May 12, 2020

Dear League Colleagues:

Just a little more than one year ago during my Installation Gala on May 4, 2019, I addressed the Miami-Dade County League of Cities (MDCLC) with this:

"The term League is defined as: a collection of people, countries, or groups that combine for a particular purpose, typically mutual protection or cooperation...And, with that said, now more than ever, it's time — time for our cities, towns, and villages within Miami-Dade County to unite - to have ONE VOICE!

So, this year, as League President, instead of focusing only on one initiative, such as: transportation, or infrastructure, or affordable housing, etc. I will focus on uniting us — our associate members and the 34-municipalities, toward COMMUNICATING more, collaborating more, sharing our resources, and building a community amongst us—just as each of us has built a community within our respective cities. Because we know the value in it; because we know there is strength in numbers!

Remember, this is your League—our League, a diverse 34-municipalities strong—and diversity is our strength, and again there is strength in numbers! Together - let's take this initiative and re-commit to deeper and BETTER COMMUNICATION! Let's make a difference beyond our municipal boundaries. Let's do this in order to better represent our constituents' day-in and day-out. Let's make them proud and confident. Let's restore public trust, and create a more united tomorrow."

Now, fast-forward a year from that statement, where we are now in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic; a pandemic the likes we have not seen for over 100 years since the Spanish Flu—where people in our communities are struggling with the loss of a job, or the loss of a family member, or a friend, and have uncertainty about their future. The unexpected foresight of my words from a year ago focusing on better communication was an ode to shared resourcefulness and a true, joint-effort made towards attaining greater resiliency. Not just in our respective cities, towns, or villages in the face of COVID-19—but in our League—and in our Miami-Dade County! Now more than ever, the responsibility of community leaders is to unite, is to COMMUNICATE, is to collaborate, is to inform, and to share resources, because there are no real municipal boundaries, especially during a crisis.

With that, in an effort to maintain continuity during this crisis, and to provide information to all our new League Board Members and Associate Members, below is a synopsis of the League’s actions over the past couple of months in response to COVID-19.

Since March 26th, 2020, the County has been under the “Safer at Home” order, which was a collaboration between the MDCLC and County Mayor’s office enacted by Miami-Dade County Emergency Order 12-20.

Then on April 29th, 2020, Emergency Order 20-21 “Moving to a New Normal” went into effect, which allowed the opening, with restrictions, of parks, golf courses, marinas, and boat ramps – where we simply asked that when people are outside that they masked (if applicable), and to always practice ‘social/physical distancing!’

Also, since mid-March 2020, I, along with the MDCLC Executive Board, on every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday attended a Zoom Meeting with Miami-Dade County Mayor Gimenez and his staff. On these calls, the county government shared up-to-date numbers on hospital beds and ventilators available, the
number of virus patient discharged/admitted by day, etc. which helped us shape our message and plan.

On every Tuesday, we virtually met with our MDCLC Associate Members. These Member-Companies share information on what they are doing to support the community during this pandemic. We also virtually met with the MDCLC Board of Directors (BOD). During this meeting, the BOD was updated on Miami-Dade County statistics and other pertinent information to ensure all municipalities are on the same page.

Then on every Thursday, we virtually met with all Miami-Dade County Municipal Mayors. During this call we discussed best practices on this fluid situation, we shared ideas, and the Mayors were updated on Miami-Dade County facts and figures and other key items from our call with the County.

Lastly, on every Friday, the MDCLC held a virtual meeting with Miami-Dade County Municipal Attorneys, and as a legal group, they addressed municipal-legal concerns that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of these outstanding efforts, I want to applaud and thank my Executive Board, the Board of Directors, the League Executive Director: Richard Kuper, the League Staff, and Miami-Dade County Mayor: Carlos Gimenez and his staff, because during this COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen the human capacity for collaboration, shared information, and communication. As such, the MDCLC has worked every day with the Miami-Dade County Mayor to deliver a united message of “safer at home” and is now following a methodical, medical-based, data-based approach for reopening Miami-Dade County.

Going forward during this pandemic, and as we transition the League leadership, I am glad to know the League is going to be in the great hands of my friend: City of Miami Commission Chairman Keon Hardemon. As my friend, I can say he is deliberate with his words and actions, and has an outstanding love for his community and family, and he does not waiver from that. As such, Chairman Hardemon’s steadfast commitment to community and family will strongly carry the MDCLC into the future as we continue to progress into our 66th year.

In closing, it is has been my true and humbling honor to serve as your League President for 2019-2020, and with that I leave you with a simple, but well-stated recent quote from Pope Francis: “please take care of yourselves - for a future that will come!”

Safer at Home,

Claudia V. Cubillos
Mayor, Village of El Portal
President, Miami-Dade County League of Cities 2019-2020
http://elportalvillage.com/officials/mayor/

“Communication creates connection - it creates a stronger sense of community, and it creates progress regardless of the resources available to us and our long-list of differences that so often mistakenly divide us.” Mayor Claudia V. Cubillos