

# THE MILE POST

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## HOW WE'RE DOING

As many of you know, Broadway has gone dark, Disneyland has closed its doors for months, and the NCAA, NHL, NBA, MLB seasons came to a halt. As the CEO of this organization, the decision to close day habilitation, suspend weekend respite program, play dances, community experiences, and large social gatherings was a paramount decision that I did not make lightly before we were forced into lockdown. With the continuing spread of COVID-19, it was in the best interest of those we serve, the staff, their families, and our community to shut down services as much as we possibly could. With that said, Hudson Milestones is not Broadway, where it is as simple as cancelling a show — although I am certain the financial loss will affect many, many actors, and their families. Hudson Milestones provides care for a vulnerable population in which closing all doors is just NOT an option! We too have suffered a great financial loss. However, it is the burden of the Board of Directors and me to sustain and pull us through.

**From the Desk of the  
Chief Executive Officer  
Teresa Maietti**



As of March 13, 3 p.m. Day Habilitation services ceased but not before we ensured Meals on Wheels for those in need, a plan to make wellness calls and many other supports that did not exist before. However, our clients require 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year care. Our staff needs to work in group home settings, sanitizing the homes, ensuring everyone is washing their hands, feeding those we serve, easing the anxiety for clients and themselves, and simply supporting them with their daily living skills. Our show must go on!

We continued to ensure food and hygiene products were delivered to homes, paid our bills, submitted billing, supported programs, adhered to mandated state and federal regulations (and boy were there many), all while processing payroll and leading throughout these critical times. Though my decision to suspend services, in many areas, does not cease the commitment of finance and operations to our programs, it was very important for program staff to understand this very important aspect. Executive Staff and I have worked around the clock to implement our emergency preparedness plan for the health and safety of all. This job continues the commitment of the Department Directors to be responsible for managing the unknown, thinking of everything that isn't defined, ensuring the implementation of and securing the communication of it all — which has been flawless despite the lack of sleep. The employees of the Department of Finance and Operations have been involved in remote access drills to support the daily operation of this organization without a complaint or hesitation, packing up files and supplies for their new remote space, understanding the impact their function is to the success of riding this storm. As of March 17, 2020, their roles have been conducted off-site and continue to be. I am so proud of this group of employees that ensured operations had little to no disruption from a remote location which was never done before.

(Continued on Page 2)

## Wisdom From The Chairman

**Lauren Nardini, Chairman of the Board**  
**THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT**



It was with much sadness and regret that we had to cancel our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Platinium Celebration and Annual Dinner Dance, back in April. This decision was out of our hands when Governor Murphy declared no large gatherings due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Our Annual Dinner Dance is our biggest fundraiser. As a non-profit organization we rely on public support for our livelihood. With that being said, refunds for previously purchased tickets and/or ads will not be issued. Instead, all reservations and/or ad journal purchases will be carried over to next year. Thank you for your understanding and continued support. We hope to see and celebrate with everyone in 2021! Stay well.

A new slate of officers for FY21-FY23 were elected at the Membership Meeting of Hudson Milestones held on June 19, 2019. These officers will continue to lead Hudson Milestones at a particularly challenging time. As a reminder to all Hudson Milestones Members, the next Tri-Annual Membership Meeting will be held in June of 2023.

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Before the closures, we met with our line staff, the soldiers, also known as the essential staff, the DSP and their Supervisors to review CDC recommendations, isolation processes and the possibility of a quarantine. Staff clearly understood it is very possible that some may need to be in one location for 14 days under mandated health law and SOME staff were. Supervisors have worked long days to ensure an adequate supply of food, medication and supplies were secured for such devastations. It cannot go unsaid, the role of our line staff in the Department of Programs is like no other. The responsibility of life weighs heavy on everyone's shoulders yet, is never a burden. I was pleased to see the Residential Coordinators, Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors smile in the hallways, as if what is being asked was just normal. I am grateful for your service!!!! I must mention that the Operations Manager of Day Program faced each directive with a sense of calm as she heard the steps, the many steps, that needed to occur and continue to occur; EI and Respite processes and meetings occurred and were again accepted, which was truly appreciated, as I watched the processes unfold. Remember this group of employees go into the community to support children and adults who live at home. This was and continues to truly be the UNKNOWN.

