

THE WASHTENAW VOICE

VOL. 30, No. 14

A NATIONAL PACEMAKER AWARD NEWSPAPER

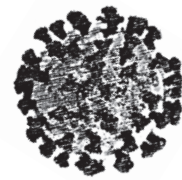
FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2020

The student publication of Washtenaw Community College

Ann Arbor, Michigan

www.washtenawvoice.com

Life in a pandemic



HOW THREE MONTHS OF COVID-19 CHANGED OUR WORLD

Campuses shut down. Business owners closed shop—some temporarily, some for good. Stay-at-home orders hit pause on the economy—and many of our lives paused along with it. Millions filed for unemployment support, while others adjusted to a new home office and remote work schedule. Some faced the frontlines, maintaining work deemed essential. Words and phrases like “flatten the curve,” “unprecedented,” “contact-free,” “social distance” and “quarantine” filled our vocabularies. Trips were canceled, concerts postponed and graduation ceremonies will have to wait.

The COVID-19 pandemic upended lives as it swept across the globe in the early months of the year. There were more than 5 million cases of the potentially life-threatening disease reported worldwide as of late May; 1.6 million of those in the U.S., where some 100,000 have died.

For many WCC students, the pandemic meant lost jobs, concerns about family members’ health, and creating a new normal within the confines of quarantine and social distancing. Students and teachers alike were tasked with adapting to a semester suddenly online. There was disappointment over vanished internships and summer vacations; fears about the job market; loneliness and uncertainty. And there was the knowledge that these troubles were tiny compared with the grief of 5,000-plus deaths in our state—one of the hardest hit in the country—or the heroics of health professionals battling a new and deadly disease with limited resources and no roadmap.

This special section—prepared as the pandemic pushed toward summer—aims to capture some of that experience.

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Nurse describes ‘unfathomable’ reality of caring for coronavirus patients

WCC nursing instructor works in COVID-19 unit: ‘I just wish people took this more seriously’

BY LILLY KUJAWSKI
Editor

We’ve heard the numbers, but most of us don’t see the reality of what’s going on inside the hospitals. For Jamie Langlois, a nurse at the University of Michigan’s health system Michigan Medicine, the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic is unlike anything she’s seen before.

“It’s very hard as a nurse to try to comfort somebody when you’re wearing a shield and a mask... it alters the whole human response.”

— Jamie Langlois

“This scale is like... constant. It’s relentless. It’s unfathomable, really,” Langlois said. She normally works in the pediatric intensive care unit, but volunteered to care for patients in the adult COVID ICU. “It’s an incredibly intense environment; everybody’s very, very sick.”

As of May 28, there were 56,014 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Michigan and 5,372 deaths.

“It does take so much to care for people that are that critically ill, so when there’s thousands of them at a time, it’s unmanageable,” Langlois said. “Of all the numbers, the majority of them are moderately, you know, not very sick, which is great. But the amount of resources, and skill, and mental, emotional and physical care that goes into trying to get these patients better is like... extraordinary.”

Packed hospitals

Typically, critically ill patients have their own ICU room, but in the COVID unit, there’s usually two patients per room, Langlois said.

On April 8 and April 15, Ann Arbor hospital had as many as 229 COVID-19 patients at once.

“The patient ratios are amazing... normally, so we’re used to caring for like one or two critically ill patients, and in this environment, we’re caring for two or three and they’re not super stable patients, so that’s challenging too,” Langlois said.

Right now, Michigan Medicine has the personal protection equipment, or PPE, it needs, said Jordyn Imhoff, a spokeswoman for Michigan Medicine.

“We currently have enough PPE to keep our employees safe as they care for patients,” Imhoff said.

Langlois said she still worries about the possibility of running out in the future. Currently, staff is reusing the N95 mask, the respiratory protective device that offers the most protection, Langlois said.

“There’s that underlying fear... ‘is that truly safe?’” she said.

Caring at a distance

It’s hard to give patients the kind of care she normally would, Langlois said.

“It’s very hard as a nurse to try to comfort somebody when you’re wearing a shield and a mask,” she said. “It alters the whole human response.”

“I had a patient on a ventilator that was awake and afraid, and she reached her arms out to hug me,” Langlois said. “I backed away from the hug, and I grabbed her hand and told her not to be afraid and squeezed her hand and held her hand, but... normally, I would not think anything of hugging a patient. I would absolutely hug a patient.”

“In my head I was like, ‘oh my god, I can’t even give this lady the comfort she deserves when she’s so scared,’” Langlois said.

Similarly, she said it’s hard because families can’t visit their loved ones. In certain end-of-life circumstances, loved ones may be able to come in to say goodbye, but if they can’t, they have to do it virtually, over FaceTime or other video chat apps.

