

# THE MILE POST

Tel #201-434-7783 / Fax # 201-434-1860 / [www.hudsonmilestones.org](http://www.hudsonmilestones.org)

## TEMPORARY SUPPORT HOTLINE TO ASSIST DURING THESE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

On December 15, 2020, I went live with a Hudson County Community Support Hotline where I respond to questions from the community. It is understood these unprecedented times may bring uncertainty; Hudson Milestones is here to ease those worries by providing reliable information.

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



Support is offered via phone or email on Tuesday mornings from 10a-11a, or Tuesday evenings from 7p-8p, in the following areas:

- ♦ Behavior resources & tips
- ♦ Medical care resources
- ♦ How to access goods, and services
- ♦ Guardianship
- ♦ How to access PPEs
- ♦ What to do when my family member with an I/DD diagnosis will not wear a PPE?
- ♦ Obtaining a meal
- ♦ Applying for social security for a family member ...& much more!

Services are readily accessible for families in our community and we would be happy to provide service information on the following:

- ♦ Group Home placement
- ♦ Respite placement
- ♦ Early Intervention placement
- ♦ Day Habilitation Placement.



If interested in receiving more information on any of the above services, please call 201-748-9692 or email [Hudson.milestones@hudsonmilestones.org](mailto:Hudson.milestones@hudsonmilestones.org)

## Wisdom From The Chairman

Arlene Rutkowski, Chairman of the Board

### DINNER DANCE DEFERRED

In April 2020, we had to cancel our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Platinum Celebration and Annual Dinner Dance when Governor Murphy declared no large gatherings due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Here we are nine months later, navigating the second wave of this pandemic, and forced with the difficult decision of having to defer the April 2021 Dinner Dance fundraiser.

As has been the case, since the onset of this pandemic, our biggest priority is keeping those we serve, our staff, and our families, healthy and safe during these unprecedented times.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support. We can't wait to see and celebrate with everyone once it is safe to do so!

## #GivingTuesday was here!

**December 1, 2020 marked Giving Tuesday – a worldwide day of giving back.**

**Giving Tuesday at Hudson Milestones is dedicated to our Day Habilitation, Residential and Early Intervention clients.**

***It's never too late! Please consider giving back by mailing your donation to:***

**Hudson Milestones Inc.  
365-381 Clendenny Avenue  
Jersey City, NJ 07304**

**Or visiting our website at  
[www.hudsonmilestones.org](http://www.hudsonmilestones.org)**



## COVID-19 GUIDELINES & RESOURCES

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

As we face another possible wave of Covid-19 spikes this winter, it's important for all of us to stay as best informed as we can on the latest guidelines and resources available to us throughout the State of New Jersey. I have put together a list of helpful information and resources guided by our State Officials and the Centers for Disease Control.

### **State of NJ Short Term Rental Assistance Program:**

As part of the Murphy Administration's overall response to assist New Jersey residents affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Murphy and Lieutenant Governor Oliver announced on Friday, the COVID-19 Short-Term Rental Assistance Program. The program will provide rental assistance to low and moderate income households that have had a substantial reduction in income as a result of the pandemic, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Please see the links below to the press release and to the information on DCA's website: [Short Term Rental Assistance Press Release](#)

### **How to Protect Yourself:**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has the most up-to-date information on protecting yourself from COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

### **If You Think You Are Sick or Need a Covid-19 Test:**

The State of New Jersey has developed an online tool to check your symptoms, as well as a centralized resource with information on COVID-19 Testing Sites throughout the state. For more information, visit:

<https://covid19.nj.gov/search.html?query=Testing+Centers+in+NJ>

### **If You Need To Contact Your Local Health Department:**

[www.localhealth.nj.gov](http://www.localhealth.nj.gov)

### **If You Need Medical Insurance:**

NJ Family Care is New Jersey's publicly funded health insurance program. It includes CHIP, Medicaid, and Medicaid expansion populations. That means qualified NJ residents of any age may be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance that covers doctor visits, prescriptions, vision, dental care, mental health and substance use services and even hospitalization.

