

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



WE SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE WE SERVE UNCONDITIONALLY.

Of the eight Guiding Principles by which we navigate, this proved the most challenging for Life Styles in 2020.

The same day as our March 11 Celebration Luncheon, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson declared a public health emergency concurrent with the first confirmed Covid-19 case in Pine Bluff. This new disease forcefully entered our reality that day and has been impacting operations ever since.

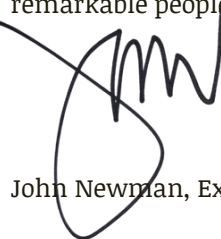
With the overriding objective of protecting our high-risk population of clients from infection, Life Styles responded quickly and aggressively. All educational and activity programming—a primary source of social interaction for our clients—was paused for a total of nearly four months, from mid-March through June, with an additional two-week hiatus in September.

Clients that did not return home to stay with family were instructed to shelter in place, a limitation our clients adapted to remarkably well, largely thanks to the dedication and creativity of our essential-worker Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). Supplementary daily staff visits to check temperatures and to deliver homemade lunches and dinners helped buoy client spirits during this restrictive time. Beginning in late September—with counsel from the local medical

community—we slightly eased restrictions on client movement to counter growing emotional fatigue associated with the quarantine. We continue to evaluate the tradeoff between mental well-being and physical health on a daily basis.

At this point in time, given a relentless organizational focus on health and safety and the individual cooperation of each Life Styles client and staff member, [we feel fortunate to report a low Covid-19 incidence rate of 2% among our clients](#) (five reported cases among 225 clients currently being served). Despite the low percentage, even a single case is one too many and you can rest assured we remain 100% laser-focused on prevention.

While Covid-19 has posed significant challenges for Life Styles, it has also motivated important innovations and highlighted the resilience, dedication, and enthusiasm of our employees. I am exceedingly proud of both our staff, and the remarkable people we serve.



John Newman, Executive Director





3 Current
passenger
limit on Life
Styles vans



25,600
Healthy, homemade
meals delivered



Only
5
clients have
tested positive
for Covid-19

12
People on wait
list for Life Styles
services

..and fielding more
inquiries weekly

225
Clients currently
being served

...66 fewer than
usual



24%
Wage increase
for qualifying DSPs

17
Programming
weeks cancelled
due to Covid-19

KEEPING CLIENTS ENGAGED AND CONNECTED.

Supported Living

For those clients not currently residing with family (in March, seventeen Supported Living clients returned to their family homes due to underlying health risks; 7 have since returned), our creative staff has devised socially distanced activities to help provide clients with entertainment, skill building, and social opportunities. In the early days of the pandemic, we assembled [activity kits](#) containing puzzles, coloring pages, and other fun to help keep clients occupied at home. Supported Living also hosted a weekly [Outdoor Movie Night](#) on the Residential Lawn, [Bingo Night](#), and a regular [Linda Jo Craft Day](#) where clients have dyed face masks, decorated cookies, and participated in other art activities.

Despite
Covid-19,
we've helped
13 clients
secure jobs
this year.

Adult Development

Health considerations and transportation issues have reduced the number of Adult Development clients we currently serve by 56, but College For Living (CFL) classes are in full swing, giving clients the opportunity to connect with each other and learn new things. For example, the Blair Center recently celebrated [Dia De Los Muertos](#) with costumes and themed art activities while one CFL class is [travelling the world virtually](#), discovering faraway places through activities, crafts, videos, and movies. Like many other university students, our Launch collegiate experience clients are learning “remotely” at the Stensgaard Center for now. Those who cannot attend Launch class in person can [link in to class via Zoom](#) to stay connected.

Supported Employment

Twelve Life Styles clients have been laid off or furloughed due to the pandemic. Many others have voluntarily left their jobs for health reasons, or have seen their work hours reduced because of business slowdowns. And Project SEARCH and our High School Transition Program are on hiatus until spring of 2021, at the earliest. But on the upside, and despite the economic challenges facing many businesses, Supported Employment has secured [thirteen job placements to date this year](#). One of those placements was a paid position with [Life Styles Shredding, which we have leveraged](#) during Covid-19 to continue developing interpersonal and job skills among our clients.

IMPROVING NUTRITION WITH HEALTHY MEAL DELIVERY.

Thanks to the incredibly generous financial support of donors, in less than two weeks Life Styles ramped up a comprehensive client Nutrition Program which made it easier for clients to stay safe in their homes while receiving healthy, homemade lunches and dinners. Since the program introduction on March 23, Life Styles has [delivered more than 25,000 meals to clients](#). The program has enhanced health safety and virtually eliminated food insecurity, but we're also delighted to report that it's improved health outcomes among our clients, who have [reduced body weight and blood pressure](#) thanks to the Nutrition Program's healthy ingredients.

ENHANCING CLIENT SERVICE WITH MORE FACE-TO- FACE CONTACT.

In June, receipt of a technology grant enabled us to implement a previously planned field-based service innovation through the [purchase of 20 iPads for Supported Living staff](#). Now coordinators can assess client goals, verify medication, conduct performance evaluations, and access other pertinent data whenever and wherever needed. They can conduct critical DSP training onsite in the client environment, ensuring better retention and more effective deployment. And perhaps most importantly, they can more singularly [focus on face-to-face client care and service within the client environment](#). As an added benefit during the current health crisis, this service model also reduces the number of outings required of clients, helping keep them safe in their homes.



