

Aspires May , 2020 Virtual Meeting Notes

Welcome, and “Disclaimer”: Richard Conte and Bonnie Kaplan (Co-chairs): Using Zoom is enabling Aspires families who cannot attend in person to participate so we expect to use Zoom for all Aspires meetings from now on. Zoom also enables us to have guest speakers from outside the local area, which is another advantage of this technology.

If guest speakers agree to be recorded, we will do so – then we can post their talks for our larger membership. However, please be aware that some of the audience questions, comments, or even images may be captured on a Zoom recording of a speaker.

The Zoom recording will always be turned off after the guest speakers finish. Aspires participants can continue to engage in the meeting and share their own personal situations (if you want to) with the other Aspires members in attendance. These discussions will not be recorded, so your privacy is assured.

Minutes: The April 7th meeting was cancelled, March 5th minutes approved.

Project Updates by John Seigner:

Horizon View: We have been offered 8 – 1 BR units in Phase 2. Rent is approximately \$800/month. Utilities and internet are extra. Horizon Housing is now pet friendly; pets need to be approved in advance. Horizon Housing tenants are required to be connected with an agency. Aspires members are referred to Monarch House unless they are already clients of another Horizon Housing partner agency. Email housinginfo@sinneavefoundation.org if you are interested.

HomeSpace Projects: There are 2 projects in development for fall. Expressions of Interest (EOI) were submitted April 30.th Both projects should be ready for occupancy in the fall of 2020. They will both be low-income sites.

- Crescent Heights is an 11unit apartment building located at 238-5th Avenue N.E. Scope will provide supports in the building to tenants who receive PDD funding. For individuals interested in the building who do not receive PDD funding, Scope is developing a fee-for-service model to provide supports as needed.
- The 5th Avenue S.W. Apartment: is a 74 unit apartment building with commercial space on the main level and a second floor community kitchen and patio. This site will have some concierge support available to tenants who are independent but could benefit from a light level of support. There will be a monthly social event. The building will also be home to other HomeSpace tenants.

PDD update: Families who receive PDD funding should contact their caseworker to ask about flexibility in PDD contracts to request a family member to provide supports during this time.

Larry Scarbeau, March of Dimes (M.O.D.) Edmonton update: M.O.D. staff have committed to only work @ M.O.D. sites. They are assuring families they have sufficient PPE supplies. They recently added another group home to their support network and there is capacity to add another in the near future.

Aspires discussion: How are people are doing during COVID-19 shutdowns? What challenges are you finding in this situation? How are you coping? Do you have any tips you would like to share? Can Aspires do anything to help you? Here is what we heard.

Challenges:

- Miss contact with the Aspires group.
- Feel very lonely and miss social network.
- Miss hanging out with friends.
- Experiencing job loss; either temporary or permanent.
- Watching more TV and COVID news. For some, too much news is having an impact on their mental health.
- Keeping track of time with a loss of structured routine is a challenge
- Anxiety and fear of the virus makes it difficult for some to leave one's own home.

Do you have any tips you would like to share?

- Zoom meetings/get-togethers helping to stay connected and keep momentum going as is the case with some Launch + Skills clients who are participating in virtual skills coach sessions.
- A sense of purpose helps. One Aspires member's job is suspended but she is doing online workouts, and cooking.
- Video games and participating in Netflix Parties (AAFS is offering) for entertainment
- Virtual D&D with AAFS.
- Still working and keeping up with weekly activities that are now virtual.
- Created new routines; cooking and helping with household tasks while other family members are working from home full time.
- Keeping an exercise routine going is helpful.
- Many people described getting outside everyday as the new routine.
- Disengage from the internet by enjoying nearby parks.
- Exploring the neighborhood in daily walks but limiting trips to the grocery store.
- Daily walks to the corner store are very helpful.
- Exploring alleys on long walks are easier than being on city sidewalks.
- Daily family touchpoints. Family members individually commit to do an outside activity everyday (cycling, walking etc.) which gives them something to talk about in their daily touchpoint.
- Develop new routines/structure. Scheduling a once or twice weekly routine to get together with a family member who is living on their own as been helpful.
- A weekly zoom meetup every Saturday, exercise, taking a course and mindfulness practice help one Aspires member who also has made a conscious choice to ride the bus in order to go bird watching.
- A strategy shared by another Aspires member is to offer help/feedback with only one thing at a time.
- Co-chair Bonnie Kaplan shared some nutrition research she also recently included in an article she had published in the Calgary Herald. <https://tinyurl.com/w7zggv4>
 1. 'Higher protein diet people feel less reactive in dealing with their anxiety (less volatile)'
 2. 'B' Vitamins are important. Eat lots of green leafy vegetables and/or take a B complex vitamin every morning after breakfast.'

How can Aspires help?

- Put more programs such as 'Beastmode' on-line.
- More online programs are needed.

- One member asked for answers to questions about housing and finances. Aspires has a financial worksheet available to calculate costs of different scenarios. Another Aspires member also shared some personal experience on costs to live on his own.

Meeting adjourned: Richard (chair) asked attendees for a 'Thumbs-Up' if you liked this meeting format. (9 participants responded with a thumbs up.) For the time being Aspires will continue to meet virtually.

Next Aspires meeting: Thursday June 4th 7-9 p.m. via Zoom.