

Key Notes



Employee
Kudos
Events
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September 2021

Remember September...



Saturday, September 11th is the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks that took the lives of 2,977 innocent people in New York City, Arlington, VA and Shanksville, PA. Victims hailed from 78 different countries and included business professionals, first responders, students, hospitality workers, performers, tourists, artists and others going about their daily lives. Each victim was someone’s son or daughter, brother or sister, spouse, parent, grandparent, neighbor, grandchild,

friend, partner or colleague. All of them were deeply loved and are deeply missed.

The U.S.’s ensuing *Operation Enduring Freedom*, as well as the way the *Operation* was recently concluded, have elicited strong opinions – both pro and con. Some of you may be too young to remember that day or realize the ways in and degree to which it forever changed us. Regardless of your views about the U.S.’s response to the 9/11 attacks, you are encouraged on this somber anniversary to honor the memories of the victims and keep their loved ones in your thoughts.

To learn more, visit www.911memorial.org

Those who perished on September 11, 2001 were not the only victims of the attacks. First responders (especially fire and police personnel) and others who spent days, weeks, or months at Ground Zero assisting in rescue and recovery operations continue to suffer from chronic medical and mental health complications. “Toxic dust” (comprised of over 2,500 known contaminants) from the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York City floated in the air for up to 5 months following the attack. Responders and residents who inhaled that dust are being diagnosed with rare and aggressive forms of cancer, pulmonary fibrosis and other serious lung diseases. In addition, many suffer from long-term psychologic effects including clinical depression, anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Please keep these brave individuals in your thoughts as well.



Want to help? The following are well-regarded charities that assist 9/11 survivors and families: [FDNY and New York City Police Foundations](#), [Scholarship America Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund](#), [Stephen Stiller Tunnels to Towers Foundation](#), [Tuesday’s Children](#), [USA Cares, Inc.](#) and the [Wounded Warrior Project](#).

Sincere Appreciation and Gratitude

To say that these past 18 months have been difficult would be an enormous understatement. The work you do with “our” youth and families is challenging in the best of times, let alone during an extended global pandemic and significant staffing shortage (please see article about increased recruitment efforts).

Since the start of the pandemic, Key has expressed its gratitude to our amazing staff with several one-time bonuses, both temporary and permanent pay increases, “premium pay” for working extra shifts and other financial incentives. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to express the **immense gratitude** that Key’s Board of Directors and Administrative and Management Teams has for each of you and your extraordinary commitment to the children, youth and families you serve. Despite the additional difficulties of the past year and a half, you have continued to provide the highest quality vital services that truly have a positive impact on Key’s clients and families.

Many thanks,
Bill Lyttle, President



Babies and Birthdays and Weddings, Oh My!



Insurance benefit plans are subject to many rules and regulations, one of which governs when you can enroll in or make changes to medical and dental insurance plans if you don’t do so when you are first eligible. If you don’t sign up for Key’s health and/or dental insurance when you are first hired (or increase your hours to 30 or more per week), you can enroll later annually during the June Open Enrollment period or within 30 days of a “qualifying event,” such as:

- Birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care
- Marriage or Divorce/Separate Support declaration
- Losing eligibility for other insurance – such as becoming unable to remain on a parent’s plan

In addition, you must enroll in or change your health and/or dental coverage **within 30 calendar days** of the qualifying event! Getting married on October 16th and want to add your spouse to Key’s medical insurance plan? Do so by November 15th! If your 26th birthday (the age to which health insurance plans have to cover you as a dependent) is September 28th, you have to enroll in Key’s health/dental plans no later than October 28th. New baby born on November 4th? Be sure to add the little one by December 4th and so on!

If you miss that 30-day “window,” you are stuck until you either have another “qualifying event” or the following June!

Best Wishes!

Northeast *Regional Director Sue Spitale* retired from Key on September 2nd after 28 years with Key. Sue was originally hired as the Program Supervisor for the Dover, NH Outreach and Tracking Program and was quickly promoted to Regional Program Supervisor (now the Assistant Regional Director position), then to Regional Director in 2015.

Sue's knowledge and experience will be greatly missed. Her commitment to clients, community and staff was unparalleled. We will also miss her off-beat sense of humor, bubbly personality, infectious laughter and many "Spitale-isms;" and wish her much happiness!

As much as Key will miss Sue, we are equally excited to congratulate **Meghan Bailey** on her promotion to *Regional Director*. Meghan has been with Key for 21 years and served as Assistant Regional Director for the past 6 years. We are confident that Meghan will do an outstanding job leading the Northeast Region team!



Recently promoted Regional Director Meghan Bailey and the recently retired Sue Spitale at Sue's retirement party

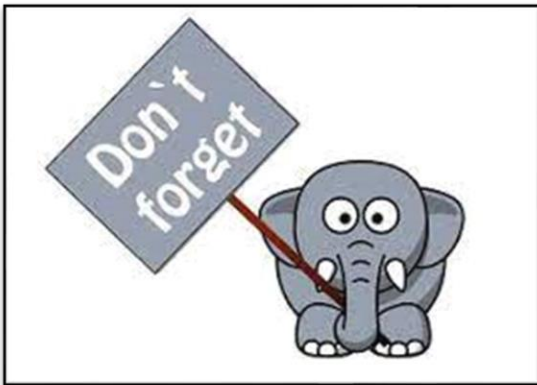
Safety Matters

Although we had hoped to be long past COVID by now, the global pandemic continues and, unfortunately, infection and hospitalization rates are on the rise. Below are important reminders about Key's expectations and ways to keep yourselves and others safe:

