Our mission is the touchstone for every program and project we do. The Village Cleaning Service provides work opportunities for those with disabilities. The Village Bakery allows those with disabilities to interact with the public and receive marketable job skills that increase their independence.

Our workshop provides various job opportunities that promote good work skills and provide a sense of purpose and worth.

Our developmental training program serves adults with more profound disabilities, letting them interact with others and build communities of trust and friendship.

Since mid-March, when the state ordered all Day Training Centers, including the Village, to suspend services, the Village has had to put its mission on hold. Emotionally, this has been a struggle.

Yes, our staff still reports to work. But the work they do has shifted from serving our men and women to doing much of the production work that was intended for them.

Our Village Bakery has remained open (on a limited scale) but the staff has turned from mentoring those with disabilities to simply doing their jobs. Even our cleaning service has had to suspend taking our men and women with them to various cleaning sites.

Activities designed to increase social interaction – like our Bike Club, Library Club, craft projects at nursing homes – have all fallen silent.

To be clear, our mission hasn’t completely stopped. We work very hard to stay in contact with those we serve.

Every month we deliver care packages to their homes. They aren’t extravagant – puzzle books, colored pencils or crayons, nail polish, maybe some baked goods; each package is tailored to the unique interests of the recipient.

We send weekly letters updating our folks on how the staff is getting along this summer and telling them how much they are missed.

We have regular Zoom meetings where our people can tour the Village, talk with each other and staff. We’ve even offered on-line painting, cooking, and exercise classes!

Our volunteers have stepped forward to help with grounds keeping, notes of encouragement, masks, and generous donations.

Even so, as our ability to carry out our mission suffers, so do our people. When one person was asked what they miss about the Village, he replied, “I miss everything.” Another man, already thin, has lost even more weight – our hot lunch program was his only reliable meal of the day. Many other families have reported that their sons and daughters have gained weight, having no routine that keeps them occupied and active. Another man comes to the Village regularly just so he can take a hot shower.

For the staff at the Village, the work we do isn’t just an occupation, it’s a passion. A passion made possible through our mission. I firmly believe that the same can be said for the people we serve.

As our mission suffers under the pressures of this pandemic, so do we all.

I look forward to the day we can start resuming services. To hear laughter in the workshop, small talk in the hallways, joking between our volunteers and our folks – these are the things we all long for.

In the meantime, we move forward as best we can.

HOPE of Ogle County served 131 Adult and 32 child client this quarter. 10 adult and 22 child clients were provided shelter services in the 4th quarter. HOPE continues to provide its 24/7 shelter services, 24/7 hotline, crisis counseling, appointment counseling remotely and in person, court advocacy, outreach services in Polo, and all services are provided in English and in Spanish. We served 25 clients with rental assistance and 5 clients that had been financially impacted by COVID-19 with food/supply assistance in this quarter.

HOPE of Ogle County: Contact: Ruth Carter 815.562.4323
This quarter involved a continued focus on service provision in the face of the Coronavirus. The situation remained fluid and many adjustments were made on a day by day basis. However, overall, by the beginning of April, the agency had a solid routine for providing services over the phone and using virtual visits. Dr. Colston joined our team during this time providing psychiatric services via telehealth. Part of our response saw several employees making homemade masks for each other and our clients.

Our residential sites and recovery home managed to stay healthy and we are moving forward with opening the Amboy recovery home despite COVID challenges with a July 6 open date. At open we have a waiting list for spots in the Women’s Recovery Home. During this time as we found more creative ways to serve clients, we looked to the future and planned to apply what we learned and looked at continuing in part or in whole different ways to provide services after this initial crisis is over. We know that substance use and domestic violence programs are better attended virtually (in some of our region anyway) and responding to hospitals virtually actually works quite well by cutting down our response time and decreasing the burden on our staff to provide this service. We have stayed in contact with our Ogle partners to offer support where needed and we were supported by our partners.

Serenity Hospice has been busy dealing with the pandemic and all the related challenges. We have many guidelines to follow as a healthcare facility, and we also have many guidelines to follow in our two resale shops which were allowed to re-open recently.

Our staff and volunteers have also created many new and unique ways to serve during this time such as a grocery delivery program, pet therapy visits outside facility windows, and comfort bread dropped off on the porches of our patients. A huge new addition for Serenity’s bereavement department has been the addition of online groups and online individual sessions. All of our regularly scheduled groups now have an online option. Serenity is committed to continual COVID-19 training as new information becomes available.

In the last quarter, RSAC staff has continued to provide services to survivors through phone counseling, crisis intervention and medical/legal advocacy. The agency has recently started a slow re-open of services in the office, following CDC guidelines for the safety of both clients and staff.

Be a part of RSAC’s virtual fundraiser, “Dispelling the Darkness.” Send a message of hope to survivors while helping support services in the community.

For more information check out the website at rockfordsexualassault.org or find us on Facebook. RSAC crisis line 815-636-9811 (24 hrs.) All services are free and confidential.

The Prevention programs at LSSI continue to find creative ways to remain involved in the community. Project LEAD spent much of the Spring engaging in activities to Promote Prevention Week. The workers partnered with many area businesses to place stickers on smoothies, pizza boxes, lunch bags, and other items that would promote awareness towards the dangers of substance abuse. The program is also working on hiring additional Prevention Specialists due to an approved expansion from the Illinois Department of Human Services. One of these workers will be dedicated to offering assistance with activities in Ogle County, while another will launch Project LEAD in Carroll County.

Youth WORKS, the violence prevention program, will also be hiring an additional worker to assist with the ever-growing demand for services, including the ‘Too Good for Violence’ curriculum. Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS), which serves at-risk, run away, and lockout youth on an emergency basis, has also continued to make adjustments in the way they serve youth. The program is responding to crisis calls, but staff have been advised to put every effort into resolving the issue without physical contact for the safety of everyone involved.

When an in person response is needed, a plan for safety including personal protective equipment and social distancing is established. CCBYS also continues to provide counseling services to adolescents and their families through confidential platforms such as “Zoom.” These services continue to be offered to promote healthy relationships and placement stability within the home environment. LSSI continues to support the Ogle County community within the guidelines established by our state and our organization. We hope for health, wellness, and safety as we continue to navigate the challenges of Covid-19.

Easterseals Family Support Services have received generous grant money through Rock River Valley United Way and the Rochelle Community Foundation. With this money we have purchased school supplies, sensory items, paid utility bills, purchased PPE, and purchased gift cards for groceries.

So far we have been able to help 11 families in Ogle County through this difficult time. We were also able to secure a donation of an adapted stroller for another family for their child who needed help with mobility.