



March 28, 2020

Dear Garrison community,

Although our community has altered our daily activities—like communities all across the country and the world—there are many signs of solidarity. Here is just a sampling of how our community is rallying together while maintaining social distance.

GUFS faculty and staff have gone above and beyond, adapting to distance learning, sanitizing school grounds regularly, working out technical issues, and more. Nurse Melissa DeFonce has stepped up big and has been handling food issues and child care for the district. We are lucky to have such dedicated folks working in our community.

The GUFS PTA has started a fundraising campaign to raise money to provide food for residents of our community who are impacted by food insecurity and economic insecurity. You can donate a tax-deductible gift to their Paypal account: <https://www.paypal.me/GUFSPTA>. Nurse Melissa will then coordinate distribution of food and/or food gift cards following proper public health guidelines.

The [Town of Philipstown](#) will be able to assist any household that is facing food or economic hardship or who is quarantined due to infection or illness. For assistance, please call the Town at (845) 265-5200. Also, the Philipstown Food Pantry, located at 10 Academy Street in Cold Spring, is still holding its regular hours on Saturday mornings, starting at 8:30 am.

To help individuals navigate this unprecedented pandemic, New York State has created a free mental health hotline. Call (844) 863-9314 to schedule a free mental health appointment with a licensed mental health professional.

Additionally, New York State has approved a [90-day moratorium or suspension of the eviction of residential or commercial tenants who are in financial distress](#). Any resident who is illegally locked out of their home or business should call the Putnam County Sheriff's Department at (845) 225-4300. [Mortgage payments, too, have been suspended](#)

[for homeowners who demonstrate financial hardship](#). Reach out to your mortgage company for more information.

Central Hudson has halted the suspension of utilities for residents who are unable to pay their bill as a result of financial distress. Customers are encouraged to contact Central Hudson via their [website](#) or by phone at (845) 452-2700. NYSEG, which serves GUFs community members in Putnam Valley, has suspended late payment charges and all disconnections for non-payment. To request assistance, please call (888) 315-1755.

The Highlands Current paper provides [comprehensive up-to-date information on how COVID-19 is affecting our community](#), including a list of [restaurants that are currently offering take-out and delivery](#). Please support our local businesses if you can.

Folks in our community have gotten creative with how to connect via screens during these times. Classes are hosting classwide chats, friends are having virtual play dates, parents are joining virtual dinner parties. Looking for more story time for your children? The [Desmond Fish Library has started hosting virtual storytimes](#) and Split Rock Books in Cold Spring is hosting virtual book clubs for kids—email them at info@splitrockb00ks.com.

Let's also take this time to complete our 2020 Census. Luckily, this year it is available online for every household and takes only 5-10 minutes to complete: <http://my2020census.gov>.

Finally, to every parent or caregiver who has taken the time to be an integral part of their child's education through GUFs' distance learning protocol, *bravó!*

You can check our district website for updated information: www.gufs.org. Please continue to practice social distancing and good personal hygiene. If you experience symptoms related to COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath), please call your doctor—do not leave your home. Please continue to stay connected with your loved ones and neighbors and keep those who are most vulnerable and our first responders in your thoughts.

In solidarity,

Dr. Debra Jackson, Interim Superintendent.

James Hoch, Board President. Courtney McCarthy, Vice-President.

Jocelyn Apicello, David Gelber, Jill Corson Lake, Matthew Speiser, Sarah Tormey, Trustees of the Garrison Union Free School District.