

Monday, June 29, 2020

Dear Friends,

In our update this week I am pleased to report that there are no new cases of the coronavirus among our Residents and staff. While a few Residents remain quarantined in their rooms, there are no active cases.

As we are in the planning stages of “Reopening St. Augustine’s” when we are permitted to do so, we recognize that it will consist of making small steps towards our “new normal” in order to protect our Residents and staff. We are cautiously moving forward since new cases of coronavirus are diagnosed each day in our area of Indianapolis.

As you well know by the Indiana State Department of Health’s (ISDH) COVID-19 Dashboard (<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2393.htm>) we can all track the number of new cases of coronavirus diagnosed in our area. Marion County continues to take the lead with the most cases of coronavirus in the state. During the peak of the virus in April and May, guidelines about wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing were respected. Our concern today is that face masks and social distancing have taken a step back and are not being respected, putting our Residents at risk.

For our elderly we recognize the difficulty and challenges of wearing a face mask — voices are muffled for the hearing impaired; the inability to visualize a person’s full face limits their already diminished vision; those who are forgetful need constant reminders to use the facemask and for those with breathing difficulties, it can seem suffocating to wear a mask. And lastly, everyone’s interpretation of six feet is different!

While these challenges are understandable for our Residents, we are asking any families who sign up to visit the Residents during scheduled visitations to adhere to these guidelines. Our challenges in keeping the Residents safe are great and we ask your cooperation to respect these guidelines.

We look forward to our focused celebrations during the month of July: the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Car Parade celebrating our nation’s independence and weekly picnics where small groups of Residents are going outside for fresh air and good food. It is very important to us to support our Residents’ social, emotional, health and spiritual needs as we walk this journey together. We pray often to discern how we can best meet those needs. We have confidence that God is leading us and will inspire us each day to meet the Residents’ needs.

Please continue to pray for us and all in our Home so that we can continue to move forward during this long challenge. You and your loved ones are in our daily prayer. Stay safe and healthy!

God bless you,

Sr Francis Gabriel and all the Little Sisters