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CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Office of the County Executive
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April 10, 2020

Dear Cecil County Citizens,

I wanted to take some time today, to share with you some thoughts that have been circulating in my mind...

Typically, as we head into this holiday weekend, we would be celebrating renewal, preparing for religious Passover, donning our nicest attire for church services, observing the beauty and regrowth of spring, coloring eggs for search-and-find hunts for our children, and preparing our menus for Easter Sunday dinner to entertain large gatherings of close friends and family.

Instead, the coronavirus has put an incredible damper on normally happier times, forcing us to participate in virtual church services from our living rooms, perhaps dressed in our pajamas, prepare more intimate meals, and dismiss many of our normal springtime events all with the intent to help 'flatten the curve' and ultimately eliminate this dreadful pandemic.

I do not want to discuss statistics, confirmed COVID-19 cases, budget numbers or even economic impact. We have all spent endless hours stressing over those things, and, assuredly, those issues will still be there going forward into the next few weeks, or perhaps months.

Today, and this weekend, I suggest that we try to focus on the positive aspects of our lives that are happening here in our community. I have witnessed the coming together of kindness and caring in Cecil County like I have never seen before. I am encouraged by the many volunteers who have offered to deliver meals for our children and homeless, make masks and hand sanitizer for our first responders, and donate unused, personal protective gear to those in need. We are so blessed to have such generous citizens in Cecil County.

I want to personally thank everyone who is working on the frontlines, who are coming face-to-face with this disease, risking their own health, for the safety and well-being of others. All levels of law enforcement, fire fighters, paramedics and EMTs, nurses and hospital staff, pharmacists, community services and aging and disability team members, bus drivers, grocery store workers and more -- all essential employees who continue to provide the services that, before this pandemic, we all took for granted. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

I acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of all of our private sector businesses both large and small for their creative efforts to share resources and ease the burden. Many of the businesses operating under the essential definition are dealing with the same stresses and emotions through their employees and the customers they serve. We should all continue to support our local businesses as much as possible.

I applaud our schools, college and libraries for going above and beyond to ensure that learning doesn't cease. I am in awe of the creativity of our educators and administrators, librarians and staff, who have gathered forces

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and brainstormed ideas to continue to provide educational curriculum and non-traditional learning activities, for not only our school-aged children, but for the entire community.

During times of crisis, it is important to maintain as much normalcy as possible to protect the mental health of our families, friends and ourselves. Our children are feeling the stress of this unprecedented predicament even though they may not demonstrate it overtly.

Being a doctor of veterinarian medicine by trade for more than 35 years, I decided to dig deep into my old medical books last evening, and I discovered something quite uplifting. It appears that rabbits are resistant to the Novel Coronavirus. I deem this as most positive news! Therefore, this morning, I signed an Executive Order, declaring the work of the Easter Bunny to be an essential service in Cecil County. While, the Easter Bunny must still comply with social distancing guidelines and not participate in public gatherings or spaces, the children of Cecil County may still receive, by the magic of imagination, those deliciously chocolate treats and tasty, sweet snacks.

Please continue to safeguard yourselves and your families by practicing social distancing, washing and sanitizing your hands, coughing into your elbow. From the beginning, we have been in this together and, together, we will see this through to the end.

Have a blessed Easter weekend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan J. McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
Cecil County Executive