<https://www.njhelps.org/>

### **If You Are Anxious or Stressed:**

Coping with stress during infectious disease outbreaks can cause anxiety and stress for anyone. These guidelines can help:

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4885.pdf>

### **If You Need Access to Mental Health Professionals:**

NJ Mental Health Cares is New Jersey's behavioral health information and referral service. If you are experiencing anxiety or worry related to the Coronavirus outbreak, help is available seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. **To get help now, call 866-202-HELP (4357) or visit:**

<https://www.njmentalhealthcares.org/>

### **If You Want Updates on COVID-19 from the State of New Jersey:**

For updates on COVID-19 in New Jersey, text NJCOVID to 898-211. For live text assistance, text your zip code to 898-211. You can also visit:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

**To See The New Jersey Department of Health's COVID-19 Online Dashboard, visit:**

[https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_dashboard.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml)

[NJ DCA Rental Assistance Program Page](#)

## DAY SUPPORT SERVICES UPDATES

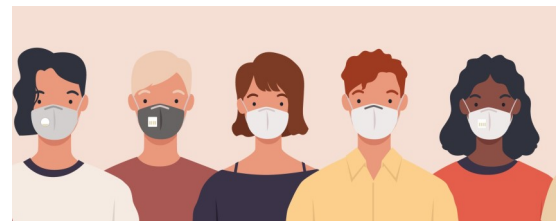
*Marisa Lione, Director of Programs*

The Day Habilitation Programs of Hudson Milestones continue to be closed at this time due to the pandemic after a brief two-month opening at 25% capacity. While we await further instructions from DDD on how to again re-open the day programs safely, we are providing Tele-Day Habilitation services that are benefitting so many. We also continue to place wellness calls to our Day Support Services families to ensure they are staying well during this second wave of the pandemic. We share resources and services being offered throughout Hudson County if needed. We continue to make connections for families such as with nearby testing sites and Meals on Wheels information. Updates will be provided as they are available.



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 providing assistance around the house and helping them pass the time as they stay safely at home. 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. In the meantime, we happily admitted a new member to our Respite family who is also a member of our JCDH. She was really struggling with staying home, missing her friends and routine when Hudson Milestones stepped in and brought some much-needed fun and activity straight to her doorstep.



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Be sure to check out our website at

[www.hudsonmilestones.org](http://www.hudsonmilestones.org)

## WELCOME TO OUR HUDSON MILESTONES FAMILY, SUSAN & JOHN

*Marisa Lione, Director of Programs*

In the months of August & September, two of our group homes welcomed new members to the Hudson Milestones family.

Susan became our new addition to the North Bergen program in August. She had been quarantining with her brother and his family when it became clear it was time for Susan to venture out on her own and "get her own place"! Susan is now happily adjusting to her new digs and has already found life-long friends in the other North Bergen residents. They are now the three amigos and enjoy making crafts, playing bingo, and taking walks around the neighborhood. Susan's presence has breathed some new life into the home and the ladies look forward to many happy years together.

In September, the Kensington group home welcomed John with open arms! He is a very easy-going and kind man who has now completed the program and filled the house. John enjoys paging through the newspaper, watching movies, and socializing with others. This was clear when he attended the fall community events offered each Wednesday in October. It was a great match in John finding Hudson Milestones and us finding John. We look forward to many happy days together ahead.



## CHRISTMAS WORD SCRAMBLE

*Donna Dolan, Director of Compliance*

*(see answers on page 4)*

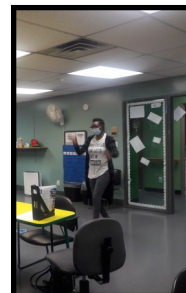
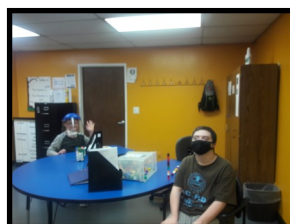
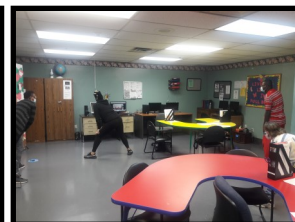
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## DAY HABILITATION RE-OPENING