We had some truly scary moments for our clients and our staff as New Jersey cases hit its peak. To hear from Emergency Responders that hospitals are not accepting any more patients after you call 911 is probably the point where many fell to their knees and prayed. I am forever grateful to the staff on duty for that shift and the 14 days to follow. That incident occurred while we were supporting five other homes that were forced into quarantine. I do not know how my department directors showed no fear as they became first responders. As I communicated with the Board of Directors, there were moments I could not hide my fear and I am once again blessed for such supporters and advocates of Hudson Milestones in each and every one of them.

In speaking with the staff on the Compliance End of the organization, their concern was getting the job done, ensuring the clients and staff are meeting requirements, while trying to survive this pandemic. No one complained that they too would be in the homes ensuring that needs were met while our high level of care was not jeopardized by COVID-19 and the change in normal routine. Another important group that continued their daily job responsibility, without a change as we entered the world of the unknown, is our maintenance staff, the property and transportation supervisor and the driver who assisted with interoffice deliveries. This group cannot be forgotten in the impact their continued uninterrupted functions are to all of us.

I hope you find this article helpful and have more of an understanding of what everyone's role was/is in this organization that is unlike many businesses. Some may not be directly working in the group homes which are in lovely condition, abundantly stacked with supplies including games and cable ☺ some may be ensuring the mail is delivered, vans are functioning, properties are to code, emergencies are reported and managed, laws are maintained, payroll is processed, candidates are screened, posts are posted on social media to provide a constant means of communication, audits and follow ups are continued, invoices are paid to ensure continued services of cable, water and electricity, billing occurs and daily logs are received, client funds are distributed, banking is complete, SNAP is monitored, orders are placed...all of this occurring from remote locations. WE all have had a role in holding up the walls of this agency. We are HUDSON MILESTONES STRONG, and together we will continue to weather this pandemic and the unrest in our country.

I hope you have remained safe and healthy throughout these unprecedented times.

***I would like to extend a special thank you to Lauren Nardini, Board Chairman, for her dedication in leading this agency these past three years!***

***I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our incoming Board Chairman, Arlene Rutkowski, as she takes the reigns on July 1st.***

***Teresa Maietti, CEO***

## HUDSON MILESTONES STRONG

*Jose Rosario, Director of Operations/Acting  
Director of Finance*

What a rare and interesting last few months we have had here at Hudson Milestones, and certainly not for the faint of heart. As March came upon us, we were met with headline after headline of uncertainty in what the next few months would bring for our agency. The country as a whole was given very little warning, and in under 2 weeks we had to mobilize and implement a "new normal" for our daily operations by equipping staff with the necessary tools and resources to do their jobs efficiently and safely. With that, we immediately began participating in DDD webinars offered while staying as informed as possible on COVID-19 precautions from various resources. Wellness calls to the group homes increased to ensure they had necessary items such as toilet paper, paper towels, hand sanitizers, and cleaning product to keep up with sanitary precautions. We are happy to announce that an outside company has been brought in to decontaminate the group homes and offices professionally as needed. A thermal temperature kiosk was installed to check temperatures once we get the green light to reopen the main office, and what was once considered our "board room" has become a massive storage room with all the necessary PPE, hand sanitizers, Lysol spray, the illusive toilet paper, and everything needed to last for months. Social Distance has brought upon creative ways for clients to enjoy the comfort of their homes. A "staycation" by adding some tiki bars, so the clients can go out and have their summer mocktails while still staying safe in the comfort of their homes is one to mention.

While so much in the news was uncertain at the start, one thing was certain here at Hudson Milestones; the necessity to adapt to whatever changes were coming and to protect our clients and staff along the way. I could not be prouder of the way our agency came together during this unprecedented global pandemic, to continue our operations seamlessly and with as minimal negative affect as possible. We unite for one common goal here at Hudson Milestones, for the safety and comfort of our clients when even the most uncertain events may arise. There is no universal guidebook for global pandemics (though there's certainly a few new agency policies!) and it is during these times of uncertainty, that the true strength and character of individuals is tested. I am proud of everyone here at Hudson Milestones for the strength and commitment they have each shown to our agency and clients over the past few months. Together we have given our all and will continue to do so.

