



### Well Intended

As we have moved through this pandemic, we have been bombarded with messages from all directions: some accurate, some not; some good, some bad; and we are left to sort them out and processes them on our own. I am more than content to let that be. However, sometimes a message hits way too close to home and can't be left without a finer point put on it.

As children were required to stay home from school and before distance learning had begun, I heard stories of parents "freaking out." "How are these children going to learn? How am I going to teach them? I'm not prepared for this." I heard the well-intended response from multiple directions and many levels within the education system: "Don't worry, you're not their teacher. We'll take care of this. Distance learning is on the way."

A message meant to instill calm and provide reassurance. A message of hope. A message that is/was well intended, but just wrong. Or should I say, needs a finer point. Parents, you are and have been your child's first and most influential teacher. You started teaching from the minute they were born and will continue to do so through a lifetime. They will learn from you whether the lesson is intended or not, whether it is directed at them or not. They will learn from everything you say and everything you do.

It is from you that their first lessons come. You teach them hope or despair, courage or fear, curiosity or placid acceptance, truth or dishonesty, kindness or cruelty, generosity or greed, respect or disregard, wonder or disdain. Not only that, children will discern how well your actions back up the things you say. They will learn more from what you do than anything you tell them.

I don't say this to disrespect the teachers in our educational system in any way. On the contrary, they are vital and I hold them in only the highest regard. They are professionals and we need them to teach our children shapes, colors, the alphabet, how to read, math, science, history, art, advanced algebra, astrophysics, not to mention any of those things I may have missed. But there is not a teacher in a classroom anywhere that wouldn't tell you that the lessons they learn from you greatly impact the manner and how well they can do their job.

So, parents remember: the classroom is always open. Your children are listening and watching. They are *always* learning something; positive or negative, they learn.

#### Lakes & Pines CAC, Inc.

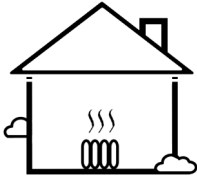
##### *Mission Statement*

To build prosperous communities by serving local families and individuals in their pursuit of self-reliance.

**Partnering to End Poverty**

*Bob Benes*  
*Executive Director*

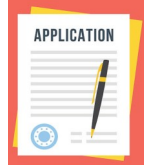
## ENERGY ASSISTANCE HELP IS STILL AVAILABLE



The COVID-19 crisis has left many in need and will continue to do so for many months. There will be unique challenges that we all will face, some of which we are not yet aware of. Lakes and Pines' Energy Assistance Program is up to the challenge.

Recent changes to the program will allow Lakes and Pines to respond to the increased need arising from Covid: First, the program has been extended until July 1, 2020. Second, the amount of crisis assistance available to each household in need has increased from \$600 to \$1200. Last, a temporary change to how income is verified has been implemented to simplify the application process.

If you know of someone who is struggling, they can call Lakes and Pines at 1-800-832-6082 to determine if they may qualify for help. These are trying and difficult times and none of us are in this alone.



## TIME FOR NEW SKILLS OR NEW EMPLOYMENT?

If you are interested in enhancing your skills and have access to the internet, your local library has many great online resources right at your finger tips. You will need a library card to access these resources. If you do not have a card yet, you can apply for one online.



Brain Fuse, is one of the many source links East Central Regional Library (ECRL) offers. Within Brain Fuse you can find free resume templates, career assessments, interview tips and assistance from live experts. This can be found on the ECRL website at <https://ecrlib.org>. Once you are on the website, click the "RESOURCE" tab and from the drop-down window choose "Database A-Z." This Database will bring you to the Brain Fuse icon, along with a deluge of other free education and information.

A library card is free, giving you access to many day-to-day, self-help resources such as: Chilton's Manuals (automotive), Minnesota Driver's Manuals/practice tests, homework help for all grade levels, college prep and computer skills training.

The Cloquet Library at <https://www.cloquetlibrary.org/> also has links to Brain Fuse, Homework Help, Genealogy Research Links, Kid Zone youth reading, audio online reading and parenting resources.

