



## C I T Y   O F   P H I L A D E L P H I A

**JAMES F. KENNEY**  
Mayor

Office of the Mayor  
215 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 686-2181  
FAX (215) 686-2180

Fellow Philadelphians:

Every year since 2016 I've been thrilled to take part in Philly Free Streets as thousands of residents from every neighborhood came out to walk, bike, roll, and play after we closed some streets to cars. Each time I was awestruck. Their unbridled joy, their enthusiasm, and their love for our city were abundant on the streets of Philadelphia. It made me very proud.

Today, the streets are quiet. Most residents are heeding our order to stay at home. Businesses are shuttered. Playgrounds, schools, and houses of worship are empty. We are waiting, hoping, praying, and mourning those who were lost.

But I write to tell you that even amid our silent streets, the spirit of this great city has not, in any way, been diminished by this virus.

I see this spirit in the growing number of folks at home sewing and donating face coverings, and manufacturers who have shifted production to personal protective equipment. It's seen in the countless people opting to order food and supplies from our restaurants and local small businesses. That spirit is in our philanthropic community who mobilized in record time and raised tens of millions of dollars for struggling nonprofits. It's in the School District and Community College of Philadelphia, doing everything possible to bring remote learning to all students. And it's also in the scores of volunteers packing thousands of meals every week to ensure Philadelphians don't go hungry.

If you're looking for ways to help, here are some ideas:

- Call neighbors, particularly seniors and those who live alone. Help them get the essential supplies they need.
- Stay in touch with others by phone, video conferencing, or email—and reconnect with those who you may have lost touch with.
- Remind others of social distancing guidance, including teens who may still feel inclined to hang out with friends.
- Order take-out or delivery from a locally-owned eatery.

- Donate to the PHL COVID-19 Fund to help our nonprofit organizations on the front line of this pandemic.
- Offer a wave of thanks when you see essential employees, especially our healthcare workers and first responders who quite literally put their own health on the line for all of us.

But the greatest single contribution you can make is simply to do the basics: stay at home, wear a face covering if you must go outside, and wash your hands frequently. To those of you doing these things, please know that you are already part of the solution. You are already helping our healthcare workers save lives.

We have weeks if not months to go before the crisis eases. Before we reclaim our lives.

Take comfort knowing that when we're through this, we will once again enjoy all that Philly has to offer – whether it be a crowded festival on South Street, a sunny picnic on Belmont Plateau, a stroll in the Italian Market, or a block party on North Fifth Street in Fairhill. We'll see joggers and bicyclists moving in groups, food vendors and merchants busy with customers, musicians playing to applause, and neighbors sharing stories on their steps.

When we get all of that back, we will stop and remember the sacrifice, the loss, the pain of this time. We will realize that the silence which now pervades the streets of Philadelphia was not, by any means, a sign of defeat. Rather, it was the abundant evidence of our resilience.

When that day comes, we will watch our children head off to school, play on the sidewalks, and even share snacks and hugs. And we'll know that when it mattered most, we stepped up, we cared for one another, we did what was right, and we endured.

Because we are Philadelphia.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James F. Kenney".

James F. Kenney  
Mayor