*Kathleen Ruiz, Day Support Services  
Operations Manager*

On September 28, 2020, Hudson Milestones was thrilled to re-open the Bayonne and Jersey City Day Habilitation Programs. To ensure the safety of all program participants and staff, we instituted several safety precautions including temperature checks and risk assessments prior to daily entry. We labeled floors with 6 feet apart stickers to ensure social distancing was observed, we limited the number of participants in each classroom and created individual activity kits for each client to avoid communal sharing of items. Meaningful activities were offered daily, and it was quite rewarding for staff to provide some normalcy to the clients during this uncertain time. We were mandated to provide services for no more than a 25% capacity, and only a handful of clients returned. However, we made the most of the time the clients attended the programs before another mandatory closing went into effect on November 25, 2020. We provided all clients with face masks with clear covering over the mouth to aid in communication and it was important to re-establish as much socialization as we could for those who had not seen their friends for several, long months. We enjoyed the fall holidays of Halloween and Thanksgiving together while working on strategies and outcomes. While we wait to see how the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of the pandemic effects are in-person day programming, we continue to provide Tele-Day Habilitation services, which has been very successful for many of the clients we serve. It is our goal to continue to ensure consistency and routine as much as possible for the clients we serve.

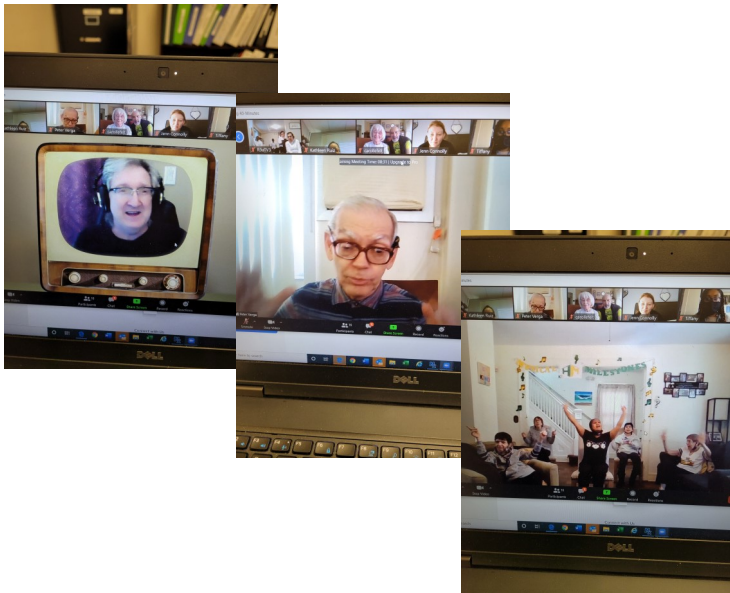




## VIRTUAL MUSICAL MILESTONES

*Marisa Lione, Director of Programs*

For the first time ever, the Musical Milestones music program went virtual based on the Covid-19 pandemic. Weekly rehearsals occurred via video on Google Hangouts and Zoom among several of our group homes and our fearless leader, Lee Howard. With the determination of Operations Manager Kathleen Ruiz and the many staff involved, the clients accomplished what seemed like at first an impossible feat! They practiced weekly sometimes plagued with issues such as sound problems and social distancing concerns while keeping all members within the camera frame. But with the patience and cooperation of everyone involved, all the hard work soon paid off. It truly was an amazing moment to see many smiling family member's faces via Zoom while they watched the final performance entitled "Favorite TV Themes". The reward of seeing those far away family members clapping and cheering to songs such as "Happy Days", "Green Acres" and "The Flintstones" really put things into perspective. Not even a global pandemic could stop the music, family/friends, and fun from effecting everyone who watched and all those who participated. I felt both pride and privilege to be a part of such an amazing connection amongst the clients, family, friends, and staff – it truly lived up to the hype it does each year. It just did so in a very different way this year.



## CHRISTMAS WORD SCRAMBLE ANSWER SHEET

**TREE; ICE; CANDY; CHRISTMAS; SANTA; SLEIGH;  
SNOW; REINDEER; ELF; BELLS; FIREPLACE; JOLLY**

## FY2020 ALL STAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Staff of Hudson Milestones are selected by their co-workers for recognition for doing their job at a level that exceeds expectations. Below are the All Star recipients for FY2020:



- ★ **Donna Dolan**
- ★ **Skima Ford**
- ★ **Victoria Loehwing**
- ★ **Paul Njeru**
- ★ **Jasmine Overton**
- ★ **Arlene Richardson**
- ★ **Keyonna Wright**