There are several libraries available at <https://www.alslib.info/>, including Moose Lake. Within this database you can find MN State and Law Library, A-Z Help Now e-learning, Brain Fuse and a plethora of other resourceful links.

If you are a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - food support participant not receiving cash assistance, then Lakes and Pines' staff is ready to help guide you through a new employment plan. If you do not have a plan for a new job, Lakes and Pines can help you find online resources provided by your local library.

Contact Lakes and Pines by email: [lap@lakesandpines.org](mailto:lap@lakesandpines.org) or calling 1-800-832-6082, option 4.



## SNAP - FOOD HELP FOR THOSE WHO QUALIFY

Lakes and Pines is ready to help people apply for benefits and find resources.

During these challenging times, many hard working neighbors find themselves out of work through no fault of their own. That makes it hard to pay all of the bills and put food on the table.



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly known as food stamps) can help individuals and families make it through this crisis. Staff at Lakes and Pines can help determine if households may be eligible and help them complete an application virtually.

To qualify for SNAP, households must be below a certain income limit based on their household size: a single person may have income up to \$1,718 a month and qualify for SNAP; a family of four may have an income up to \$3,541. For a full list of income and household size guidelines see this SNAP screening link: <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/public/DHS-3529-ENG>.

SNAP is not the only food resource available. For the most part, food shelves remain open and school districts are providing meals to students while schools are closed. To find a food shelf or a school meal site near you, or to get help with questions about or applying for SNAP, contact Lakes and Pines by emailing [lap@lakesandpines.org](mailto:lap@lakesandpines.org) or call 1-800-832-6082, option 4.



## STIMULUS PAYMENT SCAMS ON THE RISE

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act authorizes stimulus payments to those who qualify. As a result, scammers may target Minnesotans and try to steal their personal information.

### Will government agencies contact me about stimulus payments?

No. Government agencies, including the IRS and the Minnesota Department of Revenue, will not call, text or email you requesting information for stimulus payments.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue does not have a role in issuing these or other federal payments.

### What should I do?

Be aware of phishing calls, emails or texts that include language such as: “In order to receive your stimulus payment by direct deposit, you must confirm your bank information.” If you get a suspicious email or text requesting information, report it. Do not click on links or open any attachments.



### Where can I find more information?

For details on federal stimulus payments, monitor the IRS Coronavirus Tax Relief webpage at:

<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus-tax-relief-and-economic-impact-payments>.

For Minnesota tax-related information, see “Our Response to COVID-19” on the Minnesota Department of Revenue website at: <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/minnesota-department-revenue>.

## MNsure ENROLLMENT DURING SHELTER-IN-PLACE



During Minnesota's shelter-in-place order, MNsure has provided specific policies to guide you, with help from a MNsure navigator, through the enrollment process.

A navigator may help you set up an account over the phone if you do not have access to a computer or internet and cannot meet a navigator in person. The account may only be on your behalf and created if you provide the appropriate online or paper consent form - Lakes and Pines can mail you the form if needed. While creating and using the account, the MNsure navigator must be on the phone with you and is required to read all privacy warnings to insure you understand and agree to each step.

Lakes and Pines MNsure navigators are ready to help you enroll in health care coverage. They are trained in this process and certified to use the Assister Portal.

People eligible for Medical Assistance or Minnesota Care may enroll anytime. If your income is enough that you are not eligible for Medical Assistance or Minnesota Care, you may be eligible for tax credits to help pay for a plan.

If you have had a recent qualifying life event, which is defined as something that has affected your health insurance coverage, you are eligible for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP). These qualifying life events include the following: having a baby, getting married, moving to a new area or losing health coverage due to a job loss or change of jobs. The SEP is a period of time, usually 60 days from the time of the event, when you can enroll through MNsure and shop for a private health plan. Other options include changing enrollment to another private plan or waiting to enroll during open enrollment.

For questions or help enrolling through MNsure contact Lakes and Pines by emailing: [lap@lakesandpines.org](mailto:lap@lakesandpines.org) or call 1-800-832-6082, option 4.



