



April 1, 2020

Dear Ridgewood School Community,

So many April Fools' jokes come to mind today...unfortunately, none are funny. I wrote this sentence first thing this morning; then, many people called, texted, and even forwarded an April Fools' Day letter allegedly from my office saying we have no April break and are going to be in school until July 21st...not true! But, it was kind of funny and "got" me and many others. People are creative.

Today, I am including a poem by Irish Poet, Kathleen O'Meara, that was shared by a community member. It was written in 1869 after a plague devastated Ireland. As you read it, you will probably feel like it could have been written today. The road ahead may not be clear to us now, but in the end, we will heal. Thank you for sharing!

AND PEOPLE STAYED HOME

And people stayed home,
and read books and listened,
and rested and exercised,
and made art and played, and learned new ways of being,
and stopped
and listened deeper

someone meditated
someone prayed
someone danced
someone met their shadow

and the people began to think differently,
and people healed,
and in the absence of people who lived in ignorant ways,
dangerous, meaningless, and heartless,
even the earth began to heal

And when the danger ended,
and people found each other,
grieved for the dead people,
and they made new choices,
and dreamed of new visions,
and created new ways of life,
and heal the earth completely,
just as they were healed themselves



Kathleen O ' Meara (1869)

This week is Elementary School Spirit Week! For me, I have celebrated our Elementary School Spirit Week as follows:

- Maroon Monday: Ridgewood gear! As Superintendent of the Ridgewood Public Schools, I have plenty. Back in the good old days when my wife, Sue (she asked me not to only refer to her as my wife.... done) and I cleaned out some closets, we found 17 Ridgewood sweatshirts, dozens of t-shirts, and much more. We did not donate any. My kids participated in sports at RHS, so we had plenty of gear to go around.
- Team up Tuesday: I am a Dallas Cowboys fan. Ok, stop rolling your eyes and muttering under your breath. For all of you Giants fans, Jason Garret is your problem now.
- Exercise Clothes Day: If you haven't gotten the hint, I workout daily. I am an early riser and start my day with exercise. There is a lot of research out there about exercise and brain chemistry. For me, it is therapy....probably could use the old fashioned kind of therapy, but this has worked for me for decades. I am old school...cotton t-shirt (probably says Ridgewood on it or OBX or one of the colleges my kids have gone to or go to) and running shorts. Shoes - NIKE! Swoosh!

STRINGING TOGETHER RIDGEWOOD - STUDENT LEAD FUNDRAISER

While we can't get out and host a traditional fundraiser, some RHS students have come up with an idea that can be done remotely. They are selling friendship bracelets to raise money to be donated to Valley Hospital to help with COVID-19 relief. This will all be done online. Please see the link below.

<https://forms.gle/dfCJ29WjRgksF2dt5>

FEEL YOU MAY HAVE SYMPTOMS: If you feel sick with COVID-19 symptoms, you should contact your physician. The physician will be able to assist you and provide the next steps. Additionally, the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) has set up the following to answer your questions:

- **Call: 2-1-1**
- **Call (24/7): 1-800-962-1253**
- **Text: NJCOVID to 898-211**
- **Visit <https://covid19.nj.gov/> or nj.gov/health for additional information**
- **Valley Hospital: 201-447-8000** If you feel you have symptoms, Valley Hospital has set up a system to answer your questions.

SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCING: Please start thinking about how you will handle social distancing during the spring break, which is the week of April 6-10.

VIRTUAL TOURS and ACTIVITIES FOR OVER THE BREAK (DON'T DO THEM UNTIL THE BREAK):

- Yoga - [Five Parks Yoga](#)
- Running - [Couch to 5K App](#)
- TV - Grey's Anatomy (15 Season) My daughters have watched them all twice.
- Virtual Field Trips: Help for Frazzled Parents: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/20-virtual-and-educational-field-trips-that-might-help-keep-your-kids-occupied-2020-03-30>
- 28 Free Virtual Field Trips <https://www.wearethemighty.com/MIGHTY-SURVIVAL/free-virtual-field-trips-quarantine>

REMINDER: Use the links below for important information from the Village and the district. If you have not received a phone call from Mayor Hache, you have not signed up for the Village alerts. Please do so.

- Sign up for Village E-Notice System - <http://www.ridgewoodnj.net/village-info/enotices-and-alerts-registration>.
- Twitter Accounts - [@RwdPub Schools](#) and [@RWDSupt](#)
- District Facebook Page - [@RidgewoodPublicSchools](#).

ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION: The Annual School and Municipal Election will be held on Tuesday, May 12. All registered voters will be receiving vote-by-mail ballots, and there will be no polling places in the May 12, 2020 elections. For more information, click [here](#) to visit the website of the Bergen County Clerk's Office. You can still register to vote if you have not already done so. Information can be found [here](#).

