



F. A. Day Middle School
Newsletter
May 11, 2020

Quotes of the Week

“He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark.”

– J.K. Rowling

“Mother love is the fuel that enables a normal human being to do the impossible.”

– Marion C. Garretty, Writer

“Being a mother is learning about strengths you didn't know you had.”

– Linda Wooten, Writer

“To describe my mother would be to write about a hurricane in its perfect power.”

– Maya Angelou, Poet

“Sometimes the strength of motherhood is greater than natural laws.”

– Barbara Kingsolver, Novelist

“Motherhood is a choice you make everyday, to put someone else's happiness and well-being ahead of your own, to teach the hard lessons, to do the right thing even when you're not sure what the right thing is...and to forgive yourself, over and over again, for doing everything wrong.”

-- Donna Ball

THIS WEEK'S QUOTES

Mother's Day is one of those times when I simply cannot choose just one quote. As a mother myself, and also as someone whose own mother made such an indelible mark on my character and values, I live each day with the deep understanding of the impact that mothers' and also women who serve as mother figures, have on our lives.

This year, I chose to collect a series of quotes about the strength of mothers and mother figures in our lives, particularly in light of the many stories of sacrifice and heroism in this moment of crisis. Overnight, mothers have been asked to shift their usual multi-tasking, self-sacrificing practices into a new gear just to keep their families safe and well.

Let's begin with the mothers within our Day Faculty who every day are juggling the pressure of being the best mother to their own children while also working to meet the needs of their students, who like their own children, have been launched into a crisis without preparation or forewarning. Sending emails at 2:00 a.m., muting and turning off their camera during meetings to attend to their own children and jumping back in without missing a beat, taking the lead on team communication and making evening phone calls or scheduling Zoom sessions with struggling students when their own children are finally asleep. I want you to know I see you..... Your sacrifices will never be forgotten by your family and school community.

And then of course there are all those mothers in our school community who are nurses, doctors, first responders, grocery clerks and delivery workers, who are working evenings so that they can supervise their children during the day, worried that stopping will jeopardize a life or render them unable to feed their family.... I see you all as well.

In each of our households and families mothers are taking on roles as doctors, teachers, camp counselors, therapists and CEOs of their households, and that is in addition to their professional occupations that help pay the bills. There are also mothers caring not just for their own

children, but for their newly acquired extended family-- our elderly neighbors, sick friends and stressed colleagues...I see you all.

Please join me in taking a moment to honor the strength of those women in your lives by showing your gratitude and acknowledging their sacrifice. The impact of their strength will resonate the lives of so many for years to come.

LIVE SESSIONS MESSAGING

The most commonly asked question about our current distance learning plan is about live sessions – specifically their purpose and whether they are mandatory. My video to students last week was to remind students that live sessions are part of their required time on learning in our distance-learning plan. The answer about whether every session is mandatory lies in the team’s Weekly Learning Plan, where the specific purpose of each live session will be clearly stated, whether it is office hours to answer questions or mandatory whole group discussion.

Below are some guidelines for parents to reinforce with their children:

- Review the purpose of the live sessions in the Weekly Learning Plan to determine your participation. Some sessions are for review for students who have questions or need additional support, while others include mandatory whole group activities. The teachers will identify the purpose specifically in the Weekly Learning Plans.
- Email your child’s teachers directly with any questions about requirements for live sessions, particularly if your child is saying that they are all optional.
- You will be notified by a teacher if your child has been invited to a review session. Please take these “invitations” as strongly recommended as it means that your child may not fully grasp a concept and needs the review time in live session as an additional support.

WEEKLY LEARNING PLANS

In order to support your ability to guide your child and plan for use of technology in your household, effective the week of May 18th, we will be sending home the Weekly Learning Plans NO LATER THAN Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m. This is in response to parent feedback that many of you have your own work responsibilities on Monday

morning and can better support your children in planning their week if you receive the learning plans before Monday when learning is meant to begin.