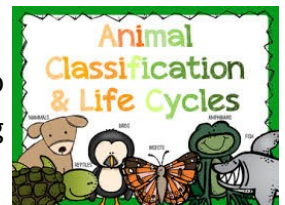
## SPRING IS IN THE AIR



With spring in the air, Head Start's Isanti Combination classroom is ready to learn about seeds and how they grow. Along with plants, students will also be exploring the lifecycle of animals.

On Earth Day the class discussed ways to keep our environment clean. Students learned that doing their part included picking up garbage, reusing old garbage to make new things and recycling whenever possible.

The children are learning to adapt during these times and found virtual learning to be new and exciting. Online resources containing educational and stimulating activities have been implemented for families to access right from their own home.



In February, Children's Dental Service spent a few days at four of our Head Start sites. Sixty-nine children who attend the Cloquet Center, Chisago Center, Mora Center and Allstar Center received free dental exams. As a result of this service, some of the kids even received follow up care.

## LIVE WELL AT HOME - SAFELY

During these trying times when we are directed to shelter-in-place, many people are anxious about having the ability to make it to the store or an appointment. Imagine being a senior with limited mobility who has not been able to get to the store or an appointment independently for months or even years.

The daughter of a 78-year-old woman in northern Minnesota called worried that the ramp her mother had “was not doing what it was suppose to.” She was worried her mother was going to get stuck in the ramp while trying to get outside. She explained that this happened a few days prior. When the Lakes and Pines staff saw the ramp, they immediately had an image of what she described. This elderly woman, all alone, was stuck in the ramp for over an hour trying to get help.

After taking pictures and discussing options with the homeowner, a plan was established to get a contractor out that week. The woman’s daughter was so grateful that she did not have to worry about her mother getting stuck again or hurt.

Over the past few weeks, seniors have been asked not to leave their homes unless it is essential, but it is important that they have a safe way to get in and out if travel is necessary. “Just not for a cribbage tournament at the Legion,” one gentleman stated recently. Hopefully, that will be an outing of his soon, just not today.



## FINDING NEW RESOURCES DURING A PANDEMIC

The Smiths\* have been “couch hopping” for some time. Recently, their families have put a stop to their overnight stays. While assisting them with their search for a new place to call home, Lakes and Pines staff came across housing provided through Loaves & Fishes, located in Duluth.

The residence consisted of two houses, one for men and one for families. Not only did the family house have four rooms for temporary emergency shelter, it also provided a day time place for anyone who needs to eat, shower, do laundry or just a safe place for their kids to play.

The Smith family has interviewed for one of the rooms, which may be opening soon. This was an especially great find during a pandemic, when many places are no longer taking people in. Although Duluth is not in our service area, it is only a short 15 minute drive for this family when they have nowhere else to go.

Link to Loaves & Fishes website: <https://duluthcatholicwork.wixsite.com/loavesandfishes>



\*Name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.

## AN ENGAGING YEAR FOR HEAD START

The Head Start Princeton Combination classroom has had a very engaging year. Initially, there were separate classes for the three and four-year-olds; these classes were combined into one morning class that meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This development opened up opportunities to partner with the school district's preschool screenings.

Pre-COVID-19, the class had just finished a study on balls and were moving into *Reduce, Reuse and Recycle*. The children enjoyed a visit from a dental hygienist who presented a fun explanation of what happens at the dental office. She used large props for hands on learning and kid friendly discussion.

During the ball study, students were able to make balls from various materials, such as sock balls and bouncy balls. Students paid particular attention to the similarities and differences between different types of balls. They discovered the answers to many questions that they were curious about including: "Why do balls bounce, roll and what is inside a ball? What happens when a ball goes in the freezer? How high can I bounce a ball?" This study included many opportunities to measure, graph, count and compare.

In early March the fun with *Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle* was just beginning. The class learned about what type of things go into the garbage and what happens to it once it leaves our home. The kids loved reusing things in new ways; one of the favorite activities was growing grass in yogurt containers labeled with fun monkey faces. When the grass grew, it looked like the monkey had grown hair. Another fun activity was building with pool noodle scraps and toothpicks. The kids made crafty ice cream cones, lollipops and porcupines.



