



SEMIAHMOO
HOUSE
SOCIETY

PENINSULA
ESTATES HOUSING
SOCIETY

THE
SEMIAHMOO
FOUNDATION

April 24, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Semiahmoo House Society Community,

I am addressing this letter to the whole Semiahmoo House Society community: people we support, the families of people we support, home share providers, and all our staff members. For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be working together, with as few boundaries as possible to ensure that everyone is supported and safe.

April 24 Update



Ariis Knight

On Monday I shared the sad news that Ariis Knight, a person SHS supported in her home (a SHS group home), passed away at Peace Arch Hospital on April 18th. Her passing was additionally tragic because SHS staff members and her family members were not allowed in the hospital to support her. We are advocating very strongly to get the Provincial government to change its Health policy so that people with disabilities who need support communicating or making informed decisions are allowed to have family members and/or staff members in hospital with them. At yesterday's news briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry stated that this should already be happening. We will continue to advocate until her words are put into a policy that is shared publicly so what happened to Ariis will not happen to others. Below are two stories about the situation and Global News will be featuring Ariis in their 6 pm newscast tonight.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/woman-disability-dies-white-rock-hospital-covid-19-1.5543468>

<https://www.peacearchnews.com/news/hospital-visitor-policy-questioned-after-south-surrey-woman-dies-without-caregiver-family/>

Acquired Brain Injury Services (ABIS)

Today I wanted to highlight the work that is being done at ABIS during the COVID-19 pandemic. ABIS staff members have been providing support in various ways including phone calls and personal meetings using a variety of platforms. They will continue to do this as long as COVID-19 community restrictions are in place. Rod has been working with other SHS staff members on the Online Campus. In the very near future, ABIS participants will be able to get online using a program called Zoom and join in with ABIS (and if they want to, other members of the SHS community) for chats, games, music and fun learning and active opportunities!

What will this look like? 🤖

ABIS itself will start off small with a chat and a cup of tea or coffee, with staff helping anyone (from ABIS) with any technical difficulties who wish to join (if you need a phone call to walk you through the initial setup of Zoom, they'll do that too!). Once we're all familiar with the online campus, ABIS will start adding more content such as Jeopardy quiz hosted by Rod, James and Craig; Wheel of fortune, Catchphrase and Hangman will be added, these games were picked to help with those with aphasia.

What is most important is that we will be working to keep everyone connected. The SHS counsellor is also available for people using ABIS (information below).

Self Advocate Leadership Network (SALN)

As part of their advocacy work, SALN is now creating podcasts and videos about life during the COVID-19 "lock down." Their first podcast, about how people are coping can be listened to by clicking on this link:

<https://uniti4all.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SALN-Podcast-Ep.01.mp3> . They've also created two videos, which can be found midway down the [Uniti4All COVID-19 Information Page](#).

WISE Employment Solutions

Job seekers with WISE Employment Solutions will be receiving a separate update today from Seema Tripathi. Please let her know if you do not get that update.

Important and Ongoing Information

Personal COVID-19 Emergency Plans

The purpose of these documents is to identify areas where support is needed if people get sick or injured during this crisis. It is not critical for Community Service participants to send a copy of the document to SHS—the document is for your use and you should share it (or not) with the people who need to see it. If you identify areas where additional support may be needed, please contact us and we can assist you in figuring out those areas. People supported in home share and staffed residential settings (group homes and Chorus) are asked to return their forms to SHS.

The Personal COVID-19 Emergency Plan documents have been uploaded to the [Uniti4All COVID-19 Information Page](#).