- Unvaccinated staff are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings indoors when unable to socially distance 6' apart from others.
- All staff, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear face coverings when participating in in-person regional or Agency-wide trainings.
- Congregate care staff must wear face coverings at all times while working in residential programs unless in a room/office alone.
- Community workers must wear face coverings when transporting clients, performing home/school/work visits or attending in-person meetings or appointments.
- Employees experiencing COVID-like symptoms, regardless of vaccination status, should NOT come to work. Consult with your medical provider to determine testing/treatment recommendations. Notify your supervisor when your symptoms began so Key can conduct contact tracing (if applicable) and determine when you may be able to return to work.



- As “essential workers,” Key staff may continue to work following an exposure to a confirmed COVID-positive individual as long as they *do not develop symptoms*. Per CDC guidance, exposed staff must wear a face-covering for 14 days from the date of exposure. In an abundance of caution, Key strongly recommends that staff get tested 3-5 days following a known exposure so they can isolate and be needed if they test positive.
- If a staff member tests positive for COVID, Key is required to notify the local Board of Health and licensing/state agency contacts. Key will work with staff and supervisors to conduct contact tracing and determine when the employee may return to work.
- **Key has extended the vaccine incentive program to October 31st**. All current and newly hired staff are eligible for a one-time \$125 incentive payment upon proof of full vaccination (2 doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine or the 1-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine). Send your vaccination card confidentially to VAX@key.org.



Don't forget “the basics:”

- wash hands frequently with soap and warm, running water
- if handwashing facilities are not available, clean with hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol
- use sanitizing wipes on “high contact” surfaces frequently throughout the day
- when able, remain a socially distant 6’ from others
- consider getting the COVID vaccine if medically able
- consider using on-line shopping and delivery services in lieu of in-person shopping

News You Can Use:



Key’s **increased referral bonus program** payment has been extended through **October 31, 2021**. If you refer someone who is hired full time, you will receive **\$1,000**; and for a part-time hire, you will receive **\$500**. Once the referred person successfully completes their 3-month orientation period, you will receive the referral bonus payment in your paycheck.

Key has also extended the “premium pay” program for *hourly-paid staff* through October 9, 2021. Hourly staff earn **double** their rate of pay for working **residential** shifts in excess of their regularly scheduled shifts (for example, a 32-hour/week employee who is regularly scheduled for 4 shifts/week would earn **double pay** for working a 5th).





September 22 marks the start of the fall season! This year's Autumnal Equinox occurs at 3:20 P.M. EDT on Wednesday, September 22. At this time, there are approximately equal hours of daylight and darkness.

Staff Recruitment A Top Priority

Significant to severe staffing shortages are impacting employers across the country. It seems there are “Help Wanted” and “We’re Hiring” signs everywhere you go. Certain sectors of the economy have been hit harder than others, including the human services industry. Like many other agencies, Key has struggled to attract, hire and retain new staff members. Over the past several months, we have increased our recruitment efforts agency-wide.



- We have an active Recruitment Committee that meets every 2 weeks to assess recruitment and advertising strategies, share ideas and experiences, and prioritize recruitment efforts for the coming weeks.
- With Indeed being the most popular source for job seekers, Key is investing in an increased number of sponsored ads to get information about employment opportunities to prospective applicants more quickly
- We have added a designated Recruiter/Trainer for the Rhode Island and Southeast Regions to focus on recruitment for those regions
- We have registered for a high number of both in-person and virtual college job fairs
- We recently increased wages for almost all positions across the Agency



We want you to know that we are trying very hard to fill open positions and recognize how hard you are all working to best serve “our” kids and families while short-handed. We don’t have the words to tell you just how much we appreciate all that you do every day!

If you have a suggestion for an additional recruitment source, PLEASE let us know! We would be more than happy share our job opportunities with college career development offices and Chairs of human/social sciences departments. Did you find Key through a lesser-known job site? Maybe we’d have success using it more extensively. If you know of someone looking for work and think they’d be a good fit with Key, encourage them to apply!

Welcome to New Staff Members Hired in August!



Berkshire Region:

Jessica Lorusso, Stephen Olson and Megan Scott

Central Region:

Jazmin Dupuis and Jessica Kaminski

Northeast Region:

Nailah Mays

Southeast Region:

Wayne Custadio, Michael Fernandez, Kathryn Hein and Michelle Robichaud

Western Region:

Nicole Bedard, Gabrielle Cardano, Gillian Hansen, Stephanie Minkos and Imani Plummer

And a very warm “Welcome Back” to:

Central Region:

Giftly Agyen and Phyllis Ketter

Rhode Island Region:

Jessica Sarah

Southeast Region:

Janaina DeSouza

Western Region:

Seanna Hague, Brittany McCarthy and Carly Rousseau



We are so happy to see you again!



Congratulations to Employees Promoted in August!

Central Region:

Brianna Cloutier, Shift Supervisor

Northeast Region:

Meghan Bailey, Regional Director

Isabella Blanchette, Clinician

Rhode Island Region:

Christine Wagner, Assistant Program Supervisor

Southeast Region:

Michael Denis, Family Support Caseworker

