



A note from Julie Bragdon, the Head of School

ITS LIKE WERE PEN PALS



MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF DENVER

Hellllloooooo is anybody out there?! (I am feeling like Winnie the Pooh calling out for friends in the Hundred Acre Wood as I sit down to write this to you.) I miss seeing you - coming through the Welcome Center, at Parent coffees, student events, or in the morning by the flagpole! I even miss my Thursday morning carline clipboard duty that would have been wet and cold this week.

So, here we are – a place we never thought we would be. Governor Polis announced on Wednesday that schools will remain closed until April 30 and looking at the COVID-19 virus outbreak graphs, even that distant date seems an unlikely end to our new normal. Like all of you I am experiencing a lot of grief missing what was supposed to happen this spring, both at MSD and personally, as well as the anticipatory grief of what might change in the world once we all come back together. This is big, sad stuff and I take comfort knowing I am not sitting with it alone.

What does give me hope is how hard our faculty and administration team are working behind the scenes to deliver an awesome distance learning Montessori education. Many of our team members have children of their own and, like you, are balancing this work with teaching and parenting at home. Dr. Montessori never taught us how to do pandemic schooling. We are learning, by the minute it seems, how to stay rooted in our sound Montessori pedagogy and also be true to the MSD mission to deliver a dynamic education. We are adapting our lessons, our routines, our classroom rituals and connections, our Specials, and we are getting creative making new lessons and finding new ways to meet your child's needs – from afar. This is big, amazing work that is happening, and based on my MSD email traffic coming in around the clock, it is thanks in large part to very long hours by your teachers, classroom assistants, and Education Directors. And we know our work is not done.

We will continue to evolve MSD's distance learning plan and add resources to support you at home. The [Resource Board](#) on Blackbaud continues to grow with all kinds of helpful tools and ways we can help each other. It was great seeing some of your faces on this week's Zoom calls with Dr. Sara Knickerbocker (check the Resource Board for great resources that she shared during these calls). I hope to see even more of you next week. The Student Support and Wellness Team is also

putting together more options to help you and your students during this time – stay tuned!

Like all of you – the MSD Board, and especially the Finance Committee, is trying to gain a more robust understanding of what this pandemic means for MSD next month, next year, and beyond. The Finance Committee is meeting frequently to guide our 55-year-old school through these uncharted waters, which in the immediate timeframe includes a commitment to not laying off any staff this school year. Taking care of each other is a community value that becomes even more important in difficult times. I will write more soon about this good work.

Thankfully, there are certainties that provide a good foundation for all that lies ahead: we are a committed group who care deeply about each other and our community and we have much to look forward to for the next school year.

This was shared with me today and I want you to read it too:

“When you go out and see the empty streets, the empty stadiums, the empty train platforms, don’t say to yourself, 'My God, it looks like the end of the world.'

What you are seeing is love in action.

What you’re seeing, in that negative space, is how much we do care for each other, for our grandparents, for our immune-compromised brothers and sisters, for people we will never meet.

People will lose jobs over this. Some will lose their businesses. And some will lose their lives.

All the more reason to take a moment, when you’re out on your walk, or on your way to the store, or just watching the news, to look into the emptiness and marvel at all of that love.

Let it fill you and sustain you. It isn’t the end of the world. It is the most remarkable act of global solidarity we may ever witness.

It is the reason the world will go on.”

-Bill Gates

We are all adapting, not from choice, but we can choose how to make sense of these adaptations. We can frame them as a test of our capacity for resiliency, creativity, and love.

We are fortunate to be part of a strong and caring community. Let's rely on that strength and compassion, both to support us at MSD and others not at the school. Please reach out to your child's teacher, your Education Director, the Parent Association, Dagmar in the Business Office, or me, if you need any help.

Be well.

Julie

P.S. If you need a little lift, check out this sweet article about our friends at [Springbrooke Senior Living](#). It's sure to bring a smile to your face! (MSD students are writing the residents while we are away from each other.)

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