PRIORITIZING SAFETY WITH A PPE STOCKPILE.

TACKLING STAFFING CHALLENGES THROUGH IMPROVED PLANNING AND COMPENSATION.

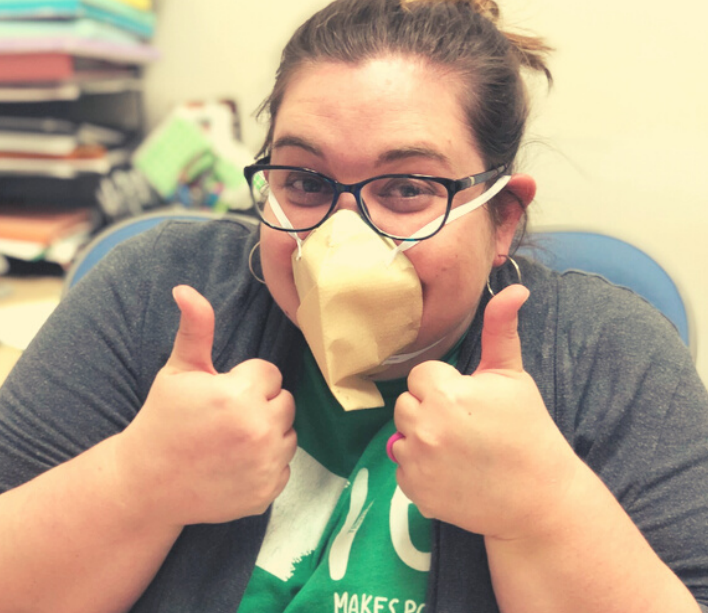
While Direct Support Professionals are always critical to client satisfaction and successful execution of our service model, we've seen the already-tight labor market for this essential service constrict with resignations or furloughs prompted by health concerns and childcare issues. Scheduling has also been complicated by the need to allow time off for Covid-19 testing and the subsequent wait for results, as well as our effort to limit the number of clients each DSP supports to minimize exposure risk. In light of these obstacles, scheduling challenges that existed before Covid-19 have been exacerbated and overtime pay has skyrocketed.

Yet we are consistently humbled by the continued [willingness of our staff to shift roles and fill critical organizational needs](#) spawned by the pandemic. And we are pleased to announce a new wage scale for Life Styles DSPs which will [increase their hourly wage by up to 24%](#)—boosting the current hourly rate of \$10.50 to \$12-\$13 per hour. We've been laying the groundwork for this new pay scale for some time [to incentivize top performers and provide a more competitive and sustainable pay rate](#) for the essential work these valued employees provide.

Maintaining an adequate supply of protective masks and gloves—and educating clients and staff on their proper use—is a critical element of our Covid-19 prevention plan. At the onset when Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was in short supply, Life Styles staff transformed the Stensgaard training room into a modified clean room where a [staff assembly line manufactured face masks](#) from coffee filters, elastic, paper clips, and staples. And before prevention measures were well known, [Nurse Pam directed and starred in videos](#) outlining proper procedures for hand washing, mask wearing, and social distancing.

Then the [community donations started pouring in](#). Both handmade and factory-made face masks were delivered, along with wipes, hand sanitizer, and gloves. The generosity was supplemented by Life Styles purchases of face shields, industrial-strength cleaning supplies, and a disinfecting electrostatic sprayer.

While our PPE inventory leaves us well-positioned to address anticipated needs through the coming months, [we do have an ongoing need for vinyl or latex gloves \(size large or extra-large\).](#)



SAFEGUARDING HEALTH THROUGH SECURE FACILITIES.

Every Life Styles building is now cleaned and sanitized at a significantly higher rate than before the pandemic. At Stensgaard alone, [professional cleaning expenses have nearly doubled](#). High-touch surfaces and classrooms are cleaned daily by teaching staff, and we have purchased stronger cleaning products for them to do so. [Sanitation stations](#) have been installed at each Life Styles building entrance.

On Life Styles vans, we installed plastic curtains between driver and passengers, and instituted a three-passenger limit. [Vans are cleaned daily and sprayed with an electrostatic gun three times a week](#).

Clients attending class at the Stensgaard and Blair Centers are required to wear masks onsite, and temperatures are checked upon entry into the buildings. At all Life Styles facilities, [classrooms are operating at reduced capacity](#) to maintain social distancing, and curriculum has been disrupted as we shift to individual versus collaborative projects that require less hands-on interaction by instructors.

CELEBRATING ONGOING GENEROSITY.

Despite the difficult circumstances sparked by the pandemic, Life Styles has been the fortunate recipient of remarkable generosity and support.

One day we unloaded a full [truckload of personal hygiene items](#) destined for clients, and we've received bags and [bags of groceries](#) to help fill client's kitchen shelves.

Thank-you cards, phone calls, financial donations, and words of support make a world of difference, too.

[More than ever, we find ourselves exceedingly grateful for the outpouring of concern and compassion from our many supporters.](#)

We launched
a new and
improved
website in
August.