



Office of the
County Executive
**EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**



*"Kites rise
highest against
the wind,
not with it."
~ Winston
Churchill*

MCG Employee Connect Newsletter – High Risers Edition

JULY 24, 2020, VOL 15

This week's High Risers are: NikKia Carver; Traci Anderson and Montgomery County Recreation's Business Administration Team; the Reopening Ambassadors; Adult Protective Services; and the Department of General Services Supplies Sourcing Team.

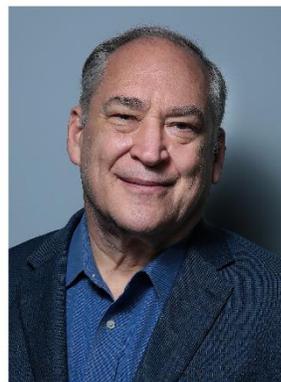
It is always a pleasure to introduce a new set of High Risers who are hardworking employees who have stayed true to their mission. They are giving their all and are focused on achieving goals rather than giving attention to obstacles.

This team of High Risers have investigated allegations of abuse and neglect and provided social support for vulnerable adults; transformed the Recreation Department's business and administrative aspects; supported the division of transit services to ensure the team had the necessary resources; worked to provide supplies throughout the pandemic but particularly when resources were scarce and personal protective equipment and supplies were very hard to obtain; and assisted our businesses with resources to help them operate as safely as possible.

As we recognize the accomplishments of our High Risers today, we know there are also hundreds of other employees who are giving it their all.

Unlike other emergencies, there is not an approximate end date. This is hard and is wearing everyone down.

COVID-19 is brutal and affects not only our work but also all other parts of our lives. The work that you do is appreciated, it is important, and it makes a difference. Thank you for all you do to make MCG the best.



Stay safe and be well,

Marc Elrich, County Executive

Andrew Kleine, Chief Administrative Officer

HIGH RISERS REOPENING AMBASSADORS



The Reopening Ambassadors program started Monday, June 8 with 19 staff members from our Department of Housing and Community Affairs code enforcement section. The program provides support to businesses by providing resources and educational materials to assist businesses in opening in compliance with safety guidelines and aligned with the County's Executive phased reopening.

The initiative started in zip codes with the County's highest cases of COVID-19, and then expanded to other businesses throughout the County. Areas that have already been visited were then revisited to see if additional establishments had reopened, or if additional educational needs had been discovered.

Inspectors have advised businesses of the necessity of social distancing and the importance of face coverings, as well as providing additional information as needed.

To date, the Reopening Ambassadors have visited 2,158 businesses and conducted 1,085 follow-up visits.

HIGH RISERS ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES



The Department of Health and Human Services Aging & Disability Services Adult Protective Services (APS) teams are High Risers who have responded daily without interruption during the pandemic, to reports of allegations of abuse involving the County's vulnerable adults.

The APS team is staffed with clinical social workers and a nurse. APS investigates cases where vulnerable adults and persons with disabilities over the age of 18 may have been victims of physical or sexual abuse, financial exploitation, self-neglect, or neglect. The program is a state mandated program.

This frontline team regularly make home visits to clients who are not only susceptible to abuse but are at high risk of COVID-19 and may need social support.

APS supervisors developed and implemented a Unit response to service intervention that is designed to protect both employees and their vulnerable clients. Administrator Mario Wawrzusin presented and advocated for the Montgomery County APS Level1/Level2 Covid-19 Response Model to the State of Maryland, Office of Adult Services. The Attorney General's Office and senior Department of Human Services (DHS) leadership approved the model after an intensive 6-week review. It is a successful plan with elements which are under consideration for long-term utilizations post-pandemic.

These are highly collaborative teams, accustomed to supporting each other's needs during "normal" times, who have clearly risen to the occasion in supporting each other during this public health emergency.

