

THE MCKINLEY TIMES

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Serving the McKinley Community Since 2020

Volume II

Distance Learning at McKinley During the “Corona Crisis”



A McKinley TK student completes a science lesson on an iPad.

by Delilah Prager

The coronavirus crisis has had an impact on schools around the world. Schools are closed, which means that we can no longer meet physically to learn. McKinley is doing a lot to help solve this learning problem. One of the things McKinley is doing is distance learning, which means people are learning online with Zoom and other digital learning platforms. However, some students may have limited or no access to the internet or computers, which may make it harder for them to learn.

Distance Learning

I asked a few teachers at McKinley what they were doing for distance

learning. Kindergarten teacher Dr. Moore summarized what many teachers are doing, including using “a variety of platforms (Google classroom, SeeSaw, Zoom, etc.) by which to connect with students.” Third grade teacher Ms. Kirven added: “What’s working well is using platforms that have become free (with no time limits) for teachers, like Zoom, to virtually meet with students. It’s so nice to see their faces, even if it is on a screen.” Second grade teacher Ms. Dempsey also saw positives in “having the option to pace learning individually [and] giving families choices.”

Challenges with Online Teaching and Screen Time

However, there were also many challenges raised by the teachers interviewed. Ms. Kirven said it is very difficult to give students immediate feedback since it is difficult to see their work. I know many houses have lots of people which make it hard to share computers/devices and/or hard to concentrate with so many other things going on.”

Teachers also raised concerns about the amount of screen time kids are having. Ms. Kirven said that, “I appreciate computers for what they can do to help us, but I am really struggling with the idea of kids learning all day in front of a screen.

continued on page 2

NEWS

“Crisis” continued from page 1

Nothing will ever replace real books for me.”

Do all Students Have Internet Access?

Teachers are also worried about whether they can reach all of their students. Second grade teacher Ms. Dempsey said it has been a challenge to find “time for live meetings that works for all students. While many students have received Chromebooks from McKinley or have computers at home, the internet can be unpredictable. This unpredictability makes it tough for all students to participate in live and interactive class sessions.”

To tie into that, Kindergarten teacher Dr. Moore raised concerns about “being able to ensure that everyone is able to get online. Even with technology, there may be dueling factors in a home, such as family members trying to work, while a student needs assistance getting online. There’s no way to guarantee that a Zoom class scheduled doesn’t conflict with something else. When we are distanced from our students, we cannot follow up the same way we would in a classroom.”

Ms. Dempsey also talked about some of the challenges of teaching younger students online: “There is also the issue of younger students needing help to connect and navigate to resources online; this is particularly challenging as their caregivers may be working (either

at home, or away from the house). While some parents may be working from home, they need to focus on work during normal school hours.”

This transition to distance learning in Kindergarten is especially tough. Dr. Moore said, “While I think any teacher would tell you that they prefer in person interactions with their students, it feels as though few people truly realize how challenging this is with our youngest learners. Kindergarten has always been its own magical world, but to be told that students are to work independently, when we know the realities of this age, is a bit of a challenge. In addition, so much of our learning in Kindergarten comes from our human interactions, and distance learning can’t replace those precious moments.”

Adjustments for Everyone

There have been adjustments for everyone, including students, staff, and parents/guardians. McKinley Elementary School Principal, Dr. Benjamin said, “Teachers are faced with having to suddenly transform artfully developed lessons into an entirely new digital remote format. Parents have unexpectedly become homeschool teachers simultaneously working from home. And students have had to learn how to navigate friendships and learning through a screen.”

Dr. Benjamin also talked about how people are coming together “with impressive bravery and strength. Teachers have jumped into distance

learning, and are showing a heartfelt compassion and commitment to our students. Students are finding ways to be creative, doing things like writing pandemic journals, working on passion projects and more. Students are also seeing how they can help in the community, by making masks, drawing pictures for those in assisted living care, and checking on friends via Zoom.”

McKinley Pride

Dr. Benjamin concluded on a positive note: “While we may be far apart physically, at McKinley we have come together in the face of this challenge. I have never been more proud to be a McKinley Lion.”

