



# Town of Hilton Head Island TOWN MANAGER UPDATE

## An Update from Town Manager Steve Riley 11/9/2020

Good afternoon Hilton Head Islanders and Guests,

Here's an update on what's happening around Town:

### **Six Local Non-Profits Receive HUD Grants for COVID-19 Help**

Six more of our local nonprofits are sharing \$125,000 in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assist low- to moderate-income families affected by COVID-19. This is part of the \$378,000 the Town of Hilton Head Island received from HUD in August specifically to address community needs resulting from COVID-19. We partnered with Community Foundation of the Lowcountry to award funds to nonprofit organizations so they can help Hilton Head Island residents with rent, utilities, mortgage, food, transportation, childcare, education and other needs.

In the first round of grants, eight organizations shared \$154,000. The six organizations in our second round of grant awards include:

- **Hilton Head Regional Habitat for Humanity:** \$25,000 for emergency housing assistance.
- **Second Helpings:** \$12,000 for food.
- **Native Island Business & Community Affairs Association:** \$25,000 for emergency housing assistance.
- **Mental Health America of Beaufort/Jasper:** \$25,000 for group therapy services.
- **Sandalwood Community Food Pantry:** \$13,500 for food.
- **The Literacy Center:** \$25,000 for Distance Learning & Workforce Certification Programs.

If you live on Hilton Head Island and are in need of help that these agencies offer, please reach out to them regarding program qualifications or requirements.

### **Grants Available for Island Non-Profit Organizations**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently awarded the Town an additional \$391,875 for COVID-19 relief. We have partnered with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry to distribute these funds to non-profit agencies serving low to moderate-income residents on Hilton Head Island. Community Foundation of the Lowcountry is now accepting grant applications up to \$75,000 for projects or programs that meet HUD criteria. The application deadline is November 16, 2020. Grants must be submitted through CFL's online portal at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=lowcountry>. Please contact Community Foundation at 843-681-9100 if you have questions or need help with your application.



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## **Counting Birds as Part of Beach Re-nourishment**

Not only is our beach a birthing ground for sea turtles, but it is a migratory stop for shorebirds listed under the Endangered Species Act. Two of these shorebirds, Piping Plovers and Red Knots, migrate to our island to spend the winter. This winter will be the fifth and last year of the monitoring program done by the Town for these species, as required by our 2015 beach re-nourishment permit. Last week, we started our shorebird population surveys, which will continue through the end of November. These surveys tell us how many wintering piping plovers and red knots we have. Following the initial population surveys, our staff conducts roosting surveys three times a month from December through March to document what banded birds are here and what parts of the beach they are using. Data from the surveys are sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to aid in the conservation of these birds.

Over the years, we averaged 15-18 Piping Plovers per season that use our beaches all winter, and have had birds banded in North Dakota, South Dakota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and the Bahamas migrating through or residing on the Island. The use of our beaches by Red Knots is much more sporadic, with no birds being seen in some years and large groups in other years. We ask that you help these birds and all other shorebirds by giving them their space on the beach and observing or photographing them from a distance. They need all their energy to migrate home and breed in the spring.

## **Lantern Parade-in-Place**

Our thanks to everyone who came out to enjoy our 2<sup>nd</sup> Lantern Parade event over the past weekend. It was just an awesome spectacle of lights in neighborhoods and other locations around the Island, and I am certain brought lots of joy. We had 600 vehicles that came through and we estimate that to represent about 2000 persons. Thank you to our sponsors and community partners Breeze Trolley, Beach House Resort, Coastal Discovery Museum and Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park. Thank you to all of the volunteers who supported the logistics, the Town's Fire & Rescue staff and the Office of Cultural Affairs. Thank lead artist Chantelle Rytter and her Krewe for sharing their talent and glowing puppets with our Island. We also want to thank:

- Pockets Full of Sunshine, which brought a large group of members with their lanterns out to greet people as they were coming and going on Friday night.
- Hilton Head Island Middle School, which hosted their own drive-thru parade of hundreds of student lanterns on Thursday night and collected almost half a ton of food for Deep Well.
- The residents of Oyster Shell Lane in Hilton Head Plantation and Water Walk apartments, which had the highest number of families and individuals displaying



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lanterns. They each were rewarded with a mini, masked pop-up parade through their neighborhood.

This was a really, really cool parade, and we look forward to next year's events.

### **Town Administrative Offices Closed on November 11**

All Town administrative offices will be closed on Wednesday, November 11, in observance of Veterans Day.

### **Join Us This Thursday for Open Park Day**

We will be hosting our second Open Park Day for our Parks + Recreation Master Plan. Come out to Shelter Cove Community Park on Thursday, November 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can check out our park maps and have a chat with our staff about the recommendations and action items included in the master plan. Because your safety is important to us, we'll adhere to social distancing and other guidelines to limit the spread of COVID-19 while we gather public input. If you can't make it to Open Park Day, then share your thoughts on our survey. It is available through November 16 on Open Town Hall at <https://www.opentownhall.com/9830>

### **COVID-19 Tests: Be Positive You're Negative**

DHEC urges South Carolinians to be positive you're negative by routinely getting tested if you're regularly out in the community. It's especially important to get tested before and after holiday traveling or events.

Free COVID-19 drive-thru testing is available 8 a.m. to noon, Monday thru Friday at Hilton Head Hospital, 25 Hospital Center Blvd. No appointment or doctor's order is needed. **The hospital only offers nasal testing.**

DHEC-sponsored testing is also free, doesn't require insurance, and results are available within 72 hours. DHEC's testing options have expanded to include shallow nasal testing, an oral swab, or a saliva test at different locations.

Visit [scdhec.gov/findatest](https://scdhec.gov/findatest) for a testing location near you. You will need to contact the individual sites to see if they offer the different testing options.

### **COVID-19 Holiday Tips**

As you prepare for the holidays, we encourage you to visit the websites for the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control ([scdhec.gov](https://scdhec.gov)) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)). Both of these agencies have a list of tips to help you plan for a safe holiday season.