



PROCLAMATION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE FRONT LINE APPRECIATION GROUP (FLAG) OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD AS "VILLAGER OF THE MONTH" FOR SEPTEMBER 2020 FOR THEIR WORK IN THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE

Whereas, Christopher Reeve once said, “A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles”; and

Whereas, on February 29, 2020, the United States announced its first reported Coronavirus (COVID-19) death near Seattle, Washington; this pandemic had already begun ravaging countries worldwide; and

Whereas, by mid-March, the United States began taking a cautious approach to this relatively unknown disease when the number of confirmed cases rose to 7,000 with 97 deaths nationwide with 427 confirmed cases and 6 deaths within the state of NJ, and 2 of those deaths being in Essex County; and

Whereas, seeing the intense growth of COVID-19 in the tri-state area, the State of New Jersey began to take action on March 16, 2020, to close its schools, non-essential businesses which included but were not limited to retail, recreation, theaters, and gyms; and

Whereas, the State of New Jersey also established a curfew and limited restaurants to move from dine-in services to take out only; and limiting essential businesses to remain open which included anything related to public health, safety, and welfare; and

Whereas, the United States and its populace had never experienced this type of epidemic in our lifetime which quickly created turmoil for millions of Americans which included many Americans to be unemployed, have severe food insecurity, concerns over housing, created emotional distress, brought uncertainty to our businesses and overwhelmed our hospitals; and

Whereas, many individual people and organizations stepped up to become heroes within our community for frontline workers and residents and to which the Community Relations Committee has selected several of those organizations as our COVID Heroes; and

Whereas, South Orange residents Ava Martin, Barbara Santoro, and Roshni Patel recognized a need to support 2 heavily affected industries during the COVID-19 pandemic by the adoption of the Front Line Appreciation Group (FLAG) within South Orange and Maplewood; and

Whereas, FLAG of SOMA utilized local restaurants and small businesses from South Orange and Maplewood to purchase meals to be delivered to front line workers at local hospitals; and

Whereas, FLAG of SOMA has raised more than \$89,728 to use toward this endeavor; and

Whereas, FLAG of SOMA collaborated with the South Orange Village Center Alliance (SOVCA) to keep up to date with restaurants and small businesses that were opened and worked with community volunteers to schedule and deliver meals; and

Whereas, FLAG of SOMA reached out to local hospitals to find out who was in need as during the height of the crisis, physicians’ caseloads were doubled and nurse-to-patient ratios went up significantly; and

Whereas, hospital workers were deemed essential and were in the frontline of the pandemic and FLAG of SOMA created a way to make them feel appreciated by providing meals, cookies and thank you notes; and

Whereas, FLAG of SOMA worked with 15 businesses who provided meals and generously provided extras to help the front line workers; and

Whereas, while FLAG of SOMA was mainly focused on meals, they took part to bring smiles to the face of 8 nurses, pharmacists and social workers by coordinating wedding dress deliveries that were donated by Kleinfeld's Bridal; and

Whereas, as of September 13, 2020, the number of COVID-19 cases in the United States surpassed 6.5 million positive cases and 194,000 deaths with 16,072 of those being from the State of New Jersey, it is a great reflection of our community to witness the caring and selfless acts from our residents and businesses.

Whereas, providing support by the community to our local restaurants and small businesses that not only helped to creatively assist them but gave them the opportunity to give back; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SHEENA C. COLLUM, Village President of the Township of South Orange Village, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, on behalf of the residents of the Township of South Orange Village, the Village Board of Trustees, and myself, hereby do recognize and commend Ava Martin, Barbara Santoro, and Roshni Patel and the FLAG of SOMA as "Villager of the Month" for September 2020 for the work they have done, and their wonderful and heroic contributions in the Township of South Orange Village.

Dated this 14th day of September, 2020

HONORABLE SHEENA C. COLLUM
Village President of the
Township of South Orange Village