Look for novel ways to do community service projects in a safe manner
- Develop plans for your future outings and activities
- Continue to attend virtual District and Council meetings including Roundtable
- Update your Scouting trainings and explore other training modules

We also ask that you **consider supporting the Council financially during these challenging times.** COVID-19 has severely impacted our ability to continue fulfilling our mission of serving youth. Our funding for day to day operations comes primarily from event attendance and donations. Since all our events and activities have been cancelled or postponed, **the Council has no significant source of income at this time.** Your support will help to ensure that our Scouting program can continue to benefit the youth of our communities. Donations can be made on-line at: www.wnyscouting.org then click the "Donate" button, or checks may be sent directly to our office at 2860 Genesee St, Buffalo, NY 14225.

Please note that the recently passed CARES Act allows taxpayers to take an above-the-line deduction for cash gifts made to 501(c)(3) organizations up to \$300 (\$600 for a married couple), even if they do not itemize. For those who do itemize deductions, the act increases the amount that can be deducted from 60% of adjusted gross income to 100%. This is for cash gifts only made to 501(c)(3) organizations such as the Greater Niagara Frontier Council.

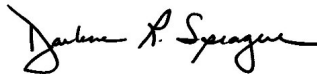
As this is an evolving situation, we will continue to provide updates as they become available and will make additional adjustments to our operations, as necessary.

Please stay healthy and safe. We look forward to seeing you on the Scouting trail very soon.

Yours in Scouting,



Gary A. Decker
Scout Executive & CEO



Darlene Sprague
Council President



Joe Lane
Council Commissioner