VIRTUAL CLUBS

We have created a new page on our website that lists all of the virtual clubs currently being offered through our After School Academic and Enrichment Program. See the link to the “Clubs at Home” page below:

[CLUBS AT HOME](#)

Highlighted on this page is one of our newest club offerings, the Sports Media Club. See a description of the club below:

SPORTS MEDIA CLUB

Interested Sports Media, branding, marketing and journalism? The FA Day Sports Media Club will explore topics including:

- Branding in college and pro sports
- Sports Journalism: Print, TV, Radio
- Learn about your favorite sports journalists and their career paths
- Social media in sports
- How journalists cover athletes and teams
- Opportunities to research your favorite teams/athletes and practice your own journalism skills
- Cover your favorite sporting events/athletes
- Hear from the pro's! Special Guest Speakers

When:

- We will meet Every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:45-4:15
Starting Thursday May 7 from 2:45-4:15

How to join/attend:

- Sign by joining the Sports Media Schoology Group: KG75-649T-NGPDJ
 - Zoom: A zoom link will be provided on the Schoology group page Thursday morning. All NPS Zoom Norms apply.

Email Mr.Quackenbush if you are interested or have any questions:
quackenbushc@newton.k12.ma.us

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP: *Middle School Matters*

The next meeting of the *Middle School Matters* discussion group is

Monday, May 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

See the meeting link below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/378647716?pwd=eTlncW13T1dFV3VuQoN3K29lWkFodz09>

Meeting ID: 378 647 716 Password: 9NzHgh

In preparation for our book discussion, I uploaded a copy of the parent discussion guide for Phyllis Fagell's *Middle School Matters*. On Monday, April 27th, we will be discussing the introduction and first 5 chapters. See the discussion guide questions linked below:

[Middle School Matters Parent Discussion Guide](#)

THIS WEEK'S PRINCIPAL HOURS

For the next month, I will only be holding office hours for 45 minutes to include all three grades as I am beginning my visits to the 5th grade classrooms and this will take up some of my office hours time. Please see a link to the Principal Office Hours for this week and the time.

Thursday, May 14, 2020 from 12:00 – 12:45 p.m.

See the link below to join:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86498824871?pwd=WERLdox6dURPbzNNWmNzUzhoaFFoUTo9>

Meeting ID: 864 9882 4871

Password: 2kyyVr

Norms:

- To join, please click on the Zoom meeting link below at the designated time.
- You need to use the chat feature to write questions.
- This is not a “drop in office hours”. It is disruptive to add members while the session is going on, so I will only admit participants up to 3 minutes past the start time of the meeting.
- Please join at the designated grade level time to allow for smaller groups. We will use the same link to join. We will admit participants into the Zoom session only on the half hour based upon the grade level schedule. See below:

QUESTIONS AND ANSWER PARKING LOT

We made the choice not to record the Principal Office Hours to encourage an open dialogue, but in return I have captured the questions that parents shared during the three grade level sessions and recorded my answers in the ongoing Q&A Parking Lot that we have created to track ongoing questions about distance learning at Day. See that link to those questions and answers below:

[Parking Lot for Family Questions](#)

Please note that this document will remain live, and you can also use it to add your own questions. I will check it periodically to respond. The benefit of using this format is that many parents have similar questions, and you are able to view all of the responses.

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

HOMEROOM HANGOUT

Every week we continue to adjust our distance-learning model to better meet the needs of our students. As you know, our Roundtable Advisory Program is a way that we have

maintained connections with students and supported their social emotional well-being. We are hearing from many of your children that they miss connecting with their friends.

While this is difficult to replicate completely in a virtual setting, this week, teams will be experimenting with a 15 minute block of time called “Homerom Hangout” where homeroom teachers and their advisory partners will divide homerooms into small groups of 10-12 students and create a once a week opportunity to have fun and connect with each other. Teams should be including information about this in the Weekly Learning Plans this coming week. This is a trial program, and as such we will be looking for student feedback on how it supports their ability to sustain peer and student/teacher connections during these challenging times.