## THIS MEMORIAL DAY WAS A LITTLE DIFFERENT THIS YEAR

*Tisheena McKenzie, Residential Coordinator*

During a time of so much uncertainty in the world, it is nice to know some things can remain the same. Good times with good friends is a staple at Hudson Milestones, where highlights of each day include putting smiles on each other's faces. This Memorial Day holiday was a little different because of COVID-19 but we managed to still enjoy the day, while wearing face masks and social distancing, of course. We all dressed patriotically in our American flag tee shirts and remembered what this day is truly all about. The clients helped prepare the food for the day including cheeseburgers, ribs, salads, and yummy desserts! We sang songs, danced, played games, and enjoyed the fresh air. Best of all, we waved to some of our friends through windows, letting them know that even though we are physically apart, we are still together in our hearts. We really enjoyed our Memorial Day holiday this year, not only for the fun and good food, but because it reminded us of all the things we have to be grateful for at a time like this, like our good friends.



## MILLER ST. GROUP HOME'S QUARANTINED DINNER DANCE 2020

*Ilyana Stuckey, Residential Coordinator*

Each April, Hudson Milestones holds its annual Dinner Dance. It is always an amazing time for all guests who attend and especially for the clients. It is filled with recognition of exceptional staff and those who support the agency, dancing, friends, great food and tons of fun. But this year, based on the pandemic, the dinner dance had to be cancelled.

Well, that didn't stop the enthusiastic residents of the Miller St. group home from having their very own quarantined version of the dinner dance! The ladies dressed up, decorated the house and created a festive night they won't soon forget. Staff assisted the clients in choosing their favorite dress clothes, styled their hair and primped their makeup so everyone looked and felt their best! Next came setting the table, hanging signs and enjoying a delicious meal together. The ladies ended the memorable night with lots of dancing fun.

So, while it is easy to dwell on all the things we have missed out on during the pandemic, these ladies chose to instead make things happen! Thanks to Gina, Alice, Carol, Mary, Aisha, Sharon the Miller staff for reminding us all that we can make our own good time no matter what the circumstances with a little imagination and some good friends. What a night!



## SUMMER FUN WORD SCRAMBLE

*Donna Dolan, Director of Compliance*

1. USN \_\_\_\_\_
2. ATN \_\_\_\_\_
3. OLPO \_\_\_\_\_
4. MEURMS \_\_\_\_\_
5. ACBHE \_\_\_\_\_
6. CNPIIC \_\_\_\_\_
7. WNIMGMS \_\_\_\_\_
8. OERSLWF \_\_\_\_\_
9. YFTUETLBR \_\_\_\_\_
10. UBADLYG \_\_\_\_\_

See Answers Below

## SUMMER FUN WORD SCRAMBLE Answer Sheet

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. SUN      | 5. BEACH     |
| 2. TAN      | 4. SUMMER    |
| 3. POOL     | 3. BUTTERFLY |
| 4. SWIMMING | 2. FLOWERS   |
| 5. LADYBUG  | 1. PICNIC    |

## IN NEED OF RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT?

*Teresa Maietti, Chief Executive Officer*

I am writing to extend an invitation to all families, in need of placing a family member into a New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities residential facility, to visit one of our homes that currently has availability.



If you are interested in hearing and seeing what we are all about and most proud of, please call (201) 434-7783 to schedule a visit.



## HOW TO SURVIVE A QUARANTINE

*Marisa Liono, Director of Programs*

As several dedicated staff of Hudson Milestones quickly learned, there is no instruction manual for getting through a 14-day quarantine. Turns out, protocols and plans are essential, yes, but a little TLC goes a long way too.

At Hudson Milestones, tender loving care came in the form of donations from many generous sources including staff, Board members, client families and friends of the organization. Several of our seven quarantines occurred during holidays and birthdays, events in which clients and staff would normally be with their families celebrating. Since that could not be for many this year, many thoughtful people brought the celebrations to us. From catered meals, homemade desserts, and frequent supply deliveries – our quarantined group homes were very well taken care of. Telephone conversations occurred daily, video chats happened often, and someone was always there to call upon if a program was in need.

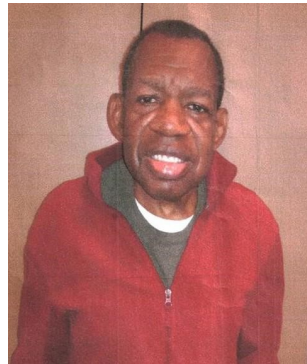
While putting one's life on hold for two straight weeks cannot be easy, we at Hudson Milestones make it our mission to ensure all staff and clients feel encouraged and supported each and every day. And during a quarantine was no different, in fact, they felt the love more than ever before.

