



**LA PORTE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**Sheila Matias,  
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Member**

**From the desk of Commissioner Sheila Matias**

Dear LaPorte County community:

Life has changed for all of us over the last few weeks. We are facing a situation that is new and full of uncertainty. Our daily routines have been upended- and even the simple act of shaking hands or going out to eat is no longer simple. We are facing challenging times; we feel anxious and concerned for our family, for our neighbors, our valued first responders, our health care heroes and our community.

Now is the time to pull together. We are fortunate that our current count in Indiana is lower than many other states, but the reality is that the numbers across the country are growing. Now is the time for each of us to do what we can do to limit the advance of this virus in our county. Together as a community, we need to respond with sensible precautions for our families and concern for our neighbors. To do this, we need your help.

As testing becomes more available in our county, positive test results seem likely to occur if our county follows the pattern occurring across our country. With your help, we can help slow the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Limiting community spread by "social distancing", that is, staying apart whenever possible, is the tool each of us can use to reduce the danger to our community. What we do now in this moment matters.

Your leaders have been meeting, making decisions, strategizing, and fine-tuning our emergency response plans for weeks now; state and federal officials are taking steps to slow the spread of the virus in order to protect our most vulnerable populations. We have amazing people across this county who are working tirelessly on your behalf ; we are so appreciative for our first responders, 911 Dispatch, IT, Emergency Management, health department, law enforcement, teams at our schools and governmental units, health care workers-the list goes on and on.

Now, we need your help.

Here's how you can be an active part of our community response:

- Important! Stay home if you're not feeling well. This is critical for your own health and for everyone else in this community. Exercise good old-fashioned common sense. Stay home when you are sick!
- Limit your exposure and your family's exposure. Avoid all non-essential travel and avoid any non-essential gatherings.
- Stay home as much as you can. Please continue to work with your employer and colleagues at work to safely get through this challenging time.
- Stay informed. Go to <http://www.laporteco.in.gov> for information, and updates. If community members wish to post important information, please send to [smatias@laportecounty.org](mailto:smatias@laportecounty.org)
- Increase your hygiene practices. It really works. Two clear examples: "Social distancing" (keeping 6 feet between yourself and others); handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds/sanitizing

- Go to the grocery store when necessary and stay apart from others. Wash your hands well before you go and after you return. If you have an elderly or ill neighbor, shop for them and leave the groceries outside their door. Buy what you need but leave some for your neighbors. Grocery stores and pharmacies continue to be restocked.
- The elderly and medically fragile should ask a friend or family member to shop for them. Please stay home if you are older or have a compromised immune system.
- Call your doctor if you feel sick. Do not go to the emergency room if you think you have symptoms. A phone call to a doctor is the first step.

If you would like to help further, consider donating to a local food pantry, the United Way, Salvation Army, Unity Foundation and other non-profits who are stepping up to serve and are needed now more than ever. Please go to the county web site for information on where you can donate. [www.laporteco.in.gov](http://www.laporteco.in.gov)

Parents: You have stepped up to become your child's teacher and you have our heartfelt admiration. Here are some learning sites which may be helpful:

<https://www.gonoodle.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/>

<https://www.brainpop.com/>

<https://mysteryscience.com/>

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8NFs-VWUusyug4zaYVVMgCQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/kidsvslife>

Younger people: You can get this virus. The data is clear that while the virus may not be fatal to a younger person, you can become ill or you can transmit the virus to a person who is vulnerable like your grandmother or your parents. Please listen. *This is not life as usual and you are not invincible.*

As a county of communities large and small, we are at our best during challenging times. We know how to work together, to do what is required of us and to look out for one another. Communities across our beautiful county rally together to support our boys and girls in their efforts to win games on the court or on the field - and it's that same incredible community spirit that is needed in this fight against Covid-19. There is no need to panic but there is a need to be smart.

Let's take care of ourselves-get some exercise, take in some fresh air in solitude, read a book, enjoy a nap or finish up a project. Lonely? Pick up the phone and call a friend, reconnect with a relative by text, email, phone or Facetime, be a pen pal to your grandkids, dig out those old board games or try a new recipe.

This is the time to show grace as much—and as often--as we are able. We need you to be safe so that everyone can be safe.

Thank you for your kindness and your efforts. We're in this together. We need each other now more than ever.

Stay well. Be healthy.

Sheila

Sheila Matias, President, LaPorte County Commission

