

Cancellation of Spring Session of Shepherd's Center of St. Andrews

Dear Members of Shepherd's Center of St. Andrews,

Everyone has been watching the rapidly changing situation with the global spread of the novel coronavirus. It is clear that our membership is the group most vulnerable to developing the most severe cases of COVID-19. On Sunday Governor McMaster closed all public schools through the end of March, triggering our standard policy of closing when any change is made to Lexington-Richland District #5. This affected only our opening day, March 31.

Later that same day, the CDC recommended against gatherings of more than 50 people throughout the country for the next two months. The Board of Directors has therefore decided that we must cancel Spring Session. We do so with much regret, but with the clear understanding that this is the safest course of action for our members, their families, and their neighbors.

The exciting lineup of classes planned for Spring will be largely or entirely transferred to the Fall Session. Most teachers have said they will indeed be available for Fall; others are checking and will let us know.

There are several important implications of this decision, both financially and personally for each of us.

The easy part first: losing the revenue from 285 members is a loss of \$9,975 in our \$50,000 budget. Granted, that loss is somewhat mitigated by not having some expenses (for example, printing the *Horn*), but many expenses continue (for example, the phone bill). Most importantly, we have two part-time staff members whom we will continue to pay. There are several major office projects, such as redesigning the website and developing a Policies and Procedures Manual, that we have all been scrambling to find the time for. This will be a good opportunity to complete those. The custodial staff will also continue to be paid. Because they have been incredibly good and loyal to us; we will return their caring by being sure those hourly workers do not lose essential income as a result of the virus.

Accordingly, we respectfully ask that you consider allowing your recent session enrollment (registration fee and first day's lunch, if applicable) to become a gift to the Center. You might appreciate knowing that all of the Board members have committed to doing this, as have a number of members who contacted us to express concern for the staff. If, however, making this a gift is not feasible for you, please contact the office before the original start date of March 31 to request a refund: amy.shepherdscenter@gmail.com. Should you not use email, call 731-9394. Thank you for consideration of this request. We will certainly honor your decision.

The second and more important area impacted by cancellation is the loss of social contact for us all. The reason we hesitated until we felt forced to close was that the

Board is keenly aware of how important classes and camaraderie are for seniors. Many of us live alone and being encouraged to self-isolate is, well, so isolating!

Accordingly, the Board has approved several actions during this period. We will be posting more often to our Facebook page, offering interesting items to read and sharing news. We will maintain weekly contact through email distribution of a modified *Horn* via Constant Contact. We will call members to check in and see how you are doing.

Please know that, whether we meet together on a Tuesday or not, we are a Shepherd's Center family and we look out for each other. If you have any suggestions for maintaining connection, let us know.

Many prayers are lifted for your individual health and safety and for the health of everyone around the globe.

BJ Bickers, President
Carol McGinnis Kay, Chair, Adventures in Learning
Amy S. Crook, Executive Director