CENSUS 2020: Today is Census Day! Don't forget to send your redacted "receipt" to your principal or just let your principal know it is complete. Let's see which school has the highest percentage of completed questionnaires. If you have multiple children in a school, each one counts. If you have children in multiple schools, send the receipt to each principal.

- Fill out the Census online at <https://my2020census.gov/>
- Or you can respond by phone at 844-330-2020.

Contest results as of 4.1.2020 (The contest is open until the Census 2020 closes.)

- 1st - Somerville
- 2nd - Willard
- 3rd - BF
- 4th - RHS
- 5th - Orchard
- 6th - GW
- 7th - Travell
- 8th - Ridge
- 9th - Hawes

TODAY'S GAME SUGGESTIONS:

- Yahtzee

Other things you can do:

- Keep moving! GET OUTSIDE! Do push-ups. <https://www.shape.com/fitness/workouts/30-day-push-up-challenge>
- Movie/TV - Academy Award Winning: *The King's Speech*. Overcoming adversity and fear. Going beyond what you are comfortable doing to bring people together.
- Book Club Book 2 - *Radium Girls* by Kate Moore. Read in our RAHP program. This is an emotional read due to human suffering. Here is a link to some discussion questions: <https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/10968-radium-girls-moore?start=3>
- Baked goods: Carrot Chips. My wife, Sue, brought home these huge carrots. I thought to myself, what is she going to make with those things. She made an excellent mushroom barley soup with carrots. (I ate it three days straight for lunch.) When I looked at them, for some reason I thought

of potato chips. I looked up carrot chips, and yes someone thought of it already. Here is the link: <https://www.aspicyperspective.com/healthy-baked-carrot-chips/>

- Home Project: Yard weeding...yup you heard that right. Get to the weeds you can see before their roots establish themselves or they drop seeds.
- Remember the Ridgewood Public Library has online resources. <https://www.ridgewoodlibrary.org>
- Call someone. They will appreciate it. If you can make a video call, that's even better for face-to-face connection.
- **REMINDER: 39 Days - This is for dads and students only.** Moms, look away! Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10th. If you are like me, you purchase gifts for your wife at the last minute because she sees every credit card transaction. Online banking! So, strategize now about how to pull Mother's Day off without a florist, restaurant, or last-minute shopping trip. You do not want to mess this up when you have no place to escape! **NOT TIME TO PANIC YET!**

VALLEY HOSPITAL NEEDS OUR HELP: Please drop off the following items Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the main entrance on 223 North Van Dien Avenue in Ridgewood.

- N95 masks
- Surgical masks
- Face shields and goggles
- Fluid resistant isolation gowns
- Non-latex (nitrile) gloves
- NEW oral thermometers

The **Red Cross** is alerting everyone to blood and platelet shortage. Please donate if you can. <https://www.redcrossblood.org/>

Keep supporting our local businesses. Many restaurants are offering curbside pickup and delivery. Here are some helpful tips (www.today.com) if you want something besides a home-cooked meal:

- Order from a restaurant you trust
- Order directly from the restaurant when possible
- Opt for contactless delivery or pick up
- Discard all packaging
- Don't share, and wash your hands before and after

I wish you good health!

Sincerely,



Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools



April 1, 2020

Dear Ridgewood School Community,

Yesterday, I received a Letter of Health Consultation (LHC) from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) addressing health concerns related to possible exposure from contaminated fill at the Orchard Elementary School. As you may recall, we had been in consultation with the NJDOH to schedule a public meeting; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a public meeting is no longer an option. Please click [here](#) to view a copy of the NJDOH Letter of Health Consultation (LHC). The conclusion of the 11-page document is as follows:

The NJDOH concludes that exposures to PAHs and lead in surface soil at the Orchard Elementary School are not likely to harm people's health. Based on our risk assessment using site specific scenarios and above average ingestion rates, the NJDOH concludes that harmful health effects are not expected from the potential exposure pathway to soil contaminants. It should be noted this evaluation assumes the areas are not covered with grass and mulch, i.e. that direct contact with soil is occurring. Therefore, it can be assumed that the exposures or the actual risk would be lower as these areas are predominantly covered. The outside areas of the school, including the recreational field, can continue to be used without posing a health risk to children until soil remediation is completed to bring levels below the NJDEP RSCSCC. Although based on our evaluation harmful health effects are not expected to occur with continued use of the recreational field, NJDOH supports the actions being planned as prudent measures to protect public health.

Additionally, I would like to inform you that the bidding process for the project has started. The bidding was advertised on March 25, 2020, and I have been told that 14 companies showed interest. The walkthrough for the project occurred on Tuesday, March 31, 2020, and the bid opening will take place on Wednesday, April 22, 2020. The link to the bid and LHC can be found at https://www.ridgewood.k12.nj.us/our_district/public_information/orchard_remediation_plan.

I hope everyone stays healthy and physically distant from each other while maintaining connections. We will get through this unprecedented global health crisis together.

Sincerely,

Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

C: Ridgewood Board of Education
Dr. Yankus, School Physician

