No School Due to Coronavirus
By Renee L.

On March 12th, Newton Public Schools announced a school closure for a week due to Coronavirus. The time was extended until MA Governor Charlie Baker finally announced on April 21st that schools would remain closed for the rest of the academic year. Oak Hill Principal, Mr. Harutunian said, “I thought that this was going to be something for just a couple of weeks maximum; never in a million years did I think this would be something that would affect the entire rest of the school year.” As a result, online virtual classes (distance learning) is how students are attending school for the rest of the year. The learning plan that is helping everyone learn virtually was created by “50 administrators, coordinators and teachers who worked together for an intense period of about 10 days to draft the NPS Distance Learning Plan,” said Mr. Harutunian.

Educators are facing challenges that they have never had before. Not spending time with their students in person and building connections is very difficult. They are not able to help students individually as much. Mr. Harutunian said “Distance learning is not certainly comparable to face-to-face school.” Pre Coronavirus a student who didn’t understand something could ask a teacher to explain, but now they have to go through the process of emailing or using Zoom. Teachers also have to adapt to online classes and learn to use different forms of technology. This all happened in a matter of days, weeks.

Teachers also shared that they have worked really hard to get together virtually and plan and prepare materials and resources for use to continue student learning. Teachers were also asked if they thought whether Zoom lessons will happen on snow days now that we are capable of doing this. They felt that was an interesting idea but they would rather not have a “Zoom” snow day. It’s understandable because we all like a good snow day.

Coronavirus has hit all parts of the world. As we are all stuck in quarantine waiting for this pandemic to be over, hopefully a second wave doesn’t return, taking more lives and forcing another stay at home order. The important thing that teachers want their students to know is they want them to stay safe, healthy, and strong.
How People are Using Zoom
By: Ayman H.

With schools being shut down and businesses closing, children and adults are finding alternative ways to learn and work with Zoom. Zoom is an online meeting service where you can chat with friends or take meetings. In schools, teachers are using Zoom as a way to meet and teach classes. Due to this, lessons have been shortened considerably and now either just focus on the main topic or multiple classes cover something that could have been finished in an in person class. There are some drawbacks to zoom though. For students it's harder to ask a question because you only have a limited time in class and the only other way to ask it is through Schoology or a teachers office hours. Often it will be harder for the teacher to explain because they can't answer their question as easily if it needs to be shown. And if you have a meeting that's three people or more and is longer than 40 minutes than Zoom charges a fee. Newton Public Schools and Zoom has arranged for sessions to go longer than 40 minutes so teachers do not have to worry about limited time. There are also features like breakout rooms that can create smaller groups. As one 8th grade teacher shared, although it is difficult to teach via Zoom at times, she appreciates the opportunity to see her students even if it on the computer.

Most tests and quizzes for 3rd term have been canceled and the work passed in is graded for completion. With almost a third of the school year in quarantine no one really knows how this will affect the next school year for students. But thankfully, Zoom allows students to stay safe and be indoors while still learning and socializing.
How the Library Adapted to School Closure

By: Victor Lock

During the quarantine for COVID-19 people, students and teachers alike experienced changes to their daily lives. When we talk about school closure and keeping school active, one of the most active places in the school before closure was the library. People go there to talk, play games, get books and print work that’s due that morning, among other things. So due to school closure people can’t go to the library, yet Oak Hill Librarian Ms. Stehle has been able to adapt accordingly and make it as if the library was still open.

We asked Ms. Stehle to reflect on adapting to the school closure and keeping the library a place where students can continue to “go”. She shared that “both the ideas for having a virtual Library experience through a Schoology group and Library Chats came to me when I was exercising.” She then said that she talked with the other library staff and brainstormed and thought of ways to make it engaging for students and staff. “I am fortunate to work with a great middle school library team. Together we brainstormed ways to engage with our students and staff and to offer our services remotely. Teamwork makes the dream work!, she said.

She continued to express that the library is “The heart of the school. Yes, it’s a place to borrow books and do school work, but it’s also a place for people to connect and to form new relationships.” She explained that she started the library chats show so she could interview staff members so the community felt connected, “I had the idea to start a little show where I could interview Oak Hill staff members so we as a community could continue to feel connected.”

While it shows that the library has adapted to circumstances so well and quickly, she said that it was a group effort for the library to morph physical presence into a virtual one, “I cannot take credit for this on my own. It truly was because the middle school library team collaborates so well together that we could morph or physical presence to a virtual one.”

When asked if the library would keep some of what is being done distance-wise for when students get back into the building, she replied, “The middle school library team just launched Some Good Book News, a play on Oak Hill alumni John Krasinki’s Some Good News. In our show, we give brief book talks, share bookish news, and share what NPS teachers are reading. We just released our second episode and we’ve received great feedback from our viewers.”
Parent's Help in Lockdown
By Neilesh A

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The coronavirus pandemic has now infected much of the world resulting in widespread stay at home orders. You may have also heard about the unbelievable things that have happened in this time such as schools closing for the rest of the year, animals coming back to their habitats, sporting events getting canceled, and positive environmental outcomes. There are so many more but there is one thing some students might not have thought about and that is how much of an impact parents have on this situation.