HABITS OF MIND

During Principal Office Hours, some Day Parents have expressed concern over the impact of distance learning on the development of the habits that students need to be successful. Habits in a traditional sense are practices that are internalized through repetition such as perseverance and grit, organization, and time management. “Habits of Mind” go further to identify habits of how effective students and human beings think including taking on other’s perspectives (thinking flexibly), questioning, analyzing and awareness of thought process (metacognition), taking risks, assuming a growth mindset and problem solving.

I understand the worry that the lack of a structured school setting may lead to deficits in on-task behaviors and perseverance and interfere with or challenge organization. Many of the structures we have put in place such as the streamlined Weekly Learning Plan are meant to support the continued development of habits such as executive functioning skills. That said, I would suggest that that our unexpected shift into a virtual distance-learning setting also creates opportunities for us to focus in more depth on those habits of mind that may be otherwise underutilized.

The need for a growth mindset and a stance of continuous learning and sense for the importance of interdependence is critical to success in this virtual world. Our faculty are modeling taking risks by trying on new vehicles for delivering content, and our students are understanding the importance of learning continuously and interdependently as teachers are asking them to share their work and ideas with students to promote shared learning and resubmit work based upon detailed feedback

until they master understanding. The practice of continuous learning based upon feedback is even more possible in a virtual world.

Below is an article with an overview of these habits of mind as you may also find an opportunity to promote their development from home. More to come on this topic in the weeks ahead:

[Integrating the 16 Habits of Mind](#)

DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR OUT-OF-ASSIGNED DISTRICT REQUESTS

Due to the closure of the Newton Public Schools, the deadline to submit applications for Out-of-Assigned District has been extended until June 1, 2020. If you would like to request an Out-of-Assigned District placement for your student(s), please utilize the Google Form below to submit your application. If you have already submitted an application, there is no need to complete a new form. All placement decisions will be made as close to June 30 as possible.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1U2sMybKoPR9ULv6wDa8IJ2S8fWiaUP3D8wYeQR7PbMo/edit>

If you have any questions, please contact:

Elementary Education (K-5) Maureen McAdams (mcadamsm@newton.k12.ma.us)
Secondary Education (6-12) Lisa Mazzola (mazzolal@newton.k12.ma.us)

Sincerely,

Khita Pottinger-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education
Toby Romer, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

I would like to begin by thanking our technology department for their efforts to support families and faculty in this new distance-learning environment. I know that the difficulties in accessing Schoology and other platforms last week led to a great deal of frustration on our first day of live sessions. In response, our technology department has

created a **direct email** for parents to use when they have specific technology issues. See below:

Tech Support Email for Families:

familytechsupport@newton.k12.ma.us

Additionally, technology updates and resources will be shared on the website page linked below:

Technology Support Website

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/3639>

Chromebook Distribution

Requesting an NPS Device for Home Use during School Closures

We are committed to helping families that may need access to devices at home in order to engage in online learning opportunities. **If you do not have a web-capable device at home other than a cell phone** (such as an iPad, Chromebook, PC, or Mac) **please complete this [request form](#)** (<https://forms.gle/K3SgotNY38V1ncNe9>) Our technology support team will be in touch with you to discuss next steps.

Please note that we are now determining if we can support families who have more than three children by creating access to additional Chromebooks. Fill out the link below if that situation applies to you family.

Please fill out the form below if you need to request additional devices. If you do not need any additional devices, no further action is required on your part.

Form: <https://forms.gle/YCZZ2NaB4kcrbyKy9>

MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beginning this week, we will be posting “morning announcements” on the distance learning page of our Day Middle School website.

Please see the link below:

[Day Morning Announcements](#)

Morning announcements were a big part of our routines when in school, and I think this is a good way to maintain your child’s connections with the school community and also create a formal start to their day in a distance -learning environment.