## RESPITE PRICELESS MOMENTS

*Jasmine Overton, EI/Respite Coordinator*

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way people were able to interact with each other. The closure of Day Habilitation programs due to the public health emergency halted many program participant's opportunities to socialize with their peers and staff. One of the program participants from the Jersey City Day Habilitation was having an especially difficult time. Being unable to attend day habilitation and interact with people outside of the home the program participant began exhibiting signs of depression. The program participant's family was unsure of what could be done to help their family member. Marisa Lione, the Director of Programs and I jumped into action to find out what help Hudson Milestones could provide. Marisa worked with the program participant's Support Coordinator to have Respite services added to the service plan. We knew we just had to help. The family observed an immediate change in the program participant's demeanor soon after beginning Respite services and were so appreciative of all our efforts. The program participant greatly benefitted from being able to socialize with someone new who they did not see every day. Being able to venture out into the community for walks and shopping with someone new lifted the program participant out of her depression. Respite is not only a service for caregivers to provide a break, it is important for the participant as well with developing a new friendship with their Respite provider. Sometimes we forget how the simple things are worth so much.

## A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT COMPLIANCE

*Donna Dolan, Director of Compliance*

Many may think during a global pandemic and shut down, that Hudson Milestones' Department of Quality Assurance — a department that completes in-person audits, monitors and ensures New Jersey Regulations and Standards for Residential, Day Habilitation, Respite, Early Intervention, and the Finance and Operation departments, would have very little to do. That would be a grave misperception.

Allow me to explain what compliance has looked like for the Quality Assurance team, a bird's eye view of the past nine months...Since March, the Quality Assurance team has been responsible for knowing and understanding all CDC and DDD guidelines, and at times it felt as if it was before the information was disseminated by the powers that be.

We created and monitored Risk Assessments for all staff and visitors that entered the group homes and addressed on-the-spot concerns no matter the hour. The assessment captured temperature checks, fielded multiple questions and has turned away multiple staff entrances to group homes while ill.

The Quality Assurance team also monitored the client's symptom checklist, at a minimum, daily for each individual client. This tool was created to ensure the client is not running a fever or exhibiting any COVID-19 related symptoms. By being proactive, we were able to obtain immediate care for our residents when needed.

We not only had to learn how to function remotely, but still ensure we were following all licensing standards by requesting documents and pictures from the group homes. This allowed us to monitor the administration of medication, Individual Support Plans, food supply, PPE availability, follow up on doctor appointments and the completion of needed paperwork, just to name a few.

Once the state started to slowly re-open, my staff, without hesitation, went right back into the group homes because they understood the importance of their work. We truly care that our residents and employees are as safe as possible. And as for me, the Director of Compliance, I was busy working with the CEO on the emergency preparedness plans and writing policies and protocols to safeguard all employees and clients, all while guidelines continued to change. At times, these protocols would need to be revised within days of writing them.

The madness continues to this date. Training occurs around-the-clock to educate our staff, since we operate 24 hours. We learned how to train through conference bridges and video chats such as Zoom and Google Hangouts. Crazy, I know, but we did it! We adapted, we weathered the first wave, and now we're onto the second.

The Pandemic forced Hudson Milestones to bring in multiple outside vendors, which I had to learn how to oversee including: Quest, Mobile Health and managing a nurse. I am and have been available to staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week because positive test results or emergencies often do not fall within a Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Completing wellness calls became a way of life for all the department directors, including the executive secretary, conducting staff surveys at all hours of the day to ensure each employee felt supported and heard during this time of crisis. Unannounced visits to different sites to ensure new policy compliance among staff and endless webinars to ensure as a company, we were up to date with current information to share with our staff, became a part of my normal duties and functions of audits within the group homes and non-COVID related compliance with staff requirements. This pandemic has not lessened the Quality Assurance team's workload, but in fact increased it massively. It was necessary and we did what we had to do.

The Department of Quality Assurance's main purpose is to ensure all standards are being met especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We personally feel it is our duty to ensure the safety of all residents and employees.