Even when families can come to say goodbye in person, they must do so while wearing a bulk of protective gear. In these cases, loved ones can’t touch and get close to the patient like they normally would, and they can’t say goodbye the way they’d like to, Langlois said.

Langlois said she’s amazed by the way many of the grieving families turn around and offer support to the hospital staff, even as they experience such a difficult, personal loss.

“It’s also very strange to see patients’ families go through that, and while they’re going through that, they express sympathy to the staff, to the doctors and nurses, because they see what’s happening,” she said.

Support and solidarity

As they navigate circumstances riddled with fear and uncertainty, Langlois said she and her colleagues still hold onto hope for each patient they care for.

“We have hope for all of them; we have hope that every single one of them will walk out the door,” she said. “Celebrating the patients who do go out to the floor, and do end up going home—that gives us hope, also.”

The way the hospital staff works together to save as many people as possible is inspiring, Langlois said.

“We know that a lot of them won’t get better,” she said. “But to see everybody put such an effort into trying... it’s pretty incredible.”

Many of the nurses, doctors and environmental-service workers assigned to the COVID unit came from different areas of the hospital and didn’t know each other very well before, but working together in the face of the

pandemic united them

“Many of us are strangers, but it doesn’t feel that way because we’re all experiencing the same level of intensity at the same time,” Langlois said.

She said this experience wears hard on the staff emotionally. Some have trouble sleeping at night. Many don’t feel comfortable talking to their families about their work, wishing to spare them from the harsh details, so instead they talk to each other.

“I have no doubt that most of us will be permanently affected,” Langlois said.

Staff members lean on each other, share support, and rely on one another as sources of hope, she said. And that support extends from staff beyond the COVID unit.

“Nurses on other units will see when we push number 12 on the elevator and they’re riding the elevator with us. They just always say something like, ‘you can do it,’ and ‘we’re thinking of you and supporting you,’” Langlois said.

Nurses from other departments often leave drawings and post-it notes of kindness and encouragement on locker room doors for the nurses working in the COVID unit, she said.

With such a high degree of regular exposure, many COVID ICU workers choose not to go home out of fear of infecting their families, Langlois said. She said some nurses are staying in hotels at this time.

Langlois said that some of her colleagues have been sick with the coronavirus and were patients at the hospital.

When Langlois goes home from work, she worries about getting her two teenage children sick.

“I’m more afraid that I’ll get somebody else sick than I am of getting sick,” she said.

“As much as we want to be there doing what we’re doing, we share the feelings that everybody else has here... you know, we’re scared and we just want our normal lives back,” Langlois said.

Our job to flatten the curve

Langlois said she wishes more people were taking the situation seriously.

While an approximate 2% death rate may not seem so bad, it’s nothing to take lightly, Langlois said. She said it’s fortunate that most people who become sick experience only moderate or even mild symptoms, but the patients who do have severe symptoms often become extremely sick.

“People on Facebook say, ‘oh, it’s only a 2% death rate’ and ‘I should be able to go out and do whatever I want,’ and ‘what’s 2%?’” Langlois said. “That 2% is my 100%. And these families that are losing these people, their 100%.”

It’s a battle to save patients as sick as the ones she cares for. That 2% may not seem so significant for someone who hasn’t been impacted person-



Jamie Langlois, a nurse at Michigan Medicine working in the COVID-19 unit, takes a selfie in her mask and scrubs.

ally, Langlois said, but that situation could change.

“It very quickly could change,” Langlois said. “For somebody that’s saying, ‘oh it’s only 2%,’ it very quickly could be somebody in their family, and it would very quickly turn into their 100%.”

There has been pushback from some Michigan residents about stay-at-home measures and other restrictions, including protests at the state capital and at Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s residence, as well as a recall threat.

Despite the call to reopen the economy from some, a survey conducted by the Morning Consult and POLITICO found that the majority of Americans support social distancing efforts. More than 70% of respondents said that social distancing measures should continue for as long as is necessary, even if it means further damage to the economy.

It’s our responsibility to stay home and do what we can to mitigate the spread, Langlois said.

“People need to be serious about staying home for a little while,” she said. “Look at it as time spent with people [you] love, and laugh, and have fun, and play cards, and enjoy it.”

A letter to nursing students

Besides her work as a nurse, Langlois is also a nursing instructor at WCC and Eastern Michigan University.

“My heart breaks for my students, too,” said Langlois, who’s taught at WCC for three years. “Some of them are scared to be nurses now.”

“They’re in this too,” she added. “I’m worried about them.”

Langlois said she recently wrote a letter to her students to offer them some encouragement and perspective during the pandemic.