In addition to distance learning, McKinley is also helping in other ways. McKinley is still giving out free lunches and is even lending computers. The Superintendent recently said that “SMMUSD will continue to provide breakfast and lunch to all students.” This shows some of the ways that McKinley Elementary is helping students during this crisis.

Interested in developing a Service Learning Project for McKinley’s Virtual Open House on May 22?

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to watch Ms. DW’s “How to Plan a Service Learning Project” video:



NEWS

Parks And Beaches Are Closed. What Should We Do?



The beaches in Santa Monica are closed to the public.

by Juliet Simon

The quarantine was a big shock to everyone. For the first week it was filled with trips to the beach and going to parks. You might have also driven out of your town to go on a hike. However, beaches and parks have now been closed and we have been advised to stay in close distance to our homes. The city officials did this because parks and beaches are very social places. We have been advised to stay in close distance to our homes because the officials want to keep the virus contained.

Truthfully though, only the parts of the public areas that would have the most germs are off limits. You will see play structures taped off because kids play there and adults could touch them while bringing their kids to the park. Certain areas of the grass might have signs telling

you not to walk there. You can still wander around parks, though. In the Santa Monica parks I've visited during the quarantine I've found that most paths and grassy areas are still open. However, on Easter all parks were closed 100% to prevent picnic goers and people who wanted to do Easter egg hunts.

Beaches are a different story. Officials closed all aspects of beaches because there were too many people treating the quarantine like a vacation and going to the beach to socialize. This caused much more interaction and made the chances of getting COVID-19 higher. Of course, it's not possible to tape off miles and miles and miles of beaches, but there are signs at every entrance and police are giving people tickets who are parking along the PCH or walking on the beach.

However, this does not mean that you can't find alternatives to exer-

cise. I asked a few students from McKinley what they were doing for exercise and to keep healthy. Sammy, from Mr. Edwards' class, said that she has been rollerskating, jump-roping, and using her scooter. When I asked Roqeia, another student from Mr. Edwards' class what she had been doing, she told me, "Well, I have been looking up exercises on YouTube to stay healthy, and I also go on a lot of walks."

Rashida, from Ms. Buckner's class said, "I have been doing the online PE. But now since it's spring break, I usually do stretches and then go outside for either a walk or a jog. For the people who don't go outside and always stay home, I recommend going outside for a bit, but if you can't, you can go outside on your balcony or outside your yard. At least some Vitamin D will be great for you!" Olivia, also from Mr. Edwards' class, told me that she has been jumping on her trampoline. "One thousand a day!"

As for me, I have been walking to two places in particular. One is Clover Park. While the play structures and tower are closed, the path around the park and past the Santa Monica airport is still open. There are a lot of grassy areas to run around on and hills to go up and down. The other area is the north of Montana neighborhood, where there is some very cool and beautiful architecture.

Although the restrictions are hard and it weighs on us, sometimes during quarantine you find new and beautiful things.

NEWS

What Changes Are We Making In Response to COVID-19?



photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels

by Sammy Ankowski

Coronavirus has hit the world pretty hard. Businesses are closing, restaurants are only delivering, and libraries are closed. So what are we doing to stop it? Are all changes necessary? I asked a Santa Monica citizen, and two McKinley students what they thought.

McKinley parent, Andy Ankowski told me about some upsides and downsides of these changes, such as staying home, are causing. “Downsides are that there are small businesses that rely on people walking in, and when they lose those people they lose the money. There are some upsides, too, including the environment. The air has gotten cleaner, and I’m no expert, but the oceans have gotten better, too, all from people not driving as much. I hope that when this is all over, people can

take what they learned from this, and realize the possibilities that we have.”

McKinley 4th grader, Delilah Prager also added, “There are dramatic changes in people’s lives. I think that one is because restaurants and public spaces are closed. This makes huge changes on people’s lives because that is what most of their life is.” I asked her if changes are making life harder, and she said, “It really depends on if you’re talking about the environment or people. For people it will be harder to change. It would probably be harder because it’s more difficult to get groceries now, and it’s easier to be bored when you’re stuck inside. For the environment, it’s better because not as many people are driving or going on trains. This will definitely lower greenhouse gases.”

Although there are many difficulties, she thinks all of them are “necessary to stop Coronavirus.”