I cannot thank my team enough for doing whatever is asked of them, no matter what day or time, and always being flexible. Please know you are essential to those we serve, myself and this organization. #HMSTRONG



## HAPPY FALL YA'LL

*Kathleen Ruiz, Day Support Services Operations Manager*

Hudson Milestones was very excited to host “Happy Fall Ya’ll”, a series of outdoor events during the months of September and October. The Residential programs were invited to our main office location to attend a different outdoor event each week. We featured various food trucks including the Dark Side of the Moo, Mister Softee’s Ice Cream, and the Carnivale Donut Bar! Tony and Michelle Nardini hosted a tailgate BBQ with delicious cheeseburgers, snacks, and drinks. Each client also received a pumpkin to take home for Halloween! We even hosted a drive-in movie day where clients danced and sang along to the movie “Grease” on an outdoor, large screen. Another event featured a Yoga instructor who helped bring peace & zen to the Pleasant Place, Miller, and Kearny I group homes! To ensure the safety of our clients and staff we limited the capacity of each event to 15 people, tables were spaced 6 feet apart to observe social distancing, and everything was sanitized between gatherings. This was a functional and safe way for our clients to be in the community, socializing with friends, and enjoying life!



## 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.

In addition, fun events were offered throughout the fall and winter each Wednesday to get the clients out of the group homes and out in the community. These events included food trucks, an outdoor movie, holiday carolers, and a visit from Santa.



## WE HAVE A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR

*The Department of Residential Services*

While 2020 has been a year filled with uncertainty, fear, and an overall feeling of gloom, we at Hudson Milestones are choosing to dwell on all we have to be thankful for. As seen in the attached photos, we are thankful for our friends, staff that feel more like family and a stable, consistent place to call home.

The Residential programs have provided much needed comfort and solace to the clients we serve while we navigate through this unprecedented time. The Day Habilitation staff have been a constant to the clients during the daytime hours while the familiar faces of the Department of Residential Services have provided unwavering normalcy and support to the clients we serve. We are relieved that our clients have stayed healthy and happy overall and seem mostly unaffected by the pandemic. Yes, they miss their friends and yes, they miss going to their day programs, out to eat and on recreational activities such as bowling- just like the rest of us. But you will not hear them complain one bit! They have learned to adapt to virtual recreational activities, Tele-Day Habilitation services and to waving to friends through the window while out on a walk. Everyone's mood is chipper, holidays have been celebrated without interruption and the clients inspire us to take a good look at all we do have to be thankful for.

Thanksgiving looked a little different this year, as we usually celebrate together with one home hosting several other homes. This could not happen this year of course as we all had to celebrate separately for safety reasons. But that did not stop the fun and festiveness from entering each of our homes on this special day. We have said throughout the last long nine months that we are Hudson Milestones strong, and no words rang truer than on this day of being grateful for all we do have.



## 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.

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**Jose Rosario**

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**Donna Dolan**

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## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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

**FOR AVAILABLE POSITIONS VISIT**

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*Amadeo & Miller; Bautista, Merlinda; Branagan, Jayne; Cohen, Bobby; County Prep. High School; Crawford, Larry; Crawford, Veronica; Cruz, Eufracia; Davis, Mayor James; De Larosa, Mr. & Mrs.; Dolan, Charles; Edmundson, Anne; Evangelista, Zosima; Fiore, Andrew & Ellen; Fiore, Ted & Janice; Freeman, Beth; Frost, Barbara; Gordon, Toy & Tony; J. Vrola Inc. Wholesale Meats; Lefelt, Carol; Lim, Mr. & Mrs. Feliciano; Lorenzo, Frank; Medeiros, Lynette; Medeiros, Sally & Paul; Mesina, Cristina; Mittica, Diane; Morales, Elsie; Nardini, Lauren; Nardini, Mr. & Mrs. Antonio; Network for Good (Facebook Donations); Norton, Jean C.; O'Leary, Frank; Palsi, John; Pinto Service, Inc.; PSEG-Power of Giving Campaign; Richardson, Arlene; Rizzo, Benedicta; Rizzo, John; Rock the 21; Rutkowski, Anne; Rutkowski, Mr. & Mrs. Edward; Talley, Morena; The City of Bayonne; Valenzuela, Remmill; Vasilantone, Fannie; Villamaria, Jose; Vrola, Joseph & Joan; Werner, Harriet & Deb; Wilson, Adela; Zepf, Carol; Zienkiewicz, Kim*

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## HUDSON MILESTONES

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JERSEY CITY, NJ 07304