



SCOTTISH RITE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
VALLEY LIAISON COMMITTEE



June 2020

Since June 2016, we have been distributing these Valley Liaison messages with the request that they be read at the next Scottish Rite lodge or chapter meeting. Since there will be no meetings for the next while, the request is for secretaries and registrars to forward this message by email to those Scottish Rite Masons who are email accessible. Perhaps those brethren can then share this with those who do not have email.

Over the past four months or so we have been living with the impact of Covid 19 on our daily lives. We have experienced first-hand the effects of this nasty virus and have had to adapt in so many ways. In this message, I would like to draw your attention to what is, for most of us, a more indirect effect. I am referring to the children, tutors and volunteers in the various Learning Centres across the country. As of April this year, the Executive Director of the Learning Centres, Ill. Bro. Matthew F. Todd, reported that there were 153 tutors working with 194 children in the nine Learning Centres. An additional 422 children were on waiting lists. This raises all kinds of questions. For example: When will the children be able to get back to the tutoring sessions? Is it possible that they will have “lost some ground” in the progress they had been making? What will happen to those who have aged out before actually completing the program? What about the 422 kids on the waiting list? Some of them will now never access this service. What does that mean for them?

Hopefully, we will not lose any tutors or volunteers over this time period but what can they expect on their return? Who will ask the screening questions of everyone, parents and kids included, such as, do you have any of the identifying symptoms listed; have you been out of the country; have you been in contact with anyone who tested positive or who has been out of the country; etc.? Will it be necessary to take temperatures and to have access to hand-washing stations?

What needs to be done to ensure safe practices with snacks or drinks, will they even be able to serve drinks and snacks? Can safe distancing be maintained in the waiting areas? More importantly, can social distancing be maintained between tutor and child in the tutoring room? Will they both have to wear masks? Who is going to scrub down the desks, the chairs, hand rails, door knobs, etc. Is it necessary to have sanitizer in each tutor cubicle or just in the reception/waiting area? What if someone shows up who might potentially be infected?

All these questions and more will need to be addressed by each Learning Centre before they re-open and they will have to be monitored on an on-going basis. The answers will vary depending on the variables in place within each Centre.

With these questions in mind, I am suggesting we need to keep the Learning Centres in our thoughts. What can we do to alleviate some of these issues that have, and will, arise as a result of Covid 19? It does not just impact those particular Valleys that are hosting the Centres or those Valleys adjoining the host Valleys. It falls on all of us to do what we can. Maybe we can volunteer some of our time to assist once the Centres re-open or maybe we know someone who lives in a host Valley and can encourage them to volunteer or drop off needed supplies, whether it be gloves and masks or other

materials. And there is always the financial contribution, either to one of the Learning Centres directly or to the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation. For more information on how to contribute, visit the SRCF website at www.srcf.ca. The children, their parents, the tutors and the volunteers will all thank you.

Ron Findlater 33°
Valley Liaison Committee Chairman