Now, the class is practicing distance learning. To keep things interactive, each day of the week the students have access to three videos: a book reading, a song or activity and a social-emotional video. These are accessed through the SeeSaw Classroom Program. Families are also receiving a phone/video virtual home visit weekly from their Head Start teacher. This allows Lakes and Pines to provide support, encouragement and resources in a timely manner, as needs arise. Families made this transition with a positive outlook and are finding fun ways to integrate learning into their daily lives. The current situation is stretching into lengthy time frames and the stressors are increasing. Lakes and Pines reminds everyone to care for their mental health, reach out for help when needed and find joy in each day.



North Branch Combination Preschool was pleased to welcome a local dentist and hygienist to come educate students during Dental Awareness Month. The excited students enjoyed brushing a large model of teeth using an extra large toothbrush. How fun it was for them to learn all the different ways to keep their teeth healthy.

## FLEEING FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Michelle,\* a mother who had fled from her abusive boyfriend in the middle of the night, came into Lakes and Pines very nervous and unsure where to turn. She and her daughter had been staying with friends since she left and were looking for assistance to find housing.

On completing her intake information and assessments, it was determined she would be placed on the Coordinated Entry priority list, a housing locator for safe, affordable housing opportunities. Michelle had not been on her own in over 15 years so this was a huge adjustment.

She was relieved and worked diligently to find an apartment for her and her daughter. Due to Michelle's determination, she was able to find a very nice townhouse within a couple weeks, allowing her and her daughter to start a new chapter in life. This is just one of the many success stories witnessed at Lakes and Pines.



\*Name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.

Jill\* and her five-year-old son were fleeing domestic violence. She came to Lakes and Pines the first week in March stating that she had left her abuser and had no where to go. Once all the necessary intake and assessments were completed, staff gave Jill all of the paperwork to start looking for housing. In the meantime, she was urged to stay in contact with Lakes and Pines for support along the way.



After five days Jill had two jobs and located a townhouse in a nearby town; she was highly determined to get back on her feet. Lakes and Pines was able to help provide her and her son the opportunity to locate a new home. She has daycare for her child through the county, allowing her the ability to work during the day. Jill is a true success story of will and determination.

\*Name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.

## SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY APPLICATION

Lakes and Pines continues to offer Social Security Disability Application Assistance remotely at this time. This means assistance will be done by telephone, email and traditional mail.

If you, or someone you know, needs help with the application, Lakes and Pines is ready to walk you through the eligibility guidelines. If staff is unable to assist with your application, they can provide a "do-it yourself" kit or furnish referrals to other assisters.



If you were not seeing a physician or therapist prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, you will probably have to wait until you are able to get consistent medical care to proceed with your claim. We still encourage you to call Lakes and Pines for questions and assistance.

Contact Lakes and Pines by email: [lap@lakesandpines.org](mailto:lap@lakesandpines.org) or call 800-832-6082 / 320-679-1800, option 4.

# FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT 101



LEARN THE BASICS OF FINANCIAL FITNESS

TOPICS COVERED INCLUDE:

- \*Being aware of your attitudes and habits about money
- \* Setting achievable financial goals
- \* Creating spending and saving plans
- \*Checking and fixing your credit score
- \* Online money management tools and which one is right for you
- \* Who to call when you have questions

*One-on-one assistance available!*

**CLASS DATES**

May 14, 2020  
 August 13, 2020  
 November 12, 2020  
 February 11, 2021

TIME: 6:00PM-8:00PM

*Note: The same content will be offered at each class. Choose one.*

**LOCATION**

Pine City-City Hall  
 315 Main St. S #100  
 Pine City, MN 55063

REGISTER BY CONTACTING  
 LAKES AND PINES CAC, INC

lap@lakesandpines.org  
 320-679-1800 or  
 1-800-832-6082  
 Option #4



**MONEY TOPICS COVERED**

- Being aware of your attitudes and habits about money
- Setting achievable financial goals
- Creating spending and saving plans
- Checking and fixing your credit score
- Online money management tools and which one is right for you
- Who to call when you have questions

**\*THIS CLASS WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY\***

**Register by contacting:**

**Lakes and Pines, CAC, Inc.**  
**lap@lakesandpines.org**  
**320-679-1800 or**  
**1-800-832-6082, Option 4**

\*Once you register Lakes and Pines staff will provide instructions on how to attend the class virtually.