Thank you to the Nardini family, Lauren Nardini, Arlene Rutkowski, Sally & Lynette Medeiros, Eufracia Cruz, Fel Lim, Tara Stauber & the ladies of Rock the 21 and countless other staff members and friends of Hudson Milestones for your support through these difficult times. Because of you, it made things a little more bearable and truly like we are all in this together.



## WELCOMING DAVID TO THE HUDSON MILESTONES FAMILY

*Scott Vanderbly, Residential Coordinator*



In February 2020, the Kensington group home added a new member to the family. David has attended the Jersey City Day Habilitation Program for the last few years while living with his family. When a residential vacancy became available, David immediately came to mind. A few dinner and overnight visits led to his family agreeing that the timing was right. The transition went flawlessly, and it immediately felt like David had always lived at Kensington.

David was already acquainted with his new housemates, and friendships quickly began to blossom. David's roommate was particularly welcoming and took him under his wing, showed him the ropes and admitted it was nice to have a "roomie" again! While David is a man of few words, his smiles speak volumes. He enjoys dancing, drawing and quality outdoor time in his new backyard which included a recent Easter egg hunt. For a true indicator of David's happiness in his new home, just look for him with his feet up on the couch in the living room. Now that's what they mean by "home sweet home!" This new chapter of David's life has only just begun, and we could not be happier to be an integral part of it.



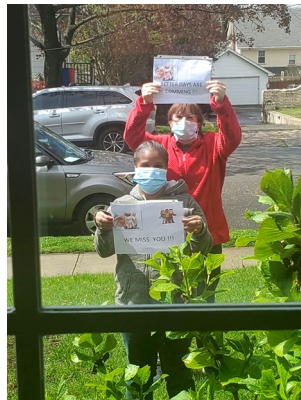
Banners hanging in front of all the group homes and program sites



## DAY SUPPORT SERVICES UPDATES

*Marisa Lione, Director of Programs*

The Day Habilitation Programs of Hudson Milestones continue to be closed at this time due to the pandemic. While we await instructions from DDD on how to re-open the day programs safely, we are brainstorming various ways to adjust to a new normal. A workgroup is being assembled by DDD to work on criteria for re-opening and more information is soon to follow. In the meantime, we continue to place weekly wellness calls to our Day Support Services families to ensure they are staying well during this uncertain time. We share resources and services that are being offered throughout Hudson County if needed. We have made connections for families such as with Meals on Wheels to ensure everyone's needs are being met while the clients cannot attend their day programs. Stay tuned for updates.



The Hudson Milestones Respite Program continues to function during the pandemic if families want and need the services. Our staff are safely working with some clients in their homes providing assistance around the house and helping them pass the time during the stay at home order. It is hoped that the program will begin to slowly function back at 100% and within the community when it is safe to do so.



## BEING QUARANTINED AT HUDSON MILESTONES

*Ilyana Stuckey, Residential Coordinator*

Waking up on a Saturday morning, on a day off, was supposed to be relaxing and filled with leisure activities. Instead, one of the clients I care for began showing signs of illness. Of course, as a Residential Coordinator, it is my responsibility to ensure medical care is sought no matter what day of the week it is. According to medical professionals, this client was suspected of having the COVID-19 virus. Upon that diagnosis, a fourteen-day isolation period, or quarantine, had to occur immediately. This would ensure the safety of the client, her housemates and all the staff.

Imagine having to drop everything, be away from family, friends, and a spouse for fourteen straight days based on something completely out of your control. Just when you think you have taken all precautions, and still somehow the possibility that you or a client you care for could have contracted something deadly affecting so many people and at such a fast rate - it was beyond frightening. Three staff had to be secured immediately to ensure one would work with the sick client while the other two staff would remain with the other five clients. That was certainly a challenge and one I did not foresee for myself when I had awoken that morning. Fourteen days in quarantine, isolated from the world, was nothing I had ever anticipated and yet I was the one who had to heed the call. But with the support system that included my family, Hudson Milestones Supervisors, and co-workers, I made it!

