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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear friends,

What a challenging time these past few months have been. As my father has said to my children during this time, we are living through important history. I have been experiencing a range of emotions during these recent months, as I'm sure you all have. Our hearts are heavy with the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, the experience of Christian Cooper – and countless other horrific examples of the racial injustice all too common in our society. We as a society can be – we have to be – better than this. While I am concerned about the safety of our communities, I am hopeful that through peaceful protest and real dialogue we can make positive progress and heal by coming together.

I am deeply concerned about the Coronavirus pandemic and the unprecedented impact it has had on our lives and our work. We know that children, youth, and families are struggling, and that the effects of all that is happening now will resonate for the communities we serve for a long time. We need to be there, Gemma strong, to support their needs. This newsletter includes just a few of the many ways the incredible Gemma staff and programs have adapted to continue to serve our mission.

First, however, I want to touch on the commitment we are making at Gemma to become the change we seek. In this issue, you will find Gemma's updated mission, vision, and values that guide our work every day. I have expressed to our staff and share with you now, our deepest commitment as an organization to listen, to learn, and to live into our value of "diversity, inclusion, and a community where everyone belongs." I look forward to updating you about this deeply important work in the near future.

I am immensely proud of our dedicated and skilled team at Gemma who have not missed a beat in rising to the challenge of serving kids and families during these tough times. Some of our programs have shifted to providing services virtually while some services must continue in-person and are orchestrated very carefully given concerns about the virus.

Recently, we asked our Gemma staff what is inspiring them through this period, and I share their uplifting responses below. They are our heroes, as are our courageous children and families who need us now more than ever.

- "I am inspired by the resiliency and the way the families and children don't allow any obstacle to stop them from achieving their goals. I am both grateful and inspired that they... continue to allow me in their homes, with a mask and gloves."
- "What's inspired me the most about my colleagues during COVID-19 is how no one ever gave up, and they continue to serve families in the community or in a residential setting."
- "I am inspired by how hard our staff is working. We truly feel we have the best staff in the business. They had to quickly, and without much warning, shift the way they provide services. They truly put the kids and the families first."

Many friends have written to us with kind messages and with offers of support. Thank you. We are grateful to our caring partners who continue to sustain our mission. We could not do this important work without you. Together, Gemma Services will come through this time of change and struggle stronger than ever.

In gratitude and with continued well wishes,



Kristen E.M. Gay, Ph.D.
President and CEO



Gemma Services: Our Mission, Vision, Values

We have made adjustments to our programs in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis by providing services remotely as much as possible via telemedicine and video platforms. Some programs continue to be provided in-person when absolutely essential. Our steadfast commitment to helping children and families in need is guided by our Mission, Vision, and Values. For updated information about current services, please visit www.silver-springs.org and click on News and Events.*

Our MISSION

Gemma Services changes lives by transforming hope into action for children, youth, and families facing emotional and behavioral challenges.

Our VISION

We envision a world in which children, youth, and families feel valued and have the tools to realize their highest potential.

Our VALUES

We value:

- Each individual and family as precious and deserving
- A safe and nurturing community that is sensitive to experiences of trauma
- Diversity, inclusion, and a community where everyone belongs
- A culture of learning
- The highest standards of excellence and data-informed practices
- Our faith-based heritage and rich tradition of service



Our WORK

Residential Treatment provides 24/7 clinical treatment and trauma-focused care for children and youth who have experienced traumas and/or significant mental health concerns. Our goal is to help them heal and learn new skills so they can live successfully in a home and community setting.

- **Plymouth Meeting campus** serves boys and girls ages 6–14
- **Rosemont campus** serves girls ages 12–18

Education is provided through two licensed, private academic schools. Our overall objective is to help students reach their educational goals. **Gemma Services School** in Rosemont provides 6th-12th grade education for girls served by our Rosemont Residential Treatment program. **Martin Luther School** in Plymouth Meeting, a Pennsylvania Approved Private School, provides K-8th grade special education for many of the children in our Plymouth Meeting Residential Treatment program and for community students from other school districts.

Community Based Programs provide outpatient mental health services; foster family care; adoption; specialized behavioral health support in a child's home or school; an Out-of-School Time program; a Family Empowerment Center, and other in-home prevention services. Our goal is to help children, youth, and families achieve their brightest future and to strengthen the communities we serve.

*New website coming soon: www.gemmaservices.org!