The team members include: supervisors Julia McGlamary and Denise Bruskin-Gambrell, OSC Lillian Mattis, and team members Lori Ashton, Pilley Doe, Toni Cooksey, Jennifer Forester, Laurie Goldman, Annette Hackey-Runion, Cynthia King, Debra Korth, Katie LaBiche, Rita Nzuwah, Carline Presbury, Terry Rudman, Aimee Ochoa, Sandra Schmidt, Karen Serio, Stacey Chipurnoi, Amy Thomas, and Iasia Tyre.

HIGH RISERS TRACI ANDERSON AND THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION TEAM



Traci Anderson has led Montgomery County's Recreation Business Administration Team in the transformation of the department's business and administrative services to a fully digital workflow. The team has developed communication tools to assist vendors and customers with the new operational plan and worked to get staff the necessary tools to transition to a teleworking environment.

The team members Traci Anderson; Vicki Kane; Bo Nyein; Charlotte Keys; Allison Cohen; Rosemarie Mantua; Joelle Kabala; Michele Bean; David Delgado; Dwyane Hawkins; Tanya Nazarian; Victoria Smith; Pet Weliwitigoda; Judi Lei Hernandez; Yumba Shaw-Smith; Derek Russell; Brigette Ocran; and the late Lanol Dove who will always be a part of the team.

The team worked nonstop to provide online training for staff members to learn to optimize business software and digital tools. This involved establishing a workflow process to ensure completion of vendor payments and procurement needs.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the team has effectively worked with community members to ensure they were able to access department offerings and adjust to virtual services. At the onset of the emergency response, the team quickly began to develop innovative tools to support a fully online financial assistance program. This was important to the families who were hard hit with the economic turndown brought on by COVID-19.

Tracy's unwavering eye on the goal, enthusiasm and steadfast leadership shaped a progressive path in a time of uncertainty. As department services were restored, Tracy and the team worked

tirelessly to establish the framework to allow customers to reserve time slots at pools, developed video tutorials, and staffed a seven-day-a-week hotline and email box.

This team has raised the bar in customer service and has taken the business operations to a higher level.

HIGH RISER DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES SUPPLIES SOURCING TEAM



The Department of General Services Supplies Sourcing Team made up of Anita Mills; Dora Thaxton; Robin Golden; Ardell Simmons; Sunil Pandya; and Keith Stickley, hit the ground running as soon as the County's COVID-19 emergency response began.

The Supply Operations team has, from the earliest days of the County's response to the present, spent long hours on many days, evenings and weekends looking for and purchasing supplies amidst the early stages of a global shortage. The team extends special thanks to the Office of Procurement for its valuable cooperation and support in aiding these efforts.

From sourcing and negotiating purchase agreements, weeding out supposed firms from legitimate resources, coordinating with Risk Management, Finance and the Office of Procurement, connecting with public entities and purchasing groups throughout the region and the entire US, and shepherding orders through delivery, the team has been on task to ensure the County had the needed supplies.

Through perseverance, resourcefulness and tireless hard work, these High Risers ensured the County's emergency stock was fully supplied.

Their ongoing work ensures that residents and employees are protected and have the materials they need to protect themselves and stay as safe as possible.

HIGH RISER NIKKIA CARVER



Since the beginning of the emergency response, Executive Administration Assistant NikKia Carver ensures the administrative functions of the Transit Services Division are expertly refined to effectively meet the needs of transit customers of Montgomery County. NikKia has been instrumental in managing communications and supporting the Division's operations through the numerous shifts and modifications throughout the County's COVID-19 response.

Since the start of the pandemic, NikKia has worked diligently to ensure the Division has communicated with transit staff and residents. She has astutely remained on top of the recurrent alterations in services. As necessary, she was quick to assimilate resources and find ways to identify limited but essential resources.

She has been extremely helpful assisting the frontline bus operator staff to ensure the necessary resources were available to meet their needs.

Early in the emergency, NikKia Carver led the Division's effort to provide meals to transit operators. Through her work, she managed meals for our operators as the division adapted to new schedules and operating conditions.

