I would like to begin by commending our administrative team and our amazing staff for their remarkable dedication to our babies, students, clients and families during this pandemic crisis. Every program is providing support for our clients and families in the best way they can…it is truly amazing and I am very proud of the work of our LADACIN staff.

First I must commend the Residential Program. Staff have been coming to work in all nine residences and ensuring that our clients are safe, nurtured and stimulated 24 hours/7 days a week. They have put aside their worries about themselves and leave their homes when the rest of us are told to stay home. They are providing daily care including feeding, bathing, dressing, dispensing medications, and monitoring the health of over 90 tenants. They are cooking meals, cleaning the homes and ensuring the use of personal protective equipment for the safety of the clients. Adult Day Programs remain closed; however, we will be exploring virtual activities in the future. We thank the 20+ staff from the Adult Day Program who have been working in the residences to help fill gaps in staffing.

School programs continue to provide very successful virtual learning experiences for the students. Last week the therapists were trained in using telehealth, parents were asked to sign consent forms, and translation services were set up. Therapy equipment is being picked up by some families to work on mobility, communication, fine motor skills and other goals. Although this is a very different way to go to school, our administrators and staff have made it exciting and fun! The creativity is incredible and I thoroughly enjoy seeing photos and videos of some of the wonderful activities going on! It is particularly heartwarming to hear about the parent’s engagement in every day school activities and the students communicating with one another when they can. They are truly making lemonade out of lemons.

Child Care, although closed, is very busy. Lisa Menzel, Head Teacher, has engaged many of the families using Class Dojo and has shared all kinds of activities, resources and supports with them. Staff have been involved as well in cheering up the children and sharing activities to do with the parents.

Congratulations to Lisa Graul for her two presentations at the end of last week. Lisa presented on Class Dojo to a group of directors from “Grow NJ” and local child care centers. Our Child Care is seeking Grow NJ certification and diligently working on meeting all the standards even during the pandemic! Lisa also presented LADACIN Network’s programs and services through Jersey Shore Medical Center to a group of 40 social workers from hospital settings in surrounding communities who often work with children who may be able to benefit from our services.

Early Intervention continues to move more families into telehealth. Out of 579 families, 217 have chosen telehealth, and 131 have taken a 14 day break in services and may choose telehealth. The therapists are busy setting up telehealth appointments and ensuring that our babies and toddlers are receiving their therapies during this critical time in their development. LADACIN
was proud to be featured in the Department of Health’s first “Spotlight on Telehealth” for the work being done by our Targeted Evaluation Team!

Our Community Relations and Development staff continue to work on communicating to our stakeholders, working on rescheduling fundraising events, and seeking (and receiving) crucial grant funding to offset costs related to the crisis.

All departments are fully operational - Finance, Human Resources, Information and Technology, Facilities and, as you see above, all programs. KUDOS to our Associate Executive Director, to our Directors and to all of the staff who are keeping our Mission alive and thriving despite these challenging times! I thank you and I know our families and guardians join me in gratitude. Lastly, I would thank our families and guardians for their willingness to continue to participate in our services. We know how busy your lives can be and salute you for your efforts in helping all of us to survive this very difficult time by sharing your precious children. They bring us so much joy! Be well and stay safe!

Patti Carlesimo
Executive Director