



March 16, 2020

Dear Families of Mary Crane,

I hope you and your loved ones are well. I am writing today to share with you Mary Crane's plans to continue to serve and support you during this unprecedented time of keeping ourselves healthy during the crisis of COVID-19. Please know that Mary Crane's top priority is the health, safety and well-being of you and your children, and of the staff of Mary Crane. It is because of this priority that Mary Crane will temporarily close its four sites and suspend home services from March 17-March 30, following the leadership of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the strong advice of the Governor of the State of Illinois.

While our offices and classrooms will be temporarily closed for everyone's safety, we nonetheless will continue to provide for you the highest quality education, family engagement, and support services during this time. Your Mary Crane teachers, family workers, directors and education teams will be in touch with you regularly to continue to provide you with ongoing educational materials and activities for you to engage in at home, and will be in communication with you to support you with assistance, information, referrals and resources directly and in the community. We particularly want to assist in ensuring that your children continue to have the opportunity to grow and learn during this time. While we know your children love to come to Mary Crane and we love to see them and you each day, this situation also presents an opportunity for you as a family to engage in education with each other at home, and we will be helping you to do that with educational materials, activities and communication supports.

Your Mary Crane team also recognizes that this health crisis may present hardships to your family depending upon your employment situations. While we cannot control the decisions of your employers, we have great hope that they will support you and your family in all ways possible. Please know that at Mary Crane, we are taking care of our employees so that they do not experience economic hardship as they continue to work with you and your families remotely during this time. It is the time for compassion, empathy and support for each other as community members, and we hope your employers and other community resources will support you as we will do for our employees.

Regarding your nutrition needs, we recognize that during Mary Crane's temporary closure, your children will need to access meals in alternative ways. Chicago Public Schools is offering meals for pick up at any CPS location each day from 9:00AM-1:00PM. CPS is offering up to 3 days of meals each day for each of your children. As your Mary Crane staff communicates with you, please let us know if this system of accessing food is meeting your needs. If it is not, we welcome that feedback so that we can assist you in accessing food in other ways if possible.

Again, please know that, although classrooms and home visits will not be accessible during this time, Mary Crane services will be continuing. These will happen through telephone, texting, emailing, the internet, social media and direct mail. Your Mary Crane team will be in touch with you personally to make a plan with you regarding how this will best work for you.

Finally, we recognize the emotional challenge this situation places upon all of us. “Social distancing” is not something anyone of us is used to or desires. However, as the Governor and the Mayor have expressed, it is our collective responsibility to keep ourselves healthy and to do our part to limit the spread of this virus. We encourage you to keep in touch with us, with your family and friends, and your communities of choice through technology and other safe means so that you are not suffering from this challenge of relative isolation. We also encourage you to continue serving your nutrition needs, your body’s exercise and movement needs in creative ways, your educational development with your Mary Crane team, and last, but never least, please continue your hope and joy. Together, we will get through this safely, strongly, and we will be back at Mary Crane soon to celebrate and engage in person once again.

Mary Crane will keep you actively informed of all developments during this time.

All my best to you and your loved ones. We care deeply about you and are here for you.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Ruth Coffey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "C".

Mary Ruth Coffey
Executive Director