**LAKES AND PINES CERTIFIED IN NAVIGATION SERVICES**

Individuals and families who are *Long-Term* or *Chronically Homeless* usually face high barriers to housing. They do not have the financial means, credit history, rental history or resources to meet their basic needs.

What does it mean to be *Long-Term* or *Chronically Homeless*?:

- **Long-Term Homeless** is defined as being without a home for a year or more or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.
- **Chronically Homeless** is defined as a single individual (or head of household) with a disabling condition who has either: experienced homelessness for longer than a year, during which time the individual may have lived in a shelter, Safe Haven or place not meant for human habitation or experienced homelessness four or more times in the last three years.

What can Lakes and Pines navigation services do for those who are experiencing *Chronic* or *Long-Term Homelessness* in Central or Northeast Minnesota's Continuum of Care?

- Assistance with completing certification documentation required for *Long-Term Homeless* or *Chronically Homeless* housing programs.
- Providing/connecting to resources and guiding through the referral process.
- Assisting with housing search and advocating for program referrals.
- A connection to housing program providers to achieve a smooth transition into housing.



Tax filing deadlines extended: The Internal Revenue Service and Minnesota Department of Revenue are giving people extra time to file income tax returns and make payments. If your 2019 Income Taxes are completed by July 15, 2020 no penalties or interest will be added.

Due to COVID-19 there have been some changes to the FREE Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) Lakes and Pines offers. Traditionally, taxpayers come to a tax clinic, participate, and wait for their return to be completed. These are unusual times and like many, Lakes and Pines has modified the way this assistance is provided. Here are the following changes:

### Virtual Tax Preparation

To have your taxes prepared you must meet one of the following requirements:

- \* Household income of \$56,000 or less (unless you meet another requirement)
- \* Senior citizen (60 years of age or older) or have a disability
- \* English is your second language

Taxes will be prepared and reviewed by volunteers, just like the traditional method, only virtually. This means the intake and final review will be conducted over the telephone or video chat. Taxpayers will need to submit all of the required tax documents to Lakes and Pines by one of the following methods:

1. Secure upload on the Lakes and Pines website at [www.lakesandpines.org](http://www.lakesandpines.org)
2. Mail copies to Lakes and Pines at 1700 East Maple Avenue, Mora, MN 55051
3. Drop Box: Place a copy of documents in a sealed envelope. Mark "Tax" and "Lakes and Pines" on the outside of the envelope and place it in the DROP BOX at one of the following locations:
  - Lakes and Pines**, 1700 East Maple Avenue, Mora, MN 55051
  - Chisago County Health and Human Services**, 6133 402<sup>nd</sup> St., North Branch, MN 55056
  - Southern Carlton County Family Center**, 316 Elm Avenue, Moose Lake, MN 55767

In order to prepare tax returns accurately and efficiently the following documents are required:

- Proof of identification (photo ID) for primary and secondary taxpayer (if joint return)
- Social Security cards for you, your spouse and dependents
- Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents on the tax return
- Wage and earning statements (Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, 1099-Misc) from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- Health Insurance Exemption Certificate, if received
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
- Bank account routing and account numbers if you choose to receive any refund by direct deposit
- Total paid for daycare provider and the daycare provider's tax identifying number such as their Social Security number or business Employer Identification Number
- Forms 1095-A, B and C, Health Coverage Statements
- K-12 Education expenses for school-aged children
- College education statements and expenses, loan interest statement (Form 1098-T; 1098-E)
- Any other applicable forms you have received
- Copies of income transcripts from IRS and state, if applicable

To file taxes electronically on a married-filing-joint tax return, both spouses must sign the required forms.