McKinley 4th grader, Olivia Zappia said,

“I think that staying home is hard. I think it’s good if we go outside at least once a day. Everyone needs exercise, and when we’re all outside we can keep a distance. Some of the changes we are making are good, it just depends on the way you look at them.”

In conclusion, although there are many ways in which the changes are not great, there are upsides, too, that we just have to look for.

Earth Day: The Impact of Coronavirus on Earth

by Angie De Togni

Wednesday, April 22 was Earth Day! For those of you who don’t know what that is, Earth Day is a day celebrated to demonstrate support for environmental protection. The main goal of this day is to also raise awareness on the negative impact our actions have on Earth as a whole.

Now that we have that out of the way, I’m sure we can all agree that the coronavirus is a very terrible event. How is this related to Earth Day you ask? Well, while the virus itself may be a bad thing, its

continued on page 4

NEWS

“Earth” continued from page 3 artificial flavors or modifications.

effects on the Earth aren't that negative. For example, in Beirut, Lebanon the skies have cleared there, whereas it used to be a country with very high levels of air pollution. In Italy, nitrogen dioxide emissions are fading away over the country, which has never happened before. There is also cleaner air and cleaner water worldwide.

Because we are encouraged to stay in our homes, we are unable to celebrate Earth Day by doing activities like beach cleanups and other group projects. Here are some ideas to celebrate Earth Day at home:

The first thing you can do is conserve water. Try and limit showers and baths to only 5-10 minutes instead of 30. You could also try and not leave the water running when you're not using it. I know this is a very simple idea, but it will have a big impact. The next idea is actually a fun activity! Plant a tree! If you don't have any seeds, don't worry. You can buy seeds online. This idea is great because not only will it help the environment, it's super fun and easy. The third and final idea is to plant a garden. As I said before, you can buy seeds online if you don't have any. Even though it's very similar to tree planting, I think it's better, because you have a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, and herbs to plant. By doing this activity you'll have fresh produce straight from your backyard (or wherever you're making your garden) and it won't have any

In conclusion, we might not be in the best situation but, you always have to remember to look at the bright side of things.

Distance Learning: Good Or Bad?

by Sammy Ankowski

Distance learning is what we're all doing right now — it's the only way we're learning during the quarantine. But, are there upsides? Are there downsides?

McKinley parent and professor, Amber Ankowski informed me about some downsides research has shown. “Distance learning is not the best way to learn, because studies have shown that people learn better when being in front of a real person than in front of a computer or screen. It's easier to focus on a person in front of you.” Along with that, “Plus, people can have a hard time connecting to the internet, Zoom sessions can be cut off, and noise and sound do not always work.”

4th grade teacher, David Edwards also said that this may cause challenges in the school year. “I'm going to have to plan really carefully about what students should learn, and when. I have to think about what lessons I can teach on Zoom, what I can teach in pre-recorded lessons, and what I expect you to

already know.”

Both of these teachers are ones at higher levels. Ed Curry, a McKinley kindergarten teacher, has a different take on it.

He said, “In a way, I am no longer my Kindergarteners' primary teacher; the parents are. Unfortunately, the reality is that some parents have to work, some families are sharing one computer, and some families may not have internet access, so not everyone can come to Zoom meetings.” He goes on to say, “However, we, as humans, can find good in any situation, no matter how dire. I feel that this gives parents a better chance to see what their children do during the day. On a more global scale, the air quality is getting better because fewer cars are out on the road.” So, from his perspective, there may still be a few good outcomes.

Overall, distance learning is not an ideal way to learn, nor is it the easiest. However, we are all in this situation, and there are many things we can do to help each other.

[Click here](#) to check out Mr. Sinfield's 2nd Graders in this heartwarming “TP Toss” video!



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Finding New Books to Read While We Stay-at-Home



Photo by Renato Abati from Pexels

by Sage Moore

Books are a great, fun way to keep busy and fill in the extra time we all have now. These are some of my favorite books that will definitely inspire you to read more. I hope you enjoy them!