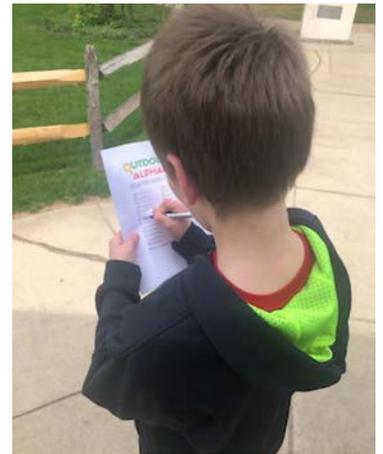
Our Mission in Action

Our committed staff members continue to work tirelessly to support children, youth, and families who need us now more than ever. During the current public health crisis, Gemma team members are finding new and innovative ways to engage with those we serve and help them manage throughout this challenging time. Here are just a few examples of our mission in action during the current pandemic. Thank you to our friends and partners who continue to join Gemma to transform hope into action for children, youth, and families.



In the **Residential Treatment Program in Rosemont**, staff continue to use therapeutic activities to engage youth in meaningful ways. A recent activity combined art and movement therapy and had the residents throwing paint-soaked foam balls against mural paper. Many of the youth shared how it was a great way to relieve frustrations, with some describing feeling calmer afterwards. Other activities have included turning a cottage into a cinema for a movie night complete with a ticket area and concession stand, painting planter boxes and planting flowers for Earth Day, and mindfulness exercises involving nature on the beautiful campus.

Children in the **Residential Treatment Program in Plymouth Meeting** also have taken to the outdoors for activities. Recent examples include enjoying a fun egg hunt on Easter Sunday and setting out on an outdoor alphabet nature walk around campus. The children noted things they found that began with each letter of the alphabet, such as "Ant," "Dirt," and "Geese." One boy exclaimed, "I love this group! Can we do it every day?"



Our **Family Empowerment Center** and **In-Home Protective Services** teams continue with home visits and supporting families remotely. They are making sure families have resources they need, including food and housing support, and that children remain safe. As one dedicated staff member put it, they are communicating that, "Gemma is always there to support families with whatever they may be going through at this time."

One of our In-Home Protective Services case managers described the recent adjustments he's made: "My home visits continue and are going well. Gloves and masks are an essential. I check in on the family's mental status, ensure their utilities are on, and there is food in the cabinets and fridge."



Staff providing **Intensive Behavioral Health Services** and **Applied Behavioral Analysis**

Services continue to creatively support more than 200 children and youth. Video platforms make yoga and mindfulness activities possible. Staff are helping kids work through grief and have sent art supplies and coloring books to use during sessions and provide further support. One boy loves his video sessions with his therapist and is improving his social skills by pretending to be a talk show host, a teacher, and a YouTube star.



During the COVID-19 Crisis



In the **Foster Family Care Program**, monthly foster parent support groups have moved online and are now weekly. They serve as an effective way for parents to share ideas for coping with current demands and pressures. Gemma team members are helping foster parents navigate home restrictions and support their foster children. Staff have also developed an online training curriculum for potential foster parents during the pandemic as we proceed with certifying foster homes in a contact-free manner.

Therapists in the **Outpatient Mental Health Program** are creatively engaging clients in interactive activities such as scavenger hunts via telemedicine and video chat. A creative therapist even baked a cake with a child during a video session. Another child was so excited to see her therapist over the phone that she grinned ear-to-ear and yelled, "You're the best therapist in the whole world!"



Martin Luther School shifted programming to virtual instruction and support with close to 200 K-8th grade students participating to finish out the school year. Staff delivered Chromebooks to nearly 90 families so students could take part in activities. Educational staff found creative ways to connect with students too. One example was Pajama Day. One student, too shy to participate and post a picture, shared one of his bear instead.

Operations and Food Services staff have been hard at work keeping our on-campus programs functioning safely. Whether delivering supplies, assisting with disinfecting and cleaning, making repairs, or maintaining grounds and buildings, the Operations Department has ensured things run smoothly. The Food Services Department

continues to serve nutritious food for the children and youth on both residential campuses with added safety precautions such as placing trays on the tables rather than self-service during meal times.



Thank you to all for supporting our ongoing work!

Faith in Action During Normal Times and Now

Our congregational partners have been valued supporters since the Village and Silver Springs – Martin Luther School were founded as orphanages within faith-based communities in the 1800s. Now, as Gemma Services, our faithful friends continue to provide essential support for our work to improve the lives of children, youth, and families. A few ways that our congregational friends engage with Gemma include:



Faith in Action Council

The Faith in Action Council (FIAC) is comprised of representatives from local churches and houses of worship and meets four times a year. The meetings include a service activity and an opportunity for participants to hear Gemma updates so they can share them with their congregations. In February, we held our first official Gemma FIAC meeting that was attended by approximately 15 members of local Presbyterian and Lutheran churches. Members were excited to gather, get to know one another, learn more about Gemma, and fill 600+ Easter eggs with delectable treats for the children and youth we serve (shown left). Please look for future announcements about FIAC meetings, whether virtual or in-person. We hope you can join us!

