

Books to the Rescue; A New Chapter for the Allentown Rescue Mission

By Stephine Appel

(ALLENTOWN, PA) – The Allentown Rescue Mission enthusiastically announces the launch of its newest program, Books to the Rescue, in conjunction with National Read Across America Day. Books to the Rescue is operated by the men of the Allentown Rescue Mission to acquire, through donations, early learning books and distribute them to local elementary schools for the teachers to pass along to their youngest and most needy students.

This initiative not only benefits the children; it provides the men with an opportunity to help others in their community. The pandemic produced a major shock to education, especially for the very young. Early learning in kindergarten and first grade forms the foundation of the entire educational process, and reading at home with family members has been identified as a vital component of learning how to read. However, local educators have found that many families do not have the resources at home to supplement COVID-limited school efforts.

The lack of at-home supplies has resulted in the most vulnerable students falling behind. Rachel Hudock, first-grade teacher, Clearview Elementary School, said, "During this pandemic, parents began asking for more books for their children to read at home. While I can provide great instruction, school textbooks, and technology, I couldn't provide trade books to all students. A program like Books to the Rescue means that our students will be provided with more at-home resources to help pave the way for student success." Books to the Rescue aims to get books into the homes of students who otherwise would not have access to them.

The men in the Allentown Rescue Mission's Transformation Program will collect, catalog, classify and organize the donated books for distribution. Books to the Rescue provides a way for the men to give back to the community that has so generously blessed them during their stay at the Allentown Rescue Mission. The Allentown Rescue Mission asks donors to drop off pre-school and elementary level books at its location, 355 Hamilton Street, Allentown. The books collected will help the youngest generation learn to read and help homeless men develop a sense of responsibility to their community. For more information, please visit allentownrescuemission.org/books-to-the-rescue. Inquiries can be made at books@armpa.org.



Vaccines For Pre-K Educators

By Mary P. Hall

HARRISBURG - Governor Tom Wolf and the Legislative COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force announced a special initiative to prioritize vaccinating Pennsylvania's education professionals, including early childhood educators and child care providers.

Last week the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention authorized the one-dose Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use. Under this special initiative, PreK-12 school staff and child-care program workers will be the first individuals in Pennsylvania eligible to receive the doses as early as mid-March.

This special initiative includes early childhood educators and staff age 18 and older who are employed by a public or non-public PreK-12 school entity, and early childhood program workers age 18 and older who work in the following settings: Child Care; Part Day School Age Programs; Home Visiting Programs; Early Intervention; and Early Childhood programs including Head Start/Early Head Start, Pre-K, and Family Centers. Early childhood staff from Philadelphia are covered in the distribution plan directed by the Philadelphia Department of Health and are not included in this special initiative.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) staff who are directly employed by PreK-12 public and non-public schools or Intermediate Units (IUs) will receive additional information from their employers. The Departments of Health and Education and PEMA are working with the IUs to set up dedicated vaccination sites for PreK-12 staff across the state. More info go to www.pakeys.org



Hike Healthy: Avoiding COVID-19 infection on the Appalachian Trail

COVID-19 (commonly referred to as "Coronavirus") is a highly contagious respiratory virus that has been diagnosed in the majority of the states along the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). Initial symptoms of COVID-19 appear between 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. However, some may experience more severe symptoms, including difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion or inability to arouse, and bluish lips or face. Those who experience any of these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

In order to minimize your risks of contracting COVID-19, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy recommends that all hikers follow the guidelines below, which are based on recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization.

- Wash your hands frequently with biodegradable soap at least 200 feet from water sources. When soap is not available, use hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol.
- Avoid sharing food. Do not eat out of the same food bag, share utensils or drink from other hikers' water bottles.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Use a tissue and dispose of it using Leave No Trace Principles
- Keep some distance between you and other hikers whenever possible, especially if anyone shows signs of being sick. Avoid shaking hands or other close contact — instead, elbow bumps or waving are safer ways to greet others.
- Avoid congregating in groups along the Trail.
- If you are an older adult or have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes or lung disease, you are at a higher risk of serious complications from COVID-19 disease. Hike and camp away from others to minimize the likelihood of infection.
- If you begin feeling sick, stay away from others and get off the Trail until examined and cleared for return to the Trail by a medical professional.
- If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 while on the A.T., please submit a report to the ATC with as much detail as possible using the form at <https://appalachiantrail.org/report-covid-19>.

For more information about COVID-19 and prevention tips, please visit cdc.gov/covid19.



For additional information on how the COVID-19 outbreak is affecting Appalachian Trail facilities and ATC visitor centers, please visit appalachiantrail.org/updates.

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