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Dear friends,

Together, we face challenging and uncertain times.

Fewer and fewer of us can avoid the impact of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our respective governing bodies and young people doing their Award are no different, although our story is not all gloom and doom. We are having to react and in a way that lives up to the values we believe in: being empowering, progressive, diverse and connected. It is exactly at times like these that building resilience, enhancing communication, encouraging adaptability, problem solving and tenacity are even more essential. As an Award community, we will be striving to do that more than ever.

This pandemic has re-written the way that we interact and the ways in which we go about our daily lives. For many, this presents a very large challenge and young people are certainly not exempt from that. While recognising that an increasing number will not be able to attend schools, youth organisations, youth clubs or sports clubs, we strongly believe the Award can and should play an important part in young people's lives at this time.

We recognise that there are three inter-related challenges and opportunities facing us all. Firstly, we must look after those who work for us and with us. Secondly, we must do everything we can to ensure that young people can still participate in Award activities and gain their Bronze, Silver or Gold recognition of their efforts. Thirdly, where it is safe to do so – and within the context of both national and local public health guidance - we must empower young people to do more than just participate. This last point may sound counter-intuitive, but we believe that young people, through proper guidance by their adult mentors, can turn their volunteering into providing the vital support that their own communities need to be resilient in these unprecedented times. Already we are hearing of Award participants and their adult supporters demonstrating that spirit: from ensuring that those who are isolated receive a phone call and a chat; to finding creative ways to distribute essentials such as food, soap and hand sanitizer. The global Award family is already working hard to support local communities responsibly.

Inevitably, the staff of the Foundation have been affected, seriously limiting our ability to move around and deliver face-to-face training, support or advice. Planning or running events, especially over the next 3-4 months, will have to be radically re-imagined as it is impossible for people to travel. Thankfully, the introduction of our digital systems and platforms over recent years means that we can continue to operate reasonably effectively. We are here, as ever, to support and help you as much as we can, especially in relation to these three challenges and opportunities.

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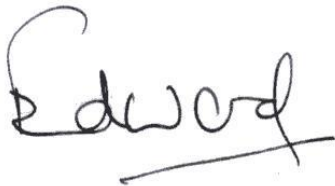
#WORLDREADY

We will be endeavouring to keep everyone in the Award family better informed and connected through regular digital briefings. In particular, we will be collecting and sharing stories, insights and ideas with you to show how you and Award participants are helping to inspire us all to make a positive difference.

Our thoughts are with all those who have been impacted by the COVID-19 virus to date and those who will inevitably be affected in the coming weeks and months. We send our very best wishes to you and your families and we hope you all remain safe and well.

We can't recall a time when working together has been more important. There has rarely been a more important time for our young people to be #WORLDREADY.

Our warmest wishes,



HRH The Earl of Wessex KG GCVO, Chairman of Trustees



John May OBE DL, Secretary General