On behalf of everyone at Community Youth Services, our hearts go out to all those impacted by COVID-19 – this includes not only those diagnosed with the virus, but also their friends and family, those whose jobs and schools have been impacted and so many more. We hope YOU are staying safe and healthy. Our focus is, as always, on the health and safety of our participants, employees and our community.

The situation is changing rapidly, and to do our part in slowing the spread of the virus, we have temporarily closed all our offices to the public. The closure went into effect on Tuesday, March 17. We realize the impact an office closure can have on the public, and this is not a decision we made lightly. With that said, all of our services will continue. We are conducting alternative scheduling, telework, phone and video conferencing to ensure that participants in our care continue to receive services. We want to take care of them as well as our employees as best we can. We will be providing our employees with the same pay and benefits during this period as well as providing additional resources to help them through this challenging time.

The world around us is changing—faster than most of us anticipated. We know COVID-19 is challenging businesses, as leaders are asked to make complex decisions to keep workforces and communities safe while moving business forward. Our team is actively working to develop ways to keep our participants safe and healthy during this time. We are practicing “social distancing” on our teams with many staff across our programs working from their homes as we are fortunate that we have the ability to continue working with youth and families virtually.

In addition, our shelters are all still open and continue to work with some of the most vulnerable youth populations, providing shelter, food, hygiene, etc. We have limited the number of overnight guests, are using universal precautions and are following all state recommendations. Our shelters and mental health services are essential services during this time and we are doing all we can to meet these needs.

There is no question this is a time of great uncertainty. While we don’t know exactly what the future may hold, we feel confident that by sticking together and supporting each other, we’ll emerge from this stronger than before.

Many in the community are asking how they can help. At this critical moment, we do not have enough supplies, knowing our essential services (shelters) will continue to remain open. We would be grateful for your donation, which is crucial to keeping these facilities supplied and able to serve our most vulnerable neighbors at this difficult time.

CYS has an overwhelming demand for the following items:

- Toilet paper
- Hand sanitizer (with at least 70% Isopropyl alcohol)
- Clorox wipes (with at least 70% Isopropyl alcohol)
- Gloves
- Masks
- All types of cleaning supplies (especially bleach)
- Non perishable foods
- Portable phone charger (big need)
- Knit gloves
- Wool socks
- Flashlights and batteries
- Tents
- Sleeping Bags

If you’d like to make a donation of any of the above items, please bring them directly to our office at 711 State Ave. NE, Olympia, WA 98596 and someone will meet you at the door. We are open Monday -Friday, 9am-5pm.

If you are interested in making a monetary donation online to help purchase goods and supplies, please visit: https://communityyouthservices.org/community-crisis-fund.

Or, if you would like to order our shelters (or their staff) food and support a local business, we would gladly welcome the sentiment. You can call our Development Director, Lynsi Polanco at 360.918.7822 to discuss further.

We thank you for your generosity, loyalty and continued support. We hope you stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Derek Harris

CEO, Community Youth Services