Holiday Celebrations

Many congregations and friends from faith communities help bring holiday cheer to our children, youth, families, and Gemma community each December. This past holiday season, more than 400 volunteers and friends helped make that a reality. Some decorated our campuses, some collected and donated toys and other items, and others wrapped and prepared gifts for Gemma's kids and families. Thank you to all who helped make the 2019 holiday season joyful for the Gemma community. With your help, the kids, teens, and families we serve know they are loved. One case manager from Gemma's Adoption Program described her client's response to a holiday gift he received, "This was a very special gift for a special young man," she said. "He was very excited to receive it and to know that someone cared enough to give it to him."



Faithful Support During the Pandemic

During the current COVID-19 crisis, we are thankful that our faithful friends continue to support Gemma. Friends have donated more than 450 handmade masks for frontline staff and children, youth, and families we serve,* purchased needed items from our Amazon wish list (<https://bit.ly/GemmaNeeds>), and made financial contributions to help Gemma respond to the crisis and continue operating programs during this challenging time. Thank you to all who join with Gemma throughout the year to transform hope into action for children, youth, and families!

**Our campuses are closed to deliveries at the present time. We thank you for your support but ask that you NOT deliver donations to any of our locations. If you are interested in donating home-made masks or discussing other possible donations, please contact info@silver-springs.org. Please also contact us if you are interested in learning more about our Faith In Action Council or other ways you might support our work.*

Finding A Forever Family

Just a few days after her 18th birthday, "A" found her forever family. At the age of 15, she was removed from her home after years of neglect and placed with two caring foster parents. "A" was comfortable in their home and from the beginning called them "Mom" and "Dad."

"A" is a bright and poised young lady. She understood her situation and took an active role in navigating the child welfare system, asked many questions along the way, and never missed an appointment or hearing. Earlier this year, "A's" dream came true and she became the ninth child adopted by her caring foster parents. "A" is thrilled

to have a family that loves and supports her, now and always.

We are confident "A" has a very bright future ahead of her. In the words of her Gemma Case Manager, "No matter where "A" goes, she will be at the top. She is going to be a force to be reckoned with." Gemma Services wishes "A" and her now-forever family all the best.

The Gemma Adoption & Permanency Program continues to provide services, albeit virtually, to children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that children continue to move toward permanency. Gemma is pleased to continue to support



children toward the goal of stability within a "forever" family. For more information about Adoption services, please call (215) 730-2240.

Introducing our New Program: Family Based Mental Health Services

Gemma Services is pleased to announce the addition of Family Based Mental Health Services (FBMH) to our suite of Community Based Programs! The FBMH Services program takes an intensive, evidence-based, and family-focused approach to bolstering families and decreasing the risk that a child will be placed outside of the home. Families are referred to participate in this program by Community Behavioral Health (CBH), Philadelphia's behavioral health managed care organization.

This new program is possible because recently CBH awarded a contract to Gemma Services to provide FBMH Services to children, teens, and families in Philadelphia. "As a result of the merger, the

number of children, youth, and families we serve has doubled as an organization," shared Melissa Harvey, Vice President of Community Based Programs. Harvey continues, "Based on Gemma's extensive experience and expertise, we are well positioned to make a significant difference for families through this new program." Gemma was one of only a few agencies selected to begin providing these services. "We are very pleased," Harvey shared. "Being selected is a testament to Gemma Services' commitment to serving families and our ability to provide high quality care."

Once the Program begins offering services to families, a two-person team will work with families over eight months and support

them in many ways. Services will take place in the family's home or in community settings. The skilled team will be comprised of a Master's level, Mental Health Professional who will provide individual therapy for the child and family members, and a Bachelor's level, Mental Health Worker who will provide case management to connect the family to needed services and supports.

"It's very exciting to be able to expand our continuum of care for the children and families we serve in this way," said Harvey. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the launch of this program is delayed. We look forward to beginning these services as soon as we are able. Please watch for future announcements.



formerly theVillage & Silver Springs
512 W. Township Line Road
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

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FEATURING

**Chef Chad &
Hanna Williams**
of
Friday Saturday Sunday

Supporting Programs for
At-Risk Children, Youth, & Families

www.one.bidpal.net/chefsforgemma2020

11.6.2020 or 4.9.2021 Stay Tuned!