

March 27, 2020

Dear VFN family and friends,

So much has happened this past week, including the very important [Stay Home Stay Safe order](#) from Governor Phil Scott that went into effect on the 25th. I hope that you and your loved ones are navigating these challenging times all right, and that you are getting help when you need it. It has been truly amazing to see the ways in which Vermonters are helping one another, neighbor to neighbor, community to community.

With yesterday's gubernatorial announcement that schools will not be opening their doors to students again this school year due to increasing concerns about the Covid-19 virus, we know that pressures are increasing for families as they try to continue their children's education at home through online and other means. We are here for you and want to support your efforts to ensure your students with disabilities and special health needs are able to make progress towards their educational and social goals.

Our entire staff is now working remotely, and our offices are temporarily closed until further notice. Although we're not permitted to provide any in-person services or support at this time, you can continue to reach us by phone or email. We're doing our very best to connect with you within 1 business day and at a time that is mutually agreeable.

It's hard for us to know how we can be most helpful to the people we serve during these unprecedented times. Can you please help us by taking a few minutes to complete this [brief survey](#)? We will use your input to focus our staff resources on what families of children with disabilities/special health needs and the professionals who serve them need most from us right now. We're trying to answer questions that are coming our way by way of these periodic E-News Covid-19 Updates, which we've saved on our [website](#). We hope you find them timely and helpful.

I'm grateful for all the hard work of our dedicated VFN staff and our many Vermont government and community partners. I've been incredibly blessed to serve individuals, children and families for over 30 years now, and have seen many instances of strong cooperation, collaboration and connection throughout my career. I have to say that our current mutual aid efforts rival anything in my rich experience. With every passing day of our brave little state's response to this pandemic, I am increasingly inspired and humbled by the courage, commitment, and creativity being brought to bear, from your house up to the Statehouse!

An important reminder: Vermont is very fortunate to have 2-1-1, our State's centralized information and referral service. 211 staff can help with many resource questions, including housing, food assistance, other basic needs, and much more. Simply dial 2-1-1 (a local call from anywhere in VT) or 1-866-652-4636 (tollfree in VT). [Texting is another option](#).

As always, we are here to listen and help you with any questions or concerns you have about you or your child's health, education, or well-being. Please contact us any time at info@vtfn.org or (802) 876-5315. We look forward to talking with you by phone or videoconferencing. We believe that the required physical distancing right now should not mean social isolation! Sending you all our very best during these unbelievably challenging times. I do believe that we are Vermont Strong and we'll get through this together.

From the heart,

Pam McCarthy, M.Ed. CEO / President