

Media Release

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Contact: Amy Catania, Executive Director

HISTORIC SARANAC LAKE

891-4606

amy@historicsaranaclake.org

HISTORIC SARANAC LAKE UNVEILS NEW “PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVES” EXHIBIT

Saranac Lake, NY August 14, 2020 — Historic Saranac Lake opened a new exhibit titled, “Pandemic Perspectives.” Twelve exhibit panels placed throughout the museum invite visitors to explore connections between their personal experience during the current pandemic and Saranac Lake’s history as a community that welcomed people suffering from infectious disease. Each panel explores a particular reaction, from positive feelings like “resilience” or “gratitude,” to more difficult ones such as “loneliness” and “fear.”

“Our collective experience in the last 16 months has exposed and exacerbated the fault lines in our society, but it’s also revealed our personal and collective strengths,” said Executive Director, Amy Catania. “Covid-19 has brought us closer to those who came before us, to the people who struggled here in Saranac Lake with a different disease in a different time.”

The exhibit incorporates quotes from literature highlighting experiences common to pandemics throughout history. The exhibit is informed by a course taught by Columbia University Professor Arden Hegele titled, “Epidemic Fictions.”

Historic Saranac Lake’s Public Programs Coordinator Mahala Nyberg was instrumental in the production and staging of the exhibit. Ms. Nyberg said, “Many of our visitors are leaving the museum having found similarities between their COVID-19 experience and that of TB patients. This exhibit provides visitors a platform to talk about those similarities, learn from them, and maybe find comfort in them.”

The exhibit includes historic images from Historic Saranac Lake’s collection and present-day images shared by local nurse, Lisa Keegan. One of the photos Ms. Keegan provided for the exhibit is of Sara Diaz, who also works as a nurse at Adirondack Health. Sara and Lisa attended the opening reception, held for members of Historic Saranac Lake on July 13. Ms. Diaz said, “I am so grateful to this community for the warm welcoming, the support, and the acknowledgment for my hard earned achievements. This is my home, and I am so honored to give back by helping others regain their health, and with Covid, it was no different.

Complementing the new exhibit, Historic Saranac Lake will host a series of public programs supported by grants from the Lake Champlain Basin Program, Humanities New York, and the New York State

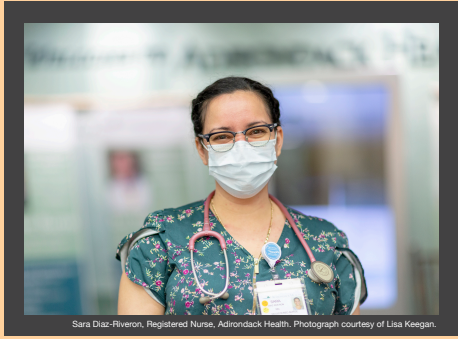
Council on the Arts. The public programs will explore four topics as they relate to Saranac Lake's history as a tuberculosis sanatorium community: The Roles of Women in the Medical History, Patients' Stories: Saranac Lake's History through the Lens of Narrative Medicine, Cure Porch Architecture; and the Healing Power of Occupational Therapy. Each of the four talks will inform four temporary exhibits for our mobile exhibit space, the Cure Porch on Wheels. HSL will take the exhibits off-site for history day visits in the summer and fall of 2021.



Public Programs Coordinator Mahala Nyberg hangs the new exhibit banner at the Saranac Laboratory Museum.

GRATITUDE

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."
— Albert Schweitzer



Sara Diaz-Riveron, Registered Nurse, Adirondack Health. Photograph courtesy of Lisa Keegan.

Nurses, doctors, housekeepers, tray boys, and cure cottage operators served as the essential workers of the TB industry. Many patients developed close bonds with their caregivers.

What have you been GRATEFUL for during the time of Covid-19?

The panel titled, "Gratitude" features a photo of local nurse, Sara Diaz. Photo courtesy of Lisa Keegan.



Sara Diaz and Lisa Keegan attended the opening reception at the Saranac Laboratory Museum.