
REACHING OUT: AN UPDATE FROM YOUR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

May 18

Dear Students and Families,

When we left school the afternoon of Thursday, March 12th, we never imagined that we would not be seeing your smiling faces in our offices and your laughter in the hallways of our schools. The past two months have been an adjustment for all of us – sheltering in place, adapting to e-learning, missing our friends and adjusting to sharing the same living space (without a break!) with our families.

We are so incredibly proud of all of you. Although this time hasn't been easy, you have all adapted. With the help of your families and teachers, you have completed over two months of distance education. You have found new ways to fill your days without going to school, socializing with your friends and participating in extra-curricular activities. You have, hopefully, had time to strengthen relationships with those in your own household and, maybe, learned a new skill or two!

So what is summer going to look like? It will look different for sure, but there is still so much fun to be had. You get a break from e-learning, which allows for more time to do things that you enjoy. When we think about our favorite summer activities, many of them are still possible amidst this pandemic. You can still play in the sprinkler and have water gun fights, you can still roast s'mores over a campfire, catch lightning bugs, ride bikes and play outside. Over the past few months, many musicians have posted virtual concerts, Broadway has released musicals that you can watch virtually and many zoos and museums have opened up their doors online for us to explore. Of course, it would be more fun to go to live concerts and musicals and to visit zoos and museums in person, but what about taking the time this summer to visit these remotely? There are also many courses you can take online to develop a new skill or explore an area that interests you. What about a photography class or an art class? Do you want to work on learning a new language or learn how to play a new instrument? Are there any books you've been meaning to read or movies you've been wanting to watch?

With summer almost here, the weather will continue to be warmer and the days will be longer. What outdoor activities can you do that you haven't be able to do through the spring and winter? Indiana has so many bike paths, hiking trails and parks to explore. We encourage you to find time to get outside every day this summer, whether it is coloring with sidewalk chalk, blowing bubbles, taking photographs of nature, riding your bike or playing an outdoor game or sport with your family. Take time to create a "Summer Bucket List" with your family and brainstorm what activities you'd like to explore this summer.

We also want to talk about your mental health. All of us will continue to have good days and bad days. Change is hard and this summer will look a bit different than what we are used to. When you experience a negative emotion, sit with it for a bit, name it and take time to feel it and then, think about what you can do to feel better. It might be a walk outside, an escape through a good book or a funny television series, a conversation with a close friend, a video game or a podcast. Whatever you are feeling is okay. However, if you find one of your family members or yourself in a situation that you are having many bad days, please reach out for support. We have mental health resources listed in this newsletter. In addition, Catholic Charities Indianapolis offers individual, couple and family counseling and will be available for counseling services throughout the summer. You can schedule an appointment by calling 317-236-1500.

We cannot wait to see you all. But until then, stay safe, be well and seek joy,

Sincerely,
Your School Social Workers and School Counselors
School Social Work Program
Catholic Charities Indianapolis

WEEKLY TIP FOR PARENTS:

We know that this summer will pose challenges with many of you needing to continue to work with the absence of many summer camp and child care resources.

The Family and Social Services Administration has developed the website Brighter Futures Indiana to help families with the most up-to-date COVID-19 related child care resources and information for Indiana families.

<http://brighterfuturesindiana.org/2020/03/latest-covid-19-related-child-care-resources-and-information-for-indiana-families/>

Also, for families who qualify for child care vouchers, effective March 15, 2020 to October 3, 2020 families with school age children who now need weekly care can request vouchers for full-time care. In addition, families with children receiving care in child care home facilities should know that the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning has waived the restriction for school age break care when school districts have closed.

<https://www.in.gov/fssa/2552.htm>

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Community Compass is a free, quick and easy app designed to show people where they can find food assistance in Marion County. With a smart phone, you can find free meal locations and free grocery locations near you. If you do not have a smart phone, you can text the word "hi" to 317-434-3758.

Indianapolis Public Schools webpage offers up-to-date information on local food and other community resources

<https://myips.org/>

The City of Indianapolis website has a list of community resources and supports aimed at helping those that are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.indy.gov/topic/covid>

2-1-1 is a free and confidential service that helps Hoosiers across Indiana find the local resources they need. Dial 2-1-1 for 24-hours a day, 7 days a week support.

Catholic Charities Crisis Office 317-236-1512

St. Vincent de Paul Help Line 317-687-0169

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:

Be Well Indiana: <https://bewellindiana.com/>

A comprehensive site created to provide Mental Health resources to Indiana families during the pandemic.

National Crisis Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

Crisis line via online chat at:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/> or by text:

Send the word HOME to 741741

Community Health Network: 317-621-5700

Provides immediate assessments by phone for persons experiencing a mental health crisis 24 hours daily and offers referrals and scheduling for mental health and addiction treatment providers.

Sandra Eskenazi Mental Health Center: 317-880-8485

Provides 24-hour telephone crisis interventions for persons with mental health or addiction treatment emergencies.

Aspire Indiana Crisis Line: 1-800-560-4038

Provides 24 hour phone crisis interventions for persons experiencing a mental health or addictions crisis.

Adult and Child Mental Health Center: 1-877-882-5122

Provides a 24-hour crisis and referral phone line.

Families First: 317-251-7575

24-hour crisis and suicide intervention services by both phone and text messaging.

Indiana Coalition against Domestic Violence: 1-800-332-7385

Offers 24-hour crisis intervention, safety planning and shelter referrals for persons in domestic violence situations.

HAPPY, HEALTHY KIDS AT HOME:

NOT EVERYTHING IS CANCELLED

sunshine is not cancelled

spring is not cancelled

love is not cancelled

relationships are not cancelled

reading is not cancelled

naps are not cancelled

devotion is not cancelled

music is not cancelled

dancing is not cancelled

imagination is not cancelled

kindness is not cancelled

conversations are not cancelled

hope is not cancelled