



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dawning Family Services Staff Continue to Help Vulnerable Families Who Are Homeless or At Risk of Homelessness During COVID-19 Outbreak

TAMPA, Fla. — Due to the progression of COVID-19, and in the best interest of our clients, staff, and community, all business operations will be conducted remotely beginning Monday, March 23, 2020.

We have fully communicated with our emergency shelter clients, and those who participate in our post-shelter support services regarding personal hygiene and social distancing, as well as provided detailed information for accessing food/nutrition and academic resources throughout these challenging times.

During normal business hours, our staff will continue to be available via telephone and/or email to ensure that client needs, such as housing maintenance, academic support, parenting support, food supply, medications, diapers, and formula are met. Staff is accessible via our 24/7 emergency telephone number that is posted in every emergency shelter unit and provided to post-shelter clients. Staff will take every precaution available if the need for face-to-face interactions occurs.

“As we address this global pandemic, please keep in mind the families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in our own community. Even before COVID-19, there were simply not enough resources to adequately help families in need,” said Patricia Langford, Chief Executive Officer. “We anticipate there will be even more families experiencing homelessness as parents lose their jobs or have their work hours reduced, as childcare and schools continue to be closed, and/or as medical needs increase in the weeks and months to come. Specific needs will vary, but one constant is that families will need our help and support more than ever.”

Dawning Family Service’s low-barrier emergency shelter for families with minor children is currently at capacity and will not go forward with shelter intakes unless it can ensure that a single family is able to occupy a unit on its own. This is to allow for appropriate social distancing, and if necessary, isolation and quarantine. There are no reported diagnosed cases of COVID-19 among staff or clients currently.

Langford adds, “Join me in thanking [Dawning] staff for their commitment, flexibility, creativity, caring, and professionalism. I appreciate all they are doing to serve homeless families in Hillsborough County while emphasizing the safety and well-being of all. I firmly believe that our community can understand the need for these temporary and drastic measures. Our work continues, just in a different format. Thank you for your continued support of the families and mission of Dawning Family Services.”

About Dawning Family Services

Dawning Family Services, formerly Alpha House of Tampa, has served homeless families since 1981. Until recently, we offered our shelter and support services to pregnant women and women alone with babies and toddlers. We estimate that we provided shelter to over 3,000 women and thousands of children. In 2018, the board of directors expanded our mission to reflect the agency's desire to address the growing need we are witnessing to serve families beyond our historic population. Dawning Family Services now serves homeless families with minor children.

For more information about Dawning Family Services, visit www.dawningfamilyservices.org or email info@dawningfs.org.