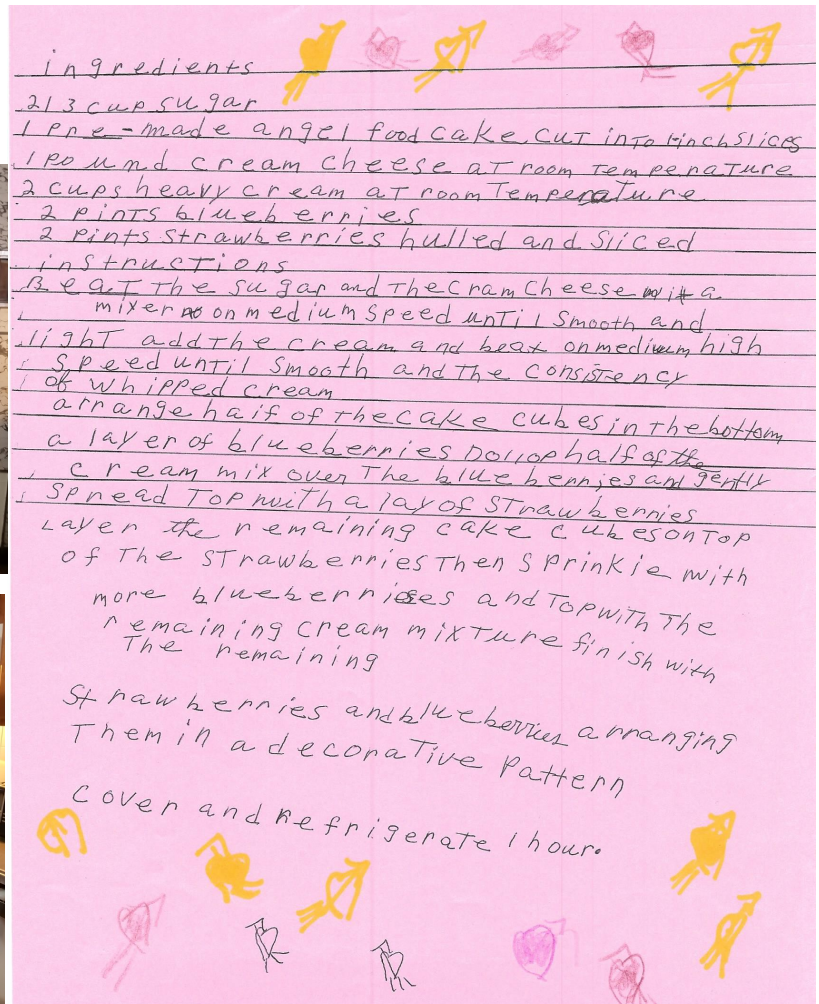
Though the client I was caring for was sick and in discomfort, each day I encouraged her and made it my sole purpose to nurse her back to health. There were definitely ups and downs, scary moments, and lonely instances where I really had to dig deep to keep moving forward. My lowest point came when the client's condition took a frightening turn and EMTs had to be called. We were told the client would not be transported to the hospital and that she was best cared for at home. As I saw my client helpless and getting worse, I was filled with worry. But once an explanation was given, my fear turned back into hope. That hope, along with the EMT's instructions and the strength I still had left in me got us through. Each day after that, the client began to get better, act more like herself, asking for snacks, reminding me of medication times and slowly gaining back her independence. There was finally a light at the end of this tunnel, and less days ahead to get through.

Even though I celebrated my 30th birthday while in quarantine, those around me made it an unforgettable one. I was showered with cakes, flowers, balloons and so many lovely gestures and gifts from everyone at Hudson Milestones. I felt very special because of the many people supporting me from the CEO, Supervisors, Board members, client families, to my co-workers. This was a birthday I would not soon forget and surely one to tell my future children about.



## STRAWBERRY BLUEBERRY TRIFLE CAKE CUPS RECIPE

The ladies of Kearny I Group Home would like to share this delicious recipe they found online:



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Due to the pandemic, activities/events for the Day Habilitation, Weekend Respite and Residential Programs are postponed and will be rescheduled when it is safe to do so.

The Residential Programs continue to engage in daily scheduled events and activities at home according to a monthly recreational calendar.



