



April 3, 2020

Dear Ridgewood School Community,

Over the past three weeks, I have received dozens of emails from parents and videos from schools about all of the great experiences our students have been having. Remote learning is undoubtedly different from our regular school day and full activity schedule, and this has demonstrated the significance of our schools and our Village to who we are as a community. I could not start the break without thanking our teachers, administrators, support staff, and custodial/maintenance workers for adapting to these circumstances and performing their roles with dedication and professionalism.

Please read the attached document, "Making It Work: For Online School and Spring Recess," written by Lauren DePinto, LCSW, District Coordinator of School-Based Mental Health. We are all faced with competing demands. Parents are juggling work while also having to be part-time educators (thank you for all you have done and will do), and our educators continue to be full-time teachers while managing their parental responsibilities. None of this is easy, but we are all rising to the challenge. Our community is stronger together!

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.... I 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!
- Thankful Thursday - See above
- Feel Good Friday - See above

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>



RIDGEWOOD HELPS

Right now, our senior citizens need our help. Below is a link to opportunities to help our senior citizens in Ridgewood. Please take a look at it and help in any way you can. If you have a neighbor who is a senior citizen, please check in with them. We must continue to look out for each other. Thank you in advance for all of your assistance.

http://mods.ridgewoodnj.net/pdf/covidinfo/RidgewoodHelpsV3.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2xLK5-VLkT7qz68jgdu8AcnQ50lNnTWuY9-Efoe_2v83AGtshg2p8m8sc

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: I have given you many suggestions about how to keep busy next week during spring break. Please look over them with your family and make a list of the ones that interest you. It may be a different kind of spring break, but there are many opportunities to create new memories as a family.

VIRTUAL TOURS and ACTIVITIES FOR OVER THE BREAK. Thanks to all who offered suggestions.

- Nightly Metropolitan Opera Streams
 - <https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/?dlv-emuid=d34f77ce-5d3b-4c7f-b78f-7d61e32cc916&dlv-mlid=39375561>
- Email your principal or teachers! They would love to hear from you!
- Learn how to cook!
- Try a new hobby. How about painting? Knitting? Gardening?
- Write a letter (yes, by hand and on actual paper) and send it to a friend or relative. They'll love getting real mail!
- Create a scavenger hunt in your house for a younger sibling. Leave a prize at the end. They'll love it!
- Start a journal. Keep track of what you're doing during this crazy time in history! It will become a first-person historical source someday.
- Listen to some new types of music (not your usual jam). You might find something new that you love!
- Try listening to a podcast or online book.
- Challenge yourself to a tech-free day (other than your schoolwork). Can you do it? How will you fill your time? Hint: See Above

REMINDER: Use the links below for important information from the Village and the district.

- 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: 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 4.3.2020 (The contest is open until the Census 2020 closes.)

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

TODAY'S GAME SUGGESTIONS:

- Uno Attack - My family always cheats during regular Uno. Let's see what happens with Uno Attack.

Other things you can do:

- Keep moving! GET OUTSIDE! Pick from one of the many options I provided you and commit to it. Three weeks should now be a habit.
- Movie/TV Fix for the Week - Academy Award Winning: *Slumdog Millionaire*; *12 Years a Slave*; *Birdman*; *Argo*; *The Artist*.
- Book Club Book 3 - *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. Read in our English 11 and 11H. Here is a link to some discussion questions: <https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-kite-runner>
- Baked goods: Pudding is excellent...fudge is better. <https://www.livewellbakeoften.com/easy-fudge-recipe/>
- Home Project: Don't take the week off. Do all the projects I offered up over the past few weeks. I know you did not do them all.
- 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: 37 Days - This is for dads and students only.** Moms, look away! Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10. 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

ORCHARD UPDATE:

Unfortunately, in my haste to get the Orchard update out to the community, I neglected to include an Indoor Air Quality Evaluation that we conducted earlier in March. It can be found on our website at https://www.ridgewood.k12.nj.us/our_district/public_information/orchard_remediation_plan. The testing results concluded: regarding the basic IAQ parameters testing for explosive combustible gases, hydrogen sulfides, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds - **None Detected.**

I wish you good health and a restful break!

Artwork: RPS Maggie Hough

Sincerely,



Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Making It Work: For Online School and Spring Recess

Lauren M. DePinto, LCSW
District Coordinator of School-Based Mental Health

Today marks the completion of three full weeks of school closure, virtual learning, and social distancing. During this time we have learned a great deal. Some of us are dealing with COVID-19 and it's many complications first hand. All of us have been challenged in various ways during this unprecedented time. Our shared adversity created many undeniable examples for growth--as individuals, families, and a unified school district. Our collective resolve to contribute to the solution, innovate in times of uncertainty, and accommodate necessary lifestyle changes galvanized us into action. We unified as a community; while physically distant from one another, we contributed to the success of an online learning initiative--never before attempted on such a wide scale. We reached out to one another as good neighbors should. We checked on family members, picked up needed groceries, and gave a little extra effort to think about who might need support. In a short amount of time, we have learned more about ourselves, what we can tolerate, what we are capable of. By collectively stepping into a shared, difficult situation, we remind ourselves that not only are we interconnected but, more importantly, we are interdependent.

The transformation of our traditional school rules and routines reminded us of some important truths. Perhaps we more fully appreciate how our schools are a hub of social-emotional interaction and the very touchstone around which so many of us organize our lives. When the usual framework was no longer feasible, our community came together at a critical, unstable time to provide consistency and protection; online learning has kept us all connected despite necessary social distance and remained a protective factor in our lives and our homes. The continuation of academic instruction online-enabled learning to carry on, provided needed structure to our day, and furthered students' relationships with school staff. In addition, it crystallized the important social contract between school and community. School administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff set the project in motion, but our students and their families made it work.

And now, a needed break! A well-earned recess from a different version of school. A vacation into....more social distancing? The thought of our daily structures being diluted once again may trigger feelings of apprehension and anticipatory stress. Without the framework of school (traditional or online), what then will take its place over break?

The week ahead is a time to let our minds wander and for family life to take precedence. It is also an opportunity for us to take a well-deserved and much-needed break from what we have been through and recharge ourselves to embrace the new normal in the weeks ahead. This time may force us to confront, accept, and channel our emotions as immersing ourselves in family life often does. However, let's not allow the promise and possibilities of our growth to turn into a

feeling of undue pressure to fill your time with a insta-worthy creativity - as uplifting and inspiring as it is to view. A break is designed to be a pause - a time of respite, reflection, and recovery. Instead, plan your days and structure your time with opportunities for connection and meaningful moments that matter and memories worth remembering. I encourage you to begin and end your upcoming break with one thing in mind - the health and wellness of you and your family.