## DO-IT-YOURSELF REMOTE TAX PREPARATION

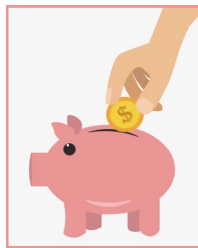
Lakes and Pines' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program will coach you through preparing your own simple taxes using free software at [myfreetaxes.org](http://myfreetaxes.org).

In order to utilize this option, you must have an email account, know your prior year Adjusted Gross Income and be knowledgeable/experienced working with a computer.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is defined as gross income minus adjustments to income. Gross income includes your wages, dividends, capital gains, business income, retirement distributions as well as other income. Adjustments to income include such items as educator expenses, student loan interest, alimony payments or contributions to a retirement account. Your AGI will never be more than your Gross Total Income on your return and in some cases may be lower. Refer to the 1040 instructions (Schedule 1) for more information. <https://www.irs.gov/e-file-providers/definition-of-adjusted-gross-income>

To request assistance, call Lakes and Pines at 1-800-832-6082 or 320-679-1800.

## SPENDING YOUR MONEY - WHAT TO PAY FIRST



The amount of money coming in has changed for many households, but the bills coming in are the same or, in some cases, greater. Ignoring your bills is not a good idea, no matter how overwhelmed you may feel. If you cannot cover a bill, be upfront about it and contact your lender or creditor to let them know; ask if an arrangement can be made.

So, what do you do when the bills equate to more money than you have? What is most important to you? That is what you pay first.

Housing is most important for the majority of people. Although there is a current freeze on evictions and mortgage foreclosures, that does not mean you do not have to pay for your housing. You will still have to pay your housing costs for these months while the freeze is in place. If you cannot pay the full amount, talk to your landlord or mortgage company. Communicate with them to work out a plan to possibly pay less each month for a while and come to an agreement as to when you will be able to pay the balance to avoid a large sum being due once the freeze is lifted.

Next, is estimating what to pay between food, medical, prescriptions, utilities, car payments and insurance coverages. All are important and vital, but maybe there is not enough money coming in to pay them all.

Lakes and Pines has trained staff ready to help you prepare a spending plan. If you prefer to create a plan on your own, there are some great resources online. [The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](https://www.consumerfinance.gov/) and [Mint.com](https://www.mint.com/) both have great information and free resources to help you spend your money on what is important to you.

<https://www.mint.com/>



<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/>



<https://www.mymoney.gov/tools/Pages/tools.aspx> Money planning Checklists



<https://www.mymoney.gov/Fast/Pages/Results.aspx?k=Budgeting%20worksheets&s=All> Money Budgeting Worksheets

## HOMELESS DAY ON THE HILL

On March 11, 2020, Lakes and Pines was thrilled to take part in “Homeless Day on the Hill” located at the Minnesota Capital. On this day of advocacy people from all over the State of Minnesota gathered to learn and talk to their local legislators about the actions needed from lawmakers in addressing homelessness within our communities.

### The 2020 Agenda Items:

#### *\$50 Million investment to Expanding and Preserving Emergency Shelter Beds.*

Expanding emergency shelter beds will provide immediate and temporary housing for our most vulnerable Minnesotans. Emergency shelter beds also supply a short-term solution for individuals and families sleeping outside. Investing in resources to expand emergency shelters will make improvements to Minnesota’s rental and housing markets while providing a healthy community.

#### *\$15 Million investment to the Emergency Services Program.*

Emergency shelters are the starting point to gaining long term housing and stability. A short term stay in an emergency shelter provides an individual or family experiencing homelessness a clean, safe place to stay. When everyone has a place to call home children learn, workers earn, seniors thrive and communities prosper.

#### *\$500 Million in Bonds for Homes.*

We know the solution to homelessness includes every type of housing across the continuum. Expanding and improving our emergency shelters creates a safe and suitable temporary place to sleep, while investing in bonds for homes builds healthy communities and promotes strong economies.