Nat Enough by Maria Scrivan: If you like graphic novels like I do, I would definitely recommend this book about a girl who is just starting middle school. Her best friend is drifting away from her causing Natalie (aka Nat) to feel left out. Having lost some of her confidence, she uses ART as a way of expression and to regain confidence. Oth-

er graphic novels you may like include: *The Babysitters Club*, *Smile, Sisters*, *Guts*, *Roller Girl*, and *Cardboard Kingdom*.

Front Desk by Kelly Yang: Yang writes about a young girl, Mia, who immigrated from China to California. As you can tell from the title, her family manages a motel, which happens to be near Disneyland!

Berenstain Bears created by Stan and Jan Berenstain: While these books may be for younger children, I still enjoy reading them. This “bear” family - Papa Bear, Mama Bear, Brother Bear, Sister Bear and Honey Bear - lives in “Bear Country.” Every book tells an adventure this family experiences and they tend to have a moral to each story. *Choose Your Own Adventure:* Authors R.A. Montgomery and Edward Packard, these books have been around for ages! The cool thing is that you can choose your path as you read. Choose the “wrong” way and you end in disaster. Choose the “right” path and you continue through the story.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: I like this series because the author, Jeff Kinney, tells the stories through the main character’s perspective. This character, Greg, is very funny which makes for a humorous book. Try one, and if you like it, you will have many more to keep you busy.

Percy Jackson Series: The first book in this Rick Riordan series is

continued on page 7

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

“New Books” continued from page 7

called *The Lightning Thief*. It is about a teenage boy, named Percy, who learns he has special “powers.” This book is full of adventure and it is very hard to put it down once you start reading. The Getty Villa had a self-guided tour called the Percy Jackson Tour which was really fun. *Extra Yarn*: A young girl who lives in a colorless village, finds a box of yarn. As she begins to knit for everyone and everything in the village, it becomes not only colorful but evident that the box is magical. When word gets out, an unexpected visitor comes and has their eye on something special. Author: Mac Barnett

The Napping House: In this odd house, there is a dog, a mouse, a cat, a flea, a grandma, a child...and you will have to read it to see what happens. Watch how the colors change in the illustrations as you progress in this book, by Audrey and Don Wood

The Whatever After Series by Sarah Mlynowski: This series main characters, Abby and Jonah, go on many adventures to different fairy tales. They always seem to “mess up” the story but always fix it before the end of the book.

Here are some suggestions by other readers:

The Last Kids on Earth series by Max Brallier: Recommended by Ben Haberman, Student Council President and 5th Grade Student.

Ben says “It’s very interesting if you like action. And I like that the kids take over earth. It’s not scary, it’s a cartoon.”

SMMUSD parent, Anne Buster, and her sons have a few great recommendations:

If I Built a School by Chris Van Dusen: It’s funny and I wish I went to a school like that. Griffin, age 10.

The How to Train Your Dragon series by Cressida Cowell (12 books): It’s nothing like the movies but still a really good action adventure. During this time it’s great to get involved in a series that has a lot of books, since we have a lot of time. Bennett, age 13.

Miss Anne says “This is a great time to escape into a book, like a fantasy or comforting read, which can transport us away from today’s stresses.” All suggestions are aimed at 4-6 grade.

If you have no attention span, try *The Devil’s Storybook* by Natalie Babbit. It has very funny short stories that will give you something to think about.

If you want to get away from it all, try diving into a different world like that of *The Talking Parcel*, a fantasy book I can almost guarantee you’ve never heard of. Children get transported to a fantasy world filled with mystical characters after finding a box on a beach. You can find it for free on the Kayray Reads podcast where you can hear her read it to

you!

If you want to keep your busy mind occupied on something else, try a mystery. My recommendation is *Green Glass House* by Milford. A mysterious old house has a cast of strange characters and it’s up to you to figure out how they all fit together.

