

# Opinions

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## Hardwick delivers personal protective equipment to seniors

Erie County Legislator Kevin Hardwick delivered hundreds of masks to senior citizens and caretakers in need last week at Marigold Senior Apartments and Islandview Assisted Living Facility. This initiative was in collaboration with Erie County's Department of Senior Services who identified the number of residents and front line staff members at each facility across the county to ensure an ample number of supplies were allotted.

The elderly and those living in close proximity are especially vulnerable to the spread of coronavirus and the negative

effects of COVID-19. In Erie County and nationally, the vast majority of COVID-19 fatalities are among those over 60. Providing masks to seniors citizens offers added protection for the most at-risk members of our communities.

Hardwick said, "Wearing a face mask is a simple way to make everyone safer. We know that it's a common-sense precaution that lowers the risk of both spreading and contracting coronavirus. Limiting community spread is the only path to reopening our economy safely, and I hope everyone takes their personal obligation to their neighbors and local businesses seriously. I'm grateful to the Erie County Department of Senior Services for making these masks available for community distribution."

Anyone in need of a PPE can contact the Erie County coronavirus hotline at 858-2929 for directions regarding community distribution county-wide. For more information on services available, visit [www.erie.gov/coronavirus](http://www.erie.gov/coronavirus).

### Letters Policy

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## This is my little story of hope ...

We are in the first pages of a 20-year story. The business we created is a David and Goliath story. We spent the winter planning an amazing "coming out" year: we were so full of excitement and ideas. We were going to make a difference on Grand Island and bring life to a hidden gem.

Then the world stopped turning. Just four weeks ago, all my staff, including myself, were laid off. My infinite optimism failed me when I accepted that all my dreams would crumble, and I would probably lose substantial financial investments, and my business, because of COVID-19. Not only did my well-managed long-term depression flare up, but I was struggling with anxiety for the first time ever. Worse, I felt guilty. Here I am worried about my business when others are worried about their lives. Truly no comparison, but you still feel what you feel - no matter what the struggle. I have no doubt many know exactly what I am talking about.

Put all politics aside. This isn't about how the world handled the pandemic or how the governor is handling how to restart our economy. Poignantly, it's about hope.

I have had a lot of loss in my life, but never had I lost hope. Probably why I am usually an incurable optimist and could always find a silver lining (much to my friends' annoyance sometimes). But about a month ago, I lost hope. People are dying. People are walking away from businesses they've poured their life and soul and money and sweat into. The division among

friends and family created by the politics of this is ruining relationships. The frustration felt by everyone feels insurmountable. People are forced to mourn their loved one's death without saying good-bye - and often in isolation. Kids and athletes are missing out on milestones in their lives. The life loss due to elective surgeries being cancelled for cancer patients, suicides of people who've lost it all, others simply afraid to go to hospital when they should have is incomprehensible. The anger we feel about all the lunacy and unfairness in life is coming to a head. Not to mention how awful it is to wear those darned masks and not be able to smile at each other ...

But, we have found new heroes among us and seen beautiful human compassion, and some families have found their core again and we realize that it isn't the rich CEOs and business owners who make our world turn - it is the hospital workers and the servers and the cleaners and the manufacturers and the scientists and the truck drivers and the cashiers and other humble everyday people! If anything good comes out of this, it will be that realization.

Here's where my little slice of hope came back and I hope others have similar stories ...

With literally days notice, and everyone laid off, we were told we could open the golf course and the marinas, and with a skeleton crew we made that happen. It isn't the start to the season that I had planned for, though! The restrictions have our hands tied and the

regulations are making us jump through hoops and not being able to open everything is making us work on a shoe-string budget, but there is a glimmer of hope!

We anticipate we will be able to open our new outdoor restaurant this season, albeit, with a lot different layout than we'd planned, but there is hope. That means we will be able to hire our own chef who will create incredible menus for the new restaurant and The Falconwood that will rival anywhere in Western New York. That gives me great hope (and excitement)!

We hired a food and beverage manager and a guest services manager to help us improve customer service and streamline operations, and we almost had to let them go, but the PPP loan got approved in the nick of time, and now there is hope.

We had to cancel beautiful weddings and celebrations, but those can still happen when life gets back to whatever our new normal is going to be. That gives me hope.

My staff don't have uniforms or name tags, they aren't perfectly trained like I had planned, we have a skeleton staff so the COO is helping put in docks instead of running numbers and I'm struggling my way through administrative stuff that has to get done - but we are all healthy and capable and there is hope that we will make all our plans happen - eventually.

So, when you are having lunch at a local restaurant (when they are allowed to open) or golfing at Beaver Island Golf Course or getting your hair cut or awkwardly meeting up with friends and family and not knowing whether to hug or not - just be patient and kind when your experiences aren't the same as they used to be. We are all reacting and dealing with this differently, internally and outwardly. Just because your way is different from mine doesn't mean it is wrong.

And remember that all we have is hope right now - and not much else!

Stay healthy. Stay sane. Shop local. And most important: be KIND!

Cyndy Montana

Guest Services Provider  
Beaver Island State Park and Big Six Mile Creek Marina

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*Our Mission Statement:*  
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