The day’s activities included meetings with Representative Nathan Nelson in the morning and Senator Jason Rarick in the afternoon. This time was used to discuss the agenda and share the personal roles staff play in housing and homelessness programs within Lakes and Pines.



## MENTAL HEALTH HELP ALONG WITH A NEW RIDE

Joe\* is a client of Lakes and Pines and was suffering from untreated mental health issues. When meeting with Joe, he occasionally would get very loud, might pound his fist, become agitated, and would get frustrated quite easily. Joe knew he had untreated mental health issues and was afraid that a therapist would judge him.

It took three visits with Joe: helping him come to understand that most people have gone through something in their lives that may have been traumatic and how therapists help us to work through it.

Joe went to Therapeutic Services Agency (TSA) and had a diagnostic assessment completed. At Lakes and Pines' next meeting with him, staff let him know how proud they were and how they respected him for working on his health. Joe was calmer and per his words, "I wish I would have done that sooner in my life." TSA is about a mile away from Joe's apartment and he does not drive. Currently, he does not work, therefore he cannot afford the local transportation.

With the funding support from Housing and Urban Development-Rapid Rehousing (HUD-RRH) and Housing with Support for Adults with Serious Mental Illness (HSASMI), Lakes and Pines was able to purchase a new bicycle for Joe.



This bike allows him to get to his therapy at TSA, the county office, job search, food pantry and provides some freedom to get around town.

\*Name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.

## HOMELESS YOUTH ACHIEVING THEIR GOALS

While Lakes and Pines staff was providing outreach at an alternative learning center (ALC), a youth inquired about housing.

He and his girlfriend were living in a house that was not meant for habitation. The two were left to live there alone after her father had to leave and the mother found other housing. The heat in the house had been shut off and there was an eviction notice for them to leave.

The Lakes and Pines intake form and other necessary information was completed. Later that day staff received an email that a landlord was renting a house in the area the couple wanted to locate to. Lakes and Pines staff immediately contacted the landlord regarding the young couple renting the house. The process progressed quickly from there and within a week they were in their new home.



The couple will continue to receive rental assistance until he finishes school. She has already located a job and they are working with the Lakes and Pines Agency Wide Advocate on life skills, taking control of paying their bills and achieving their goals.



## HEAD START GOES VIRTUAL

### Cloquet Head Start Center

Lakes and Pines' Head Start staff has been doing Virtual Home Visits (VHVs). These are audio and/or video meetings that are done on devices such as cell phones, computers and tablets. Not only do the VHV's provide visual and audio information, but core feelings can be interpreted as well. Staff have commented that this is going great.



Teachers offer suggestions about online resources for the students, such as activities, learning domains to strengthen development, Go Noodle (staff used it on the SmartBoard in the classroom) and the different songs the children really enjoyed from it. Parents can join their children in enjoying the many lively online resources provided.

Knowing this is out of the normal routine, parents are asked how they are doing, how things are going without attending the center and how the children are adjusting at home every day. Families are informed that Lakes and Pines also offers resources for counseling, social services and other mental and financial assistance. Parents are reminded that if they need to talk, vent or discuss their child's behavior, they can feel free to text or call the staff.



Concluding each VHV, families are left with a different quote. This weeks quote was from Winston Churchill: "Success is not final; failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

### Chisago Head Start Center

As you can imagine, Lakes and Pines' Early Childhood and Family Development staff and families are joining together to adjust to new work and learning situations through Virtual Visits.



Every day, a group text is sent out to families with the "Dad Lab," an activity posted by a Dad in the UK. These activities are geared towards families in quarantine and, for the most part, feature materials that families already have around the house. Each text is concluded by asking parents to send pictures of their children attempting and completing these activities. This has been successful, with multiple messages from parents coming in daily.

Teachers and families have been talking about these activities during our Virtual Visits and the consensus is that parents want more. To accommodate this, more activities and more texts are going out to families. Parents are happy to have the activities, children are excited about getting the "homework" and the feedback from parents helps staff fill in Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG), an observational assessment tool used for evaluating all areas of development and learning.

