



October 2020

To our beloved community of children, families, providers, and organizations,

It is with an incredibly heavy heart that we announce the closure of Santosh Wellness. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and necessary safety protocols, we are unable to maintain our services and support our team of talented staff moving forward. If you'd like more information about our closure, please read on for details and for the logistics of our closure.

Santosh Wellness first opened on October 2, 2017 as Kalamazoo's first children's wellness center. Since our initial opening, we have been able to expand our services from just occupational therapy to also include speech therapy, social skills groups, early childhood play and support groups, yoga, community outreach, and infant massage. In our time as a business, we have also employed ten women and served hundreds of children and their families through our services. Our mission has always been to create access to services for the children and families of our community, and we've been able to do just that. In the three years we've been in business, we have come to be known as the gold standard of care by many physicians, counselors, teachers, and parents. We have never taken that for granted and have always worked tirelessly to hire the most capable staff, provide continuing education to our whole team, connect with the community, and take actionable steps to ensure our space was a safe, healing, welcoming space for all.

However, as with many small businesses, we have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As many of you know, we had to temporarily close on March 16, 2020 due to safety concerns of our clients and their families, all at the direction of the Kalamazoo County Health Department and the State of Michigan. Following the Stay Home Stay Safe order put in place by Governor Whitmer and ongoing recommendations from the Kalamazoo County Health Department, we remained closed until May 25, 2020. On that date, we softly re-opened for telehealth services only (no in-person services) until July 6, at which point we further re-opened for some in-person services within our Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy programs only. We have been opened since then for our Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy services.

Since being re-opened, our team has worked incredibly hard to be creative in flexing our service offerings to continue to meet client needs while maintaining safety guidelines. We have offered online groups, expanded our private pay services, offered virtual consultations, and supported

families and schools. We have offered our groups outside and virtually and have continually sought input from the community on ways we can support and help while also ensuring safety. We were even in the process of brainstorming future preschool groups for the winter months for the early childhood population. We also did a lot of work behind the scenes to reduce costs and fight for maximal insurance coverage of our services.

The difficult fact of the matter is we moved into our larger space last September in order to expand and run our groups in addition to our other services. Prior to our closure due to COVID-19 in March 2020, we were exceeding expectations in all our business projections, doing better than we had envisioned with each of our group programs. We were led by passion and excitement and had many more ideas for expanding group programs. We truly were on the precipice of something great. Even after our initial re-opening this summer, we felt stronger than ever and had been able to take what we had learned to bring about more efficiency, improved practices, and more. But with some unanticipated costs this Fall and our ongoing inability to run groups in the manner in which we need due to the necessary safety precautions from COVID-19, we are no longer able to cover our costs to continue our work. With no concrete end in sight with these necessary restrictions, and with colder weather once again increasing safety concerns of indoor activities and limiting outdoor programming, we are now in a position where we are not able to remain open and ensure the financial well-being of the business.

We do not make this decision lightly, as we know this will impact not only our staff and our current clients, but all those who would seek our services in the future. Our entire staff lives and breathes the mission of Santosha Wellness, and we pour ourselves fully into this work. We will greatly miss doing this type of work but find immense comfort in knowing of all the children and families we've had the good fortune of working with over the past three years.

We are uncertain of what our future holds but are trusting in the process and allowing time to hold the answers. While we are closing our physical space, the brand of Santosha Wellness will remain alive. We will continue to share resources on our website and on our Facebook page, and in the future, we will explore options for other services we can provide without a physical building. We are trusting and hoping that in the future, we will be in a place to consider re-opening and once again serving the community with our therapy and wellness services. We encourage everyone to follow us on our website and Facebook page to stay up to date as time goes on.

I, Rebecca - owner of Santosha Wellness, am currently pregnant with my second child (*such a celebration during this difficult time!*) and am due in April 2021. So, all programs will be fully paused until at least next Fall, at which point I may explore offering some of our classes (ie. Play & Grow, Infant Massage) around the community. Beyond that, I don't have answers, but I do have faith that goodness awaits. While our physical space is closing, my passion and vision for this center is only strengthened.

Logistically, please read below for our anticipated timeline as we move forward:

- Last day of service and time in our space (including phones): November 25, 2020
- Documentation Finalized / Given to Families: December 11, 2020
- *Our phones and physical space will not be available after November 25, 2020*

Please also know that if you donated to our scholarship fund, 100% of the proceeds were put toward providing weeks of Occupational and Speech Therapy for one of our clients who otherwise would not have been able to receive care. So we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the kind, generous donations, and want to ensure everyone that the funds were all utilized and graciously accepted.

Our therapists will be working with all current families on a transition plan over the coming weeks. Thought this is unexpected and comes with much uncertainty, we will do our best to provide the most information, structure, and closure for all children and their families. We ask for patience, understanding, and grace as our staff navigates the grief that comes along with an unexpected transition such as this.

If you are a current client and have questions about the future, please contact your therapist directly.

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- Cary: cary@santoshawellnesskzoo.com
- Liz: liz@santoshawellnesskzoo.com

If you are another provider in the community, please know that we will no longer be accepting referrals for services or scheduling new appointments. If you'd like a list of our recommended providers for Occupational and Speech Therapy in the community, please contact our office and we'll be happy to provide that! If you'd like to contact Rebecca directly to stay up to date on our future plans, you may email her at rebecca@santoshawellnesskzoo.com or call at 616-834-0798.

Thank you again for your understanding and for reading through this heartfelt letter. We value each and every one of you and will never forget the amazing memories over the past three years.

With sincere love and gratitude,

Rebecca Hernandez, Owner of Santosha Wellness
on behalf of the entire Santosha Wellness Team
Stacy, Lori, Kristen, Palin, Cary, Liz, Sarah, and Laura

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