

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Residential Foster Care Agency Adjusts to COVID-19 Pandemic, Restructures Programs and Services to Protect Children and Staff, While Ensuring Level of Normalcy for Kids in Care**

**New York, N.Y. (March 17, 2020)** - The Children's Village has issued the following statement from President and CEO Dr. Jeremy Kohomban, regarding the organization's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in their residential programs. One such program is their campus located in Dobbs Ferry, where approximately 300 children ages 12 to 20 live at any given time, with lengths of stay ranging from 30 days to 12 months. The campus also has apartments for staff, which house approximately 114 staff families. There is a public school that serves the residents and children from the surrounding communities; a job training programs that give residents experience in dog training, barbering, cooking, and other skills; a recording studio; full recreation center; greenhouses and community garden; and other facilities.

"We serve some of the most vulnerable and at-risk children in society. Our staff are on the frontline of this crisis caring for these amazing children every day. Not only do most of us not have the option of working from home, but there is much more for us to do on our campus and in our many residential programs in the NYC area. Our main priority, as always, is keeping the children and teens in our care healthy and safe. To that end, our physicians and staff are closely monitoring the guidance of the New York State Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control to ensure that we are taking every necessary precaution.

But, during this time, we also have a tremendous responsibility to ensure the emotional wellbeing of our children.

All children and young people need love, stability and reassurance, and this need is especially acute for the kids who have been separated from their families and are in our care. They have often experienced extreme stress and trauma. We are taking great care to keep them engaged, to inspire their creativity and to show them that we can still be happy and have fun during trying times. The staff are drawing on their creativity and offering them programming that is compatible with social distancing. With the on-campus public school closed due to the pandemic, the recreation center is open all-day with a carefully regimented schedule that ensures all residents the opportunity to exercise and recreate. Weather permitting, we are spending as much time outside as possible with structured activities including basketball, bike riding, and taking walks to explore our vast campus, among other things. We are working hard

to ensure that the mental health and wellbeing of the young people in our care is not forgotten, while still providing the highest levels of physical safety.

Our staff of nurses, doctors, psychologists, clinicians, psychiatrists, social workers, direct care workers, and administrative staff are working around the clock to ensure that we adjust to a new reality and provide the continuity of care our hundreds of children and their families rely on us for.

And, of course, we have and continue to implement tactics and precautions for avoiding contracting or transmitting the coronavirus at our campus. These include proper hygiene according to CDC guidelines, daily sanitation of all facilities, canceling any trips that involve groups of people, and holding all meetings with external partners via phone or video conference. We continue to closely monitor the guidelines of the CDC, New York State, New York City, Westchester County, and adjust our programming and protocols if and when necessary.”

Jeremy Kohomban is available for interview.

### **About The Children’s Village**

The Children’s Village is a leading charity working with some of the most at-risk youth and families in New York. Founded in 1851, The Children’s Village runs the nation’s oldest and once largest children’s residential foster care center, housing hundreds of children from across New York. Learn more: <https://childrensvillage.org/>