Self-Advocate Work

Semiahmoo House Society and The Semiahmoo Foundation has been supporting self-advocates to have a voice during the COVID-19 pandemic. I wanted to share with you some of the advocacy work that two self-advocate groups that we are associated with have been doing. The Provincial Self-Advocate Leadership Network (SALN) have been creating news releases and sending them to provincial and federal leaders, and the Self-Advocates of Semiahmoo (SAS) have created five public awareness videos about COVID 19. SALN news releases and SAS videos can be found on the [Uniti4All COVID-19 webpage](#) < <https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/> >

Guidance Counselor

Shab Khan, Registered Family Counsellor, MPCC, RPC, will be providing support to people connected to Semiahmoo House Society during the COVID-19 pandemic. The counselling is meant for people SHS supports, including people already on the Guidance Counselor's active list, people on her wait list, family members, and

home share providers. Priority will be given to the people in the most critical situations (environmental, health, or emotional). The support given will be virtual—through phone, email, or secure online platforms. Contact information below:

Guidance Counselor contact information:

Shab Khan, Registered Family Counsellor, M.P.C.C., R.P.C.
Telephone: 604-536-1242 Extension: 276
Email: s.khan@shsbc.ca

Peninsula Child Care (PCC)

PCC re-opened last week for children of staff members who are doing essential work and for the children of health care workers/first responders in South Surrey. Staff members and community health care workers or first responders who need childcare should contact Liz Deschenes (contact information at the end of this letter).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

If someone we support in home share or residential services does get ill with COVID-19, we have N-95 masks, face shields, and other PPE to distribute to people we support, home share providers, and staff members who are at risk. Due to limited supplies, these PPE are reserved for cases of confirmed COVID-19 infection (by Fraser Health) in staffed residential settings (group homes and Chorus) and home share homes only.

Online Support

We are supporting daily (Mon-Fri) coffeehouse meetings through Rec & Leisure Services. These meetings are open to all and are a chance to catch up with each other and see some friendly faces. If you are interested in joining those calls, please contact Anita Bhatti (contact information at end of letter).

If you are using any online social sites or games with your family and friends that you recommend we look into, please send them to the staff members connected to the service you use at the end of this letter.

We will begin to roll out our Online Campus this week. This Campus will feature ways to connect and learn from staff members and experts.

WISE Employment Solutions

The WISE team is figuring out how to do the discovery process with job-seekers online. More information about this will follow next week.

Rec & Leisure

We have cancelled all May and June Rec & Leisure events. Participants will receive refunds for those sessions.

Provincial Financial Support and Resources People with Disabilities

More information on this benefit and others can be found [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance/covid) < <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance/covid> >.

Additional Support

If you need additional support, please contact the relevant person listed on the next page.

SHS Staff Member	Service/Program
Lise Boughen Director of Inclusive Living l.boughen@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 227	Staffed Residential (Group Homes) Chorus Apartment Supports
Gale Cooper Manager, Community Support Network g.cooper@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 231	Home Share Providers
Liz Deschenes Community Services Director e.deschenes@shsbc.ca 604-536-1242 ext. 234	Peninsula Child Care Acquired Brain Injury Services
Brianna Hopaluk Community Services Manager b.hopaluk@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 232	South Campus (formerly PD)
Teresa Randle Transitions Services Supervisor t.randle@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 311	North Campus (formerly Transitions) Focus Group Encore
Anita Bhatti Recreation and Leisure Services Program Coordinator a.bhatti@shsbc.ca 604-536-1242 ext. 255	Rec & Leisure Services
Kristyl Downing Program Coordinator—ABIS k.downing@shsbc.ca 604-592-1006 ext. 230	Acquired Brain Injury Services
Seema Tripathi Employment and Innovative Services Director s.tripathi@shsbc.ca 778 888 5916	WISE Employment Solutions Culinary Arts Program (CULA) SPARK tidyAlot

Sincerely,



Doug Tennant
CEO, Semiahmoo House Society

Resources

While there is much media coverage of the COVID-19 virus it is important to be sure the information is reputable and up to date. Here are five sites that will keep you informed (google the name if this is not an electronic letter):

- [Public Health Authority of Canada](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [BC Ministry of Health](#)
- [Government of Canada Travel Advisories](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

SHS's communications about COVID-19 and our response can be found here:

<https://unit4all.com/covid-19-information/>