SCHEDULE FOR LIVE SESSIONS

In our discussions during principal office hours, parents asked if live sessions would be scheduled at the same time every week. The sessions will be on the same days of the week and during the same 2- 2.5-hour block, but the actual structure of the sessions may change each week depending on student needs. For example, one week a teacher may choose to schedule shorter live sessions with smaller groups and another week they might schedule whole class or even team sessions. Below is a schedule of the general block of time in which each live session is be scheduled:

- ❖ 6th Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.
- ❖ 7th Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday: 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- ❖ 8th Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday: 12:00 – 2:30 p.m.
- ❖ On Team Special Ed. Teachers: Live Sessions: (same as the grade level schedule above)
- ❖ World Language Teachers: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 9:00 -11:00 a.m.
- ❖ Arts Rotation Teachers: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- ❖ PE/Wellness: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- ❖ Lit Lab and Math Lab Live Sessions: 6th gr: 1- 3 p.m., 7th gr: 9 – 11 a.m., 8th gr.11 –1 pm
- ❖ Exploratory Classes: Live Sessions may be Monday if available.

SPRING BOOK CHALLENGE

The Newton Free Library is hosting a spring book challenge. Families or classes can sign up. See the link below:

<https://newtonfreelibrary.beanstack.org/reader365>

ROUNDTABLE ADVISORY AT HOME

Our Roundtable Advisory Planning Group has created a website with resources for families to access activities from home including team building, fun challenges, conversation starters at the dinner table and wellness activities that all foster a sense of connection, community and social emotional and physical wellness. The web site is linked through the Day Middle School site, or can be found below:

<https://sites.google.com/newton.k12.ma.us/roundtablehome/home>

DAY LIBRARY RESOURCES

Ms. Lightfoot will be offering Live Sessions in the library based upon the following schedule:

9-9:30- Grade 6
9:30-10- Grade 7
10-10:30 Grade 8

See the update below from our school librarian, Ms. Lightfoot:

Hello Day Students,

I hope you are all doing well during these difficult and uncertain times. I really miss seeing you and having conversations with you each day. Our Library website offers many great resources; one page that will be particularly helpful to you is our Ebooks & Audiobooks Page. This can be found on the library's website under the top navigation bar.

I have created and will update a Library Schoology group for each grade where you can find links to optional activities that you may enjoy exploring/contributing to. I will also communicate ways that we can continue to build community and connection through these groups. If you have never attended one of our Lit Lunch groups, now is the time! You can expect a video of me reading a few chapters every few days on the Schoology group. Feel free to listen during your lunch time, or whenever.

Grade 6 Schoology Code M2QC-RTPG-MXWPF

Grade 7 Schoology Code QMZG-QM4Q-HKF7Z

Grade 8 Schoology Code 6GPM-J4F6-96DXR

I update the Library's Instagram daily (_daymiddleschoollibrary_) and my professional Twitter account (LightsInTheLibs) with what I am reading, fun activities I come across and, of course, cute pictures of my cats! The stream for these accounts is also available on the library's website. If you need anything, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Reach out if you need anything,

Ms. Lightfoot

GUIDANCE SCHOOLOGY COMMUNITIES

Each of your students should have received access to a grade level community created by the guidance counselors. This community includes resources for students on self-care topics from mindfulness to nutrition and stress reduction. Please reach out to your child's guidance counselor with any questions or if you are in need of any support.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Today I met virtually with Team IV student, Alexander Elvin, who is sponsoring an amazing community service project that I hope you will support. Alexander's family works in the medical field, and he is asking that our Day students and faculty write cards and encouraging words to the health care workers and their patients who are hospitalized with COVID19 and unable to see family or friends. Here is the information from Alexander that I will also be sharing with Day parents:

Hello students, faculty and parents of our community, my name is Alexander. Our doctors in Cambridge Health Alliance are working hard to get rid of this virus one step at a time, during this hard journey our doctors and the patients in these annex wards would appreciate a card or a craft that could bring them joy, confidence, and hope. We only ask if you would like to send cards to the doctors and to the sick. We remind you that this is not something that you must do but if you could make someone happy or hopeful by sending a card. Would you?

If so, write a card and drop it off at 125 Beaumont Ave Newton, MA.

My best to you and your families,

Jackie Mann

F. A. Day Principal

jacqueline_mann@newton.k12.ma.us

(617) 559-9100

On Twitter: @JMannNPS