



May 28, 2020

Greater Niagara Frontier Council Family,

We are pleased to see that Western New York has made progress in the battle against COVID-19 and are optimistic that continued efforts will allow our society, businesses, schools and other activities to reopen very soon. We also recognize that Scouting must do its part in making sure that there is not a resurgence or new flare up of the disease and that all Scouts and Scouters must remain vigilant in our social distancing and health and safety efforts. Collectively we can and will beat this pandemic!

While progress has been made against COVID-19, **state and local authorities have made it clear to us that Scouting activities fall into Phase 4 of the New York State Plan to Reopen.** As a result, **we have no choice but to continue the suspension of all in-person Scouting activities until further notice.** This includes all in-person unit meetings and activities, district and council events, our summer camp programs, and the use of our camps in any manner. We are saddened by this but, must continue to keep the health and safety of our Scouts, volunteers, Scouting families, and larger community as our top priority.

We are very hopeful that the progress we have made as a society against the pandemic will continue and that we will be able to get back to in-person Scouting very soon. In the meantime, **we strongly encourage you to keep Scouting in the ways you have** for the past few months:

- Continue to have virtual meetings with your dens, packs, patrols, troops, and crews
- Encourage your Scouts to keep working on advancements
- Look for novel ways to do community service projects in a safe manner
- Develop plans for your fall outings and activities
- Continue to attend virtual District and Council meetings including Roundtable

The Council is **committed to providing quality program opportunities for our Scouts and units this summer** even though we can't do so in our in-person, traditional format. Building on the great success of our 1st ever Virtual Council Camporee earlier this month we will be launching several sessions of virtual Cub Scout Day Camps this summer. Additionally, we will be creating many new virtual, hands-on activities for our Scouts, BSA including a greatly enhanced virtual Merit Badge program. The details of these new and exciting programs are being finalized and will be announced in early June.

As we look to the fall, we are hopeful and optimistic about a resumption of many of our traditional Scouting activities including in-person meetings, camping, and district/council events. To help begin planning for success this fall we will be holding our **annual Popcorn Extravaganza on Wednesday, June 24 at 6pm** (in a virtual format) and then a combined **Membership and Popcorn Kickoff on Tuesday, August 4 at 6pm** (format to be determined). Additional details for these events will be released soon.

We are pleased to announce that we will be switching Popcorn companies this year. Through a series of blind taste tests and feedback about product design and prize programs, you clearly indicated that a change was needed. As a result, **we will be selling CampMasters Popcorn.** Our sales line will include:

- **a *Special Edition Buffalo Bills* tin**
- 9 items for \$20 or less
- 8 products in tins

- 2 nut packages
- more popcorn product per tin/bag
- a more robust prize program
- continuation of a strong on-line/virtual selling program

We believe these changes will provide us all with the greatest opportunity to have a successful popcorn sale and help Scouts earn their own way.

As of **Tuesday, June 2 our Scout Service Center will begin a 3-phase reopening process** as part of the state's reopening plan, with new health and safety and social distancing requirements.

- For the first time in more than 2 months our staff will resume working from the building (albeit at 50% capacity and with many social distancing procedures in place).
- During this time no visitors or meetings will be allowed in the building.

If the state's reopening continues to progress, the Service Center will enter phase 2 of our reopening on Tuesday, June 16.

- During this stage the building will begin to reopen to the public.
- The Scout Shop will reopen (with limitations on the number of customers), and small numbers of visitors will be allowed to meet with staff.

From there we hope to reopen the Service Center fully later in the year, with new health and safety and social distancing requirements in place for the foreseeable future. Please understand that all the steps of this plan are dependent on the progress made by the state and region in our fight against the pandemic.

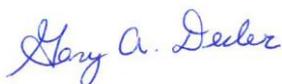
Throughout this entire reopening process our staff remains available to support you. Please feel free to call us at (716) 891-4073 and leave a message in the appropriate staff members voicemail box, send an e-mail directly to a staff member, contact your unit commissioner, or e-mail us at gnfc@wnyscouting.org.

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, donations, and summer camp. Since all our events, activities, and camps 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.

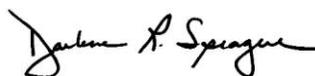
As this is an evolving situation, we will continue to provide updates as they become available and will make additional adjustments to our operations, as necessary.

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