To access books while we are in Stay-at-Home, here are some sites to consider :

- Open Library
- Audible
- Scholastic
- Amazon

If you want to know more books beyond these, you can do the following:

- What are your friends reading? Ask them for suggestions.
- Sometimes it is good to judge a book by it’s cover, so choose a book that “looks” good and give it a try. Just make sure it is age-appropriate and close to your reading level.
- Think about what your teacher had in the classroom library and ask them for a “just-right” book.
- Your family will be able to direct you to many good options.
- Once they reopen, you may have access to the public library, the librarian in the children’s section will be very helpful. Just let them know what you like to read and ask for suggestions.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Photo by JESHOOOTS.COM on Unsplash

Uplifting Movies for Uncertain Times

by Daisy Moe

During this time of social distancing because of the Coronavirus, many of us might be starting to feel bored, sad or miss their friends. Many of us are passing time by using screens or watching movies.

I would like to suggest a few movies that are streaming on the TV. The reason that I am suggesting these movies is because I find them exciting, funny, and they have happy endings.

The first movie I would recommend is *The Sound of Music* because it's a musical with fun sing alongs.

I would also recommend *Despicable Me* because a man who is not used to kids starts warming up

to three orphans, and the movie is also a comedy and funny. This particular movie just recently came out on Netflix.

Trolls World Tour was supposed to come out in the theaters, but because of the shelter in place orders, it was released for streaming. I would recommend *Trolls* because it's funny, and a bunch of different pop singers make appearances and sing fun songs.

Abominable is one of the two cartoon Yeti movies that came out in the past year. I would recommend the movie because it's an exciting adventure about a young girl who goes on a journey with two friends to bring a Yeti back home to Mount Everest.

Frozen 2 is a fun movie because the sisters learn a valuable lesson: they can't do things on their own. The

movie is in the genre of adventure and comedy.

In *Sonic*, Sonic and a guy named Tom adventure to San Francisco. During the whole movie, Sonic's most valuable items are his rings that help him teleport into different dimensions.

Shrek is about an ogre that has an adventure with a donkey around a world of fantasy characters. I would recommend the movie, because it's kid friendly and has no violence.

Little Women is worth for it's memorable quotations. For example, one of the sisters says, "Life's too short to be mad at one of my sisters." The movie is also a no violence movie, and the only thing that I personally wasn't a fan of was how they were going back and forth in flashbacks.

Goonies may be a 1980s movie, but it's an amazing adventure movie involving pirates and hilarious comedy. I would recommend this particular movie for kids who don't get easily scared, or younger kids in general.

I hope you can find these movies entertaining and funny. You can find most of these movies on different streaming channels on your TV, but you can find just *Abominable* on Hulu.

Check out the McKinley Twitter!
@McKinleyLions.

[Click here!](#)

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Jude's Top Ten: Quarantine Activities



Photo from Pexels.com

by Jude Pandola-Paik

During the Coronavirus, we need activities to keep us busy. Most people are stuck inside and can't do what they normally do. I usually hang out with friends or play pony baseball or go to school, but now I can't do any of those things. Here's a list of activities you can do during these difficult times:

1. You can play a board game. I've been playing "Sorry" with my family. It's a fun strategy game where you try to be the first one with 3 of your pieces in your safe zone.
2. You can play video games. I've been playing Madden 20. It is a fun online football game where you try to build a team with a bronze team. Then you do some challenges to make your team better and better.
3. You can Zoom. I've been Zooming with my friends. We always play Madden when we Zoom.
4. You can bake with your family. I learned how to make banana muffins.
5. You can watch TV and movies. I watched Back To The Future.
6. You can make art. I made some awesome art with my family. We made foxes.
7. You can read. I've been reading *Wringer* with my mom.
8. You can still play outside, but please wear a mask. I've been playing football with my dad.
9. You can help someone. I've been helping my sister in Prodigy, which is a fun online game where you have to finish a quest with math. Or, you can make someone a card to make them feel better.
10. You can go for a bike ride. I went on a bike ride with my family in the neighborhood.

I've been keeping busy by doing all of these activities. It's important to have fun while staying safe. I hope this ends soon. Stay safe.

A Note From Ms. DW & Ms. Ross

It has been such an honor to continue to advise The McKinley Times staff during these trying times. We were able to meet weekly over Zoom and, as always, were so impressed with these amazing writers and editors. All 4th and 5th graders were invited to contribute. If you are interested in becoming involved with the McKinley Times, please contact Ms. DW at dwienersmmusd.org or Ms. Ross at mrosssmmusd.org.

~Ms. DW and Ms. Ross

