



ACCESS® Adjusts Programs to Continue Providing Essential Services

March 31, 2020

A Statement from Tammy Simmons, Executive Director and Co-Founder of ACCESS:

The impact of COVID-19 has made for unprecedented times for businesses throughout our state, and ACCESS has also found itself making difficult decisions.

Over the past weeks, we have been in conversations with various state organizations to determine the best way in which to move forward for the clients we serve and our employees as we navigate this new pandemic. In conversations with DDS/Medicaid, we were reminded that ACCESS provides essential services and has been identified as such by Homeland Security. DDS/Medicaid have worked diligently over the past few weeks to provide additional options for organizations like ACCESS. These include: Telemedicine for therapy services, EIDT for school-aged students who require services beyond a traditional school environment, greater capacity for childcare centers, and some additional services for individuals on the CES Medicaid Waiver waiting list.

With all of the information we have been able to gather, ACCESS is currently offering limited services to those clients for which our services are considered essential. We are taking precautionary measures to follow CDC guidelines, along with medical advice from medical advisors, to ensure the health and safety for our clients and employees.

However, because of our current climate, ACCESS is being forced to operate at a limited capacity. Last week, we made the unfortunate and difficult decision to furlough a portion of our employees in order to meet demand and keep our organization viable. These therapists, educators, administrative staff, and more have been an integral part of the ACCESS family. We are hopeful that when this pandemic has passed, they will be able to bring their talents and dedication back to this organization that values them so very much.

As we celebrate our 25th year of providing services for individuals with special needs, we reflect on the invaluable support from our community. Because of the generosity of individual donors, corporate sponsors, grants from foundations, community partnerships and volunteers, we have been able to open our doors year after year. We cannot deliver these essential services without your investments.

We are exploring all options to keep ACCESS a viable resource for our community including federal assistance, but we need our supporters to remember ACCESS now more than ever in these difficult times. As a nonprofit organization, we do not have the safety net of cash reserves needed to survive an extended pandemic situation such as COVID-19.

We extend our heart-felt gratitude to our donors for their steadfast support all these years, and we ask during this time that you consider adding ACCESS to your list of local businesses you are helping to endure this situation. Please consider [making a donation on our website](#). If you are looking for the perfect plants to spruce up your gardens and landscape, visit the ACCESS Gardens and our annual [ACCESS Gardens Spring Plant Sales](#). Individual and wholesale purchases are welcomed, and sales directly impact our mission. Every little bit helps us to continue serving our mission of expanding individual potential through innovative instruction for many years to come.

ACCESS will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation within our community, making the best decisions for the health and safety of our clients and employees. We will remain optimistic and remind ourselves of what we at ACCESS have branded as our motto – Building Brighter Futures! This is not only applicable to the important work our team administers and the significant impact it has in the lives we serve. This holds true to the challenges we are facing as a society and across the globe.

Thank you for your ongoing support. Together, we will get through this. Together, WE ARE ACCESS.

With gratitude and thanks,

Tammy Simmons
Executive Director and Co-Founder, ACCESS