There are new things being added to one's regular daily habits and one of the biggest ones is around education with distance learning. Many students responded to a question posed around parental participation in their child’s distance education. To begin with, all Oak Hill parents receive a Sunday night email with your child's weekly learning plan. Some students said their parents have been helping by making schedules so they can keep track of what they have to do and not forget to do it. Parents are helping with wifi and internet connections. One student shared, “my mom helps me get on the computer” This might be because people are not used to using sites like “zoom”, “google hangouts” or “google meets” among others. Another student's dad helps with network issues around the house which might be a problem. When everyone is using the wifi and internet for entertainment, education or work, it can impact the system. Some parents let their children know if anything new pops up and they make sure they do what is required before they can have a break and do other things. Some parents decide to teach and help their kids themselves, and other parents decide to let their kids work by themselves where they will not get disturbed or distracted by anything. What came through was that most parents have been really supportive and caring to their children in these tough times.

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**Weekly Goals for our students in team classes are listed in the chart below.**

*Zoom Meetings are linked to teacher name*

- **Self Care:** See the grid below.
- **Hunt Math:** Students will evaluate equations with two variables given a value for one of them and determine independent and dependent variables
- **Corruo Math:** Students will be able to work with data to create a line graph and understand the terms mean, median and mode.
- **Janow Social Studies:** Students will continue researching Changemakers and will create a Power Point.
- **Sedewitz Science:** Students will be able to identify characteristics of life and explore parts of cells.
- **Simpson ELA:** Students will continue to read and analyze The Giver.
- **Leary ELA/Academic Strategies (Password 216):** Students will continue to read and analyze book club novels.
- **Boehm**
- **World Language:** Click this link
- **Tech/Engineering, Art and Drama:** Click this link
- **Music, Band, Choir, and Orchestra:** Click this link
- **PE, Wellness and Health:** Click this link
- **ELL Classes, Academic Strategies, and Literacy Lab:** See the links below
How To Spend Time
By Aleeza A.

During these uncertain times, when nobody is allowed to hang out, all restaurants are closed, and most fun places to go to have been closed, there are very limited options on how to suppress waves of boredom. The question most likely lingering on everybody’s minds is whether it okay to hang out with friends. The answer has basically been no. With many options on how to spend time crossed off the list, what are people doing instead?

We asked Oak Hill students what they have been doing for fun during quarantine, and the most popular responses were reading, taking part in some form of exercise, playing video games, or watching Netflix and Youtube. There were also responses that shared creative ideas. One student was sewing masks! Not only is this an amazing way to help out in your community, but it’s also a good way to get away from a screen or get rid of some boredom. Another Oak Hill student created their own magic tricks! This is a very fun way to get creative and entertain your family.

There were quite a few ways Oak Hill students have been dealing with the quarantine. Whether it is playing video games, playing frisbee, or doing arts and crafts, what really matters that it is done safely.
Previous Pandemics - Why this One is Different
Ira S.

The world is experiencing a serious health crisis with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This pandemic has put us in circumstances that have caused things that we have never experienced before. Schools and workplaces all around the globe have closed. Once busy highways are near-abandoned. People are in their homes for weeks on end, only leaving to get food. And entire countries are in lockdown, drones patrolling the streets.

But although we've never gone through anything like this, has this happened before? The answer is yes and no. There have been pandemics in the past. But, a pandemic is not just an outbreak of a disease. To be a pandemic, the virus/disease has to be affecting an entire country, or in more extreme cases, like the current coronavirus, the whole world. In the past fifty years, there have been other dangerous virus outbreaks. However, we have had pandemics in the more distant past. Even so, the world hasn't quite experienced one in this way before. Since the last pandemic was more than a hundred years ago, there wasn't as quick of a spread of information as there is now. Even though the situation was just as bad, people didn't know the extent of it, and therefore couldn't make decisions to essentially shut down the world as we have today. The general public's information was very limited.

In recent years, there has been the Ebola (EVD) and Swine Flu (SIV) outbreaks. Both of those certainly made the news, and were extremely harmful, each killing tens of thousands of people. Two most notable pandemics the world has experienced are the Spanish Flu and the Bubonic Plague. Those both killed tens of millions of people, and were both pandemics by definition since they were all over the world (although the Plague was only in Eurasia and Northern Africa since they didn't have contact with the rest of the world quite yet.) The reason why these still did not have nearly the same effects aforementioned with the coronavirus again can be summed up with one word: information. There was no media in any form during the Plague, and during the Spanish Flu, there were newspapers and radios, no television and of course no internet! Radios were still in their earliest stages, having just been invented, there was very limited access to them. And newspapers gathered information slower than they do now. The writers had limited access to information, so even if the information was known in one country, it may have not been realized in another for a long time. This led to them not knowing the full effects of the disease of the global population. The world is currently going through something we have never experienced before. We are living in unprecedented times. But, needless to say, it is necessary. Lockdown has undoubtedly saved millions of people's lives, and hopefully, going forward, the pros of quarantine will outweigh the cons.
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Have A Nice Summer