



Contributed photo

Family with sign showing thanks to staff at Chester's Apple Rehab Chesterfields during parade in Chester on Saturday, May 17.

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# Let's have a parade

Families show appreciation for staff at Apple Rehab Chesterfields

By Lisa Reisman

CHESTER — On a sun-splashed Saturday, first responders led a parade down Chester's Main Street as fire trucks' sirens rang out, car horns sounded and lively music filled the air.

As the procession wound its way to the parking lot of Apple Rehab Chesterfields, roughly 20 staff and residents, masked and spaced 6 feet apart, waved at families as their cars rolled by.

Apple Rehab Chesterfields is a facility for "short and long term rehabilitation and recovery, according to its website.

"It was very emotional for all of us," said administrator Megan Nonamaker, "but especially our families since they haven't been able to see their loved ones during this whole crisis."

The parade was the brainchild of Deep River's Ginger Andreoli Muscarella, whose father, Fred Andreoli, is a resident at Chesterfields.

"We wanted to express our appreciation for the tireless work of the staff in caring for our family members during this difficult time, and also just see the faces of our

loved ones," said Muscarella.

Both Muscarella and Nonamaker noted that none of the 43 residents has tested positive for Covid-19.

"They keep the facility sealed up tighter than a Ziploc bag," Muscarella said.

"They're amazing."

Nonamaker said the staff has shown creativity in their programming to keep the residents safe, with bingo games waged with residents sitting in their doorways, and a "vacation" party with a virgin Margarita cartwheeled from room to room.

To help residents maintain connection with their families, there's Skype and FaceTime and letter writing, and "we just keep reminding them that this will all be over as long as we stay safe and do what we're supposed to do" Nonamaker said.

Even so, "sometimes, especially during this pandemic, it's good to have a reminder of why we do what we do," she said. "The parade was that reminder. It was awesome."

For her part, Muscarella said she felt "overjoyed" by the response of families, staff, and the town, acknowledging in particular Chester Fire Dept. Chief James Grzybowski, musicians David O'Donnell and John Anyzeski, as well as Nonamaker.

"All of them went above and beyond, but it wasn't just them. It was everyone," she said. "It was beautiful."