

## **Message from Rabbi Aryeh M Sufrin MBE, Exec Director Chabad N E London & Essex re Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

Dear Friends,

We are living in unprecedented times, challenges that in my 37 years KAH as an active community Rabbi in and around Essex, that we have never seen before.

There is confusion and deep worry about the health of our loved ones in and around our homes, amongst our friends, communities and beyond.

Over several weeks many discussions have taken place, with the Chief Medical Officer, the Government and Rabbinic authorities as to how best to respond to this virus, whilst keeping all safe, and each and every one of our community feeling connected and part of "Am Yisroel" (the People of Israel).

**It is therefore with a heavy heart, but falling in line with the guidance given by Chabad UK, Chabad Global, the Chief Rabbi and the United Synagogue, the Federation of Synagogues and the Government's requirements, we are closing our Chabad Houses across Essex, as of immediate effect, for all communal services and activities including Shabbat Services until further notice.**

For many this will be shocking but "saving & preserving lives" takes precedence over everything else. Please use this time to engage in private with G-d from your homes, who is surely listening to our cries for help, guidance and support at this time. Spend more quality time with your families at home. The Tehillim - Book of Psalms - is a powerful way to connect with G-d at all times.

However, although in a physical sense this will appear as if we are distancing ourselves, we are fortunate to be living in the modern age of communications. We will therefore be providing regular updates and opportunities for online classes, lectures and ideas to remain connected.

For the first time in over 30 years we will be unable to hold a Communal Seder, which is one of mine together with Mrs Sufrin and our family's highlights of the year, together with so many of you that have joined us over the years. This indeed will be so strange for us!

We hope to be in a position to offer for those that wish a "ready-made SEDER box", for you to conduct your own Seder this year at home. We are also looking into the possibility of being able to provide a Pesach meal for those in need.

Please be in touch with us if you would like to order one of these plates, or are interested in a meal being provided.

We hope, as always, to have our "hand baked Shmurah Matzot", within the next two weeks, and work out how you can ensure to receive a box in time.

In the meantime, you can sell your Chometz on line, here is the link: <https://form.jotform.com/200543583945358>

Please find the link here <https://www.chabad.org/> to engage with Chabad.org who are providing materials of interest for you to engage with as you need.

We are also looking for younger volunteers to assist with deliveries as needed in the coming weeks, if you are willing to assist please be in touch with Jacquie on tel: 020 8554 1624 or e-mail: [admin@chabadilford.co.uk](mailto:admin@chabadilford.co.uk).

Our Chabad House office will remain open for now and I, together with Mrs Sufrin, will continue to support you and your Families to the best of our ability. Please feel free to be in touch. Stay safe and well.

We will be in touch again shortly, as for now we pray to Hashem to have mercy on us all and bring a speedy recovery to all those affected by this virus and protect us all from any further harm and anguish.