



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE 'FACES' REMAIN UNITED AMID PANDEMIC

Uniontown, PA – As the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic continues to cause devastation worldwide, the Fayette County Public Relations Initiative recognizes the need for light and positivity in times of uncertainty and darkness.

That's why we've chosen to honor you, our citizens, as the latest "Face" in our ongoing "Faces and Places" series. The series aims to highlight the many citizens and locations that make Fayette County a wonderful place to live, work and do business.

Among our citizens, there are thousands of workers who have been deemed "essential" and must continue to serve our communities, despite the risks associated with the Coronavirus (COVID-19). They are the first responders, medical personnel, food service workers, grocery store employees and so many others who continue to provide life-sustaining services in the midst of crisis.

Fayette County Commissioner Vince Vicites said our essential employees are making a huge difference in county citizens' lives.

"They are all heroes for risking their own lives to help others in our county," Vicites said. "It's really amazing to see how we are coming together in Fayette County and doing what we need to do to fight the COVID-19 pandemic."

Commissioner Scott Dunn said we "owe an extreme debt of gratitude to our first responders and medical personnel."

"In these tough times, we know we can rely on their dedication and professionalism," Dunn said. "They always go the extra mile. This time is no different."

Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr said that while most who contract COVID-19 will not require hospitalization, we must have care in place for those who need it.

"Of course, our entire medical community is essential, as well as our first responders and emergency service," Lohr said. "They're on the front line, where they run the risk of being exposed and carrying the virus home to their loved ones."

Lohr said utility workers must also be recognized for their essential contributions to our communities.

“This is a challenging time, but it would be far more difficult if we didn’t have working lights and running water,” he said. “Let’s not forget everyone who works at our essential stores. While some items have been in short supply, it’s not overreaching to say that we all need food and water. Kudos to everyone on the front line. These are today’s heroes.”

In addition to those deemed essential, hundreds of Fayette County citizens, local business owners and more are going above and beyond to help their neighbors in need.

Rick Miller, owner of Windows, Doors & More, is donating 1,100 coveralls, 200 shoe covers, 7,800 gloves and 5,250 gowns to assist Fayette County’s medical and mitigation efforts through the Emergency Management Agency.

“This is just one example of everyone working together to help during this time of crisis, and there are many other examples of this type of cooperation happening all over the county right now,” Vicites said.

Other acts of kindness include the Uniontown Salvation Army giving away countless gallons of milk to anyone in need this week; Connellsville Area Community Ministries donating food and other supplies to many grassroots efforts; and local photographers joining a national movement and donating their time and talents to documenting this interesting time in our history.

Some citizens created a Facebook group called “Fayette Area Coronavirus Assistance Needs/Availability,” which is designed to connect residents with resources while so many are quarantined at home and facing financial difficulties. Recently, members of this rapidly growing group rallied around a woman who is expected to give birth to a son next week, donating diapers, clothes and other supplies to ensure she’s prepared during the pandemic.

Sew Special of Uniontown has organized a countywide army of volunteers who are using their sewing abilities to make much-needed medical masks, which the Fayette Chamber of Commerce is distributing to local nursing homes.

Uniontown’s Neubauer’s Flowers and Titlow Tavern and Grille recently teamed up to donate and deliver pasta meals and flowers to those in isolation.

Titlow is also among the many local restaurants offering free takeout lunches to Fayette County students during school closures. Others include Keedy’s Pizzeria, Maywood Grill, Bittersweet Cafe and many more.

In turn, thousands of residents are rallying behind their small business owners, ordering takeout from local restaurants or placing online delivery orders with other businesses. Commissioners Vicites, Dunn and Dave Lohr encourage all citizens to continue those practices.

“Please, if you can, support our local businesses in their time of need,” Dunn said. “These are the people who support our community organizations. Now, you can repay the favor.”

Inspired by our communities’ unbelievable acts of kindness, the Fayette County Public Relations Initiative has officially launched its #UnitedFayette campaign to keep us all connected during this time of unprecedented need and showcase the positive happenings all around us.

Whether you’re standing on the front lines as a nurse, doctor or paramedic; working overtime to manufacture necessary supplies; shopping locally to support our businesses; or simply social distancing

and taking the recommended precautions to mitigate COVID-19's spread in Fayette, we want to hear from you. Share your #UnitedFayette moments with us on the Fayette County PA Facebook page, and consider using the photo examples provided with this release.

"When we remain united, we stay focused together on what we should be doing to slow the spread of this pandemic," Vicites said. "We must also focus on the recommendations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention."

"This country and this county have a long history of pulling together when times get tough. We've pulled together through wars, through economic decline, through illness - and we've always come out stronger on the other side," Lohr said. "This is actually a great time to draw strength from those shared experiences. As you're talking with the seniors in your life who might be feeling particularly isolated right now, get them to talk about their memories of those other difficult times and how people pulled together to see it through."

This week, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf extended his Stay-at-Home Order to the entire state, including Fayette County, restricting citizens' travel and activities indefinitely. Additionally, commissioners declared a proactive state of emergency for Fayette in mid-March.

Monday night, U.S. President Donald Trump approved Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf's major disaster declaration, extending statewide school and nonessential business closures indefinitely. The disaster order allows for federal assistance to supplement state, tribal and local recovery efforts in areas affected by the Coronavirus.

As of Sunday, the state Department of Health reported 27 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Fayette County, as well as one death.

Lohr said that, although "it feels like life as we know it has ground to a halt," we must look for ways to stay connected and find a sense of normalcy.

"We were not created to be solitary creatures. We were created with a need for connectedness and contact with others," he said. "I encourage everyone to get creative to combat feelings of isolation and disconnectedness. Besides staying connected by phone, connect with family and friends by video chat. 'Meet' for a virtual cup of coffee, to play a game, share a meal or pray together. Together, we're better; together, we're stronger; and together, we'll get through this. We are Fayette County strong, and we are the best."

"Maintaining social distancing and proper hand hygiene are how this can be defeated. We must support each other and look out for our elderly and at-risk family, friends and neighbors," Dunn said. "We always come together as a community in times of need like storms, floods and snow. We must be strong for each other again."

For more information on COVID-19, including symptoms, treatments and outbreak updates, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov. For regular updates, visit www.facebook.com/fcema911 or www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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