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Aceti, Carla; Aceti, Jerome; Acquavella, Veronica; Acquaye, Vera & Theo; Advanced Disability Management Services Support Coordination Agency; Amadeo, Mr. & Mrs.; Barkhorn III, Henry; Bautista, Merlinda; Bayard, Ray; Camaya, Sairone & Jonathan; Cohen, Bobby; Crawford, Veronica; Cruz, Eufracia; DeGise, Thomas; Derowski, Maura; Di Rienzo, Donna; Disbrow, Carmine; Evangelista, Zosima; Fields, Evanette W.; Freeman, Beth; Frost, Barbara; Golluscio, Alfred & Sharon; Gray, Karen; Grossmann, Peter; Hinck, Douglas & Tina; Hinzpeter, Matthew; Holiday Express; Hudak, Joyce; Hussey, Ronald; Jarencio, Edgardo & Teresita; Jersey City Police Department; Jersey City Police Officer's Benevolent Assoc.; Jespersen, Kevin; Justice Brennan Courthouse; Kelly, Michael; Kelly, Ruth & Ken; Lefelt, Carol; Lim, Mr. & Mrs. Feliciano; Lorenzo, Frank; Maldonado-Gonzalez, Julia; Mangrobang, Mr. & Mrs.; Medeiros, Lynette; Medeiros, Sally & Paul; Minard, David; Mojsov, Ms.; Mulvey, Karen; Nardini, Lauren; Nardini, Mr. & Mrs. Antonio; Norton, Jean C.; O'Leary, Frank; Patel, Chiandrika; PSEG-Power of Giving Campaign; Rizzo, Benedicta; Robinson, Amy; Rock the 21; Rutkowski, Mr. & Mrs. Edward; Smith, Mark; Stein/Mahayosnand, Adam & Paula; Synogen Solutions; Valenz, Mr. & Mrs.; Vasilantone, Fannie; Walsh, Cathy; Werner, Harriet & Deb; and Woodham, Gardenia.

*Great care has been taken to assure the accuracy of our donor lists. Please accept our apologies for any discrepancies and let us know if you are incorrectly listed.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Jose Rosario**

Director of Programs

**Marisa Lione**

Director of Compliance

**Donna Dolan**

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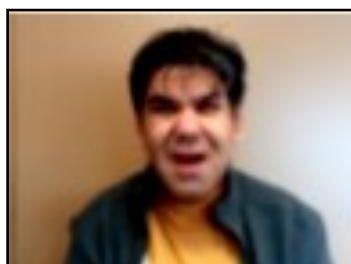
**Tracey Belvedere**

## Rest In Peace

*It's hard to forget someone who gave us so much to remember.*



**Rosetta DePinto**  
(former Residential Client)



**Davindra Jaigobind**  
(former Day Habilitation Client)



## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Interested candidates email resumes to  
[hmrecruiting@hudsonmilestones.org](mailto:hmrecruiting@hudsonmilestones.org)

**FOR AVAILABLE POSITIONS VISIT**  
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## THE FUTURE OF THE WEEKEND RESPITE PROGRAM

*Kathleen Ruiz, Day Support Services  
Operations Manager*

During this pandemic, there has been uncertainty about when things will return back to “normal”. That feeling is no different for the clients of the Weekend Respite Program. To try to address all concerns, we are currently working on creating a plan to convene the Weekend Respite Program activities as soon as we are permitted to do so while ensuring safety when in the community.

Throughout the year, this program typically holds two to three events each month. The initial thought is that the number of events will stay the same but that the group numbers will need to be reduced. To ensure each client has an opportunity to attend at least one event a month, our large group of participants may be divided into three smaller groups to ensure proper social distancing processes are followed. Hudson Milestones staff will communicate with vendors and venues to ensure all safety practices are in place for their prospective establishments. Additionally, staff and clients will wear face coverings and ensure proper cleaning and sanitizing of all surface areas. When in the community the staff will strongly encourage and oversee frequent hand washing.

While we await official approval to put any type of plan into action, we are always coming up with alternatives for our new normal. While the world has changed, our mission is the same. Hudson Milestones is deeply committed to providing meaningful experiences while maintaining everyone’s health and safety.

## TRANSITION TO TELEHEALTH SERVICES

*Jasmine Overton, Early Intervention Coordinator*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic plaguing the country at this time, the New Jersey Early Intervention System approved service delivery via Telehealth. Telehealth refers to the use of technology to complete sessions virtually in lieu of face-to-face visits. This includes the use of telephone calls and video conferencing. Several Hudson Milestones Early Intervention Practitioners are providing services via FaceTime, Google Duo and WhatsApp to name a few of the ways the various therapies can be delivered. Utilizing Telehealth services is allowing the Practitioners to embrace the tenants of Early Intervention and provide coaching and modeling to families to work with their children that can be practiced at any time between and during sessions. Being able to continue sessions with the Practitioner’s guidance allows families to maintain routines and consistency during this uncertain time. Telehealth is empowering families to develop their child’s existing skills while new ones evolve. The feedback thus far has been very positive from families who originally did not think this delivery of services would be effective for their child. Most importantly, this vital service is reminding parents and family members that they are the best teachers for their children.



## HUDSON MILESTONES

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