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For Our Health

Cognitive Design^o

In partnership with **Constellations** and
Gene Kansas | Commercial Real Estate

Of all the reasons I enjoy Constellations, I value the people most.

As restrictions on physical distancing (which is very different than being socially distant) are lifted, it's understandable that some people may experience stress and anxiety about returning to public places. That in mind, I'd like to welcome you back and share a few outcomes from an ongoing partnership between Cognitive Design and Constellations to promote the health of our community.

As you may know I'm very passionate about healthy design and in addition to being the first tenant, I'm also the architect of Constellations, and now my firm has been hired to do a healthy re-design.

Building on the foundation we laid when this space was originally designed, we're now focusing on opportunities for improvements to promote healthy behaviors around optimal **hygiene** and **immune function**. First, Constellations janitorial services are following recommendations from CDC and WHO to make our

workplace more hygienic. Second, we're facilitating healthy choices you can make to benefit your circadian function, physical fitness, and nutrition that support immune system function.

The information in this letter will make you aware of behaviors we can all practice to stay healthy, as well as the changes that were made while we were working from home.

I receive a lot of fulfillment and joy from the community and culture that are unique to Constellations. I'm looking forward to joining you in safely returning to our workplace when the time is right, we need our social community now, more than ever.

See you soon,

Matthew A. Finn

AIA, NCARB, LEED AP

Founder of Cognitive Design

Member of the Constellations Community

The building that is home to our Constellations community was originally built in 1910 as a schoolbook warehouse, it's witnessed two world wars, the Great Depression, and the Civil Rights Movement. It is here today because people have cared for it and it has adapted to a changing world.

When we think about health and the built environment the first aspect that comes to mind, for many people, is our physical health and the COVID-19 pandemic really highlights the importance of this. And yet we must also acknowledge the importance of our mental, social, spiritual, and emotional health.

Health is personal and while the ideas in this letter are well-founded⁹, they may not be exactly right for you. Please use discretion and make informed choices that balance all aspects of health for you and your situation.

It's a transition. I'm ready to get back to some of my favorite things, like eating at restaurants and going to the gym. As we transition back to exercising and eating out, don't try to make up for lost time. Overexertion and poor nutrition can suppress the immune system¹. Additionally, prolonged and intensive training has been associated with increased risk of upper respiratory tract infections due to exercise-induced changes in immune function, while regular moderate exercise, has the opposite effect and can reduce infection risk².

The ability to integrate exercise into my daily routine is one of the reasons I love our walkable neighborhood. You probably already saw a map for a 30-minute walk, consider giving it a try, at a brisk pace it'll be a half hour well spent and you'll get to see some of my favorite buildings. Or you can chart your own path and let me know what you enjoy seeing.

Synchronize your schedule. Constellations is open 24/7 so you can work at a time that works for you. Diversity is a strength of our community, so if you're an early bird (me) or night owl, want to sync your schedule with your family or the sun, you can do so here. Sleep and a healthy circadian rhythm support immune function³. In extreme situations, lack of sleep can even cause changes to the immune system that increase the risk for acquiring viral infections⁴, so be sure to get lots of rest and feel good about it.

Our roots. Atlanta is rightfully known as "a city in a forest" and we're bringing some of that forest a little deeper into the city. You'll notice more greenery all around, including purposeful plants in the phone rooms. In addition to contributing beauty, these specific plants purify the air and reduce the concentration of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide⁵. These plants can also reduce volatile organic compounds in the air, which is a major class of indoor pollutants and work equally well with or without air-conditioning, and in light or dark,⁶ but we're not turning off the lights or A/C any time soon. In addition, contact with nature has been linked to physiological relaxation, stress recovery, immune function improvement⁷ and cognitive performance⁸.

Take a deep breath. Speaking of purified air, Constellations now owns a portable air filter, which you can use to scrub the air in a meeting room before or after an event. You can also borrow it for your private office, contact Jasmine for details. At a larger scale, Constellations performs regularly scheduled maintenance including quarterly air filter replacement using the best quality filters for our HVAC equipment.



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(Sweet) treat yourself right. Constellations is going to continue providing fresh baked cookies for tenants and our guests on Fridays. Cookies will now be served direct from the source, at Refuge Coffee just two doors down, and I'm excited to have another good reason to visit and support our friends there. Constellations will also soon be serving healthy cookie-alternatives.

This change was made in support of our health because eating too much sugar can prevent the immune system from working properly for several hours¹⁰. For example, consuming 100 grams of refined sugar (which is a lot more than is in a single cookie), can reduce white blood cell reactivity by 40% and suppresses immune system function for up to 5 hours¹¹. These cookies, like many of the best things in life, are free and served with a smile.

Wipe the slate clean. (I'm not just talking about the chalk board in my office) Constellations now provides wipes in the meeting rooms and other common spaces, which provide a couple benefits. The first is obvious, we can quickly and easily clean surfaces. The second is that we see these new objects in our environment, and they will remind us of the importance of good hygiene. This will likely inspire more hygienic behaviors for some people, like washing hands before eating, especially after opening doors or shaking hands with others.

Get the perks. Working at Constellations has many perks, the most literal of which is the coffee. While you're getting some, be mindful of high touch surfaces, including the coffee carafe and refrigerator door handles, and take care to not touch the lip of your coffee cup with your hands. Speaking of which, we'll all soon enjoy new coffee cups with a fun design by Office of Brothers.

Touchless tech. Our bathroom faucets are now touchless. Gone are the days of having to handle a handle after handling your hand hygiene. To further benefit your hand hygiene and health, we even have new hand soap that is EWG Verified¹³.

And just so you know, the FDA studied hand soap and concluded products labeled "antibacterial" don't have any benefits over plain soap at preventing illness¹⁴. Some antibacterial soap ingredients may even have a negative effect on your health. Washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to clean your hands.

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