“Each semester I usually give my senior students ‘a talk

about the first six months of nursing,” Langlois wrote in her letter, which she shared with the Voice. “This talk is meant to encourage and inspire but also reassure you that the beginning may not be what you expected; but it gets better. This talk may be needed now more than ever but it’s going to look quite different.”

“The uncertainty, the fear, the anxiety: I share these feelings with you,” she said in the letter. “The beginning of your careers was supposed to be exciting and fun. The last semester of school was supposed to be worrying about exams and what to wear to graduation. It all looks different now and it’s OK to worry about that. It’s OK to worry about your family and your safety. It’s OK to think to yourself, ‘what did I sign up for?’”

Langlois reminded her students that as nurses, they are needed now more than ever.

“You are going to be the most incredible nurses; I have no doubt,” she wrote. “You are going to help the most vulnerable people through the worst and most impossible ex-

“For somebody that’s saying, ‘oh, it’s only 2%’—it very quickly could be somebody in their family, and it would very quickly turn into their 100%.”

— Jamie Langlois



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer addresses the state with COVID-19 updates during a March 26 press conference.

Unemployment claims skyrocket as workers grapple with economic distress

BY LILLY KUJAWSKI
Editor

Amid shutdowns, stay-at-home orders and other mitigation efforts, COVID-19’s economic consequences intensified and local workers and businesses took a hit.

In April, Michigan reached its highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression, at 22.7%, according to a release from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

An executive order from Whitmer, along with the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES act, expanded unemployment benefits to assist workers during the pandemic. Since the onset of the crisis, Michigan saw an unprecedented spike in unemployment claims.

Between March 13 and May 15, the state of Michigan received more than 1.71 million unemployment claims, said a press release from the

Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

Industries forced to close or limit operations faced severe economic repercussions.

In the first 22 days of March, the Michigan restaurant industry saw the loss of 72,000 jobs—along with an estimated \$491 million in sales—according to a survey conducted jointly by the National Restaurant Association and the Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association (MRLA).

Working students affected

The deteriorating economy affected workers, including some WCC students. Many work at local retailers, restaurants, hotels and other service-based firms.

Jaime Yacono, a WCC student studying culinary arts, was an employee at the Graduate Hotel in downtown Ann Arbor. The hotel closed

operations in March after laying off staff, including management.

Yacono said staff hours were cut before that, with paid time off providing some compensation. The Graduate eventually laid off its entire staff without pay, with plans to reopen in June or July, according to Yacono.

Ali Annala, a 20-year-old nursing student at WCC, used to work two jobs, but now, at least temporarily, she’s out both of them.

Annala worked as a gymnastics coach at Gym America in Saline, but the center closed indefinitely because of COVID-19.

Annala is also a server at Texas Roadhouse, which moved to takeout orders only, per an executive order from Whitmer. To comply with the order, the restaurant also had to cut down its staff for a given shift to “essential” employees only.

SEE UNEMPLOYMENT, A7

WCC rises to uncertain times

How the campus community navigated the pandemic

BY LILLY KUJAWSKI
Editor

When classes moved online, students, teachers adapted

When COVID-19 forced the closure of schools across the country, colleges and universities had to adapt quickly—including WCC.

“It’s kind of like building the plane as we are flying it,” was how Linda Blakey, vice president of student and academic services, described the abrupt transition to online classes.

On March 11, WCC officials made the decision to suspend all in-person classes and move to remote alternatives instead. The decision came the day after the first two coronavirus cases were confirmed in Michigan. Later, the college announced the summer semester would be held entirely online.

Many instructors rose to the task of adjusting to alternative teaching methods, said Kim Hurns, vice president of instruction.

“Every day I am just more in awe at some of the things that I’m hearing that instructors have done,” said Hurns. Along with managing their newly online courses, instructors were also assisting each other with the transition. They continued to have faculty meetings and check-ins, to figure out how to best help their students learn from a distance.

The transition of some of her classes to online was stressful for Ali Annala, 20, a nursing student at WCC. Even though she was already taking one online class last semester, she said she learns

science-based classes better face-to-face. When her organic biology class suddenly became all online, it posed some challenges for Annala.

However, most of her teachers were very understanding and communicative throughout the transition, which made it easier for her, Annala said.

WCC has been offering courses online since 2005, and Hurns said that she believes already having an established online program helped WCC make the transition to alternative learning back in March.

“We have the experience; we have the infrastructure and support,” said Hurns. “I think that really helped us get through this semester in a much more productive way.”

Students in lab and clinical classes that couldn’t be entirely substituted with online alternatives were issued an “Incomplete” grade and supplied a learning plan with an extended timeframe for the class to be made up when possible in the future.

Various student services, such as tutoring help, library services and counseling, moved to virtual options along with classes.

Unlike some other colleges and universities, WCC officials chose not to move to a pass/fail system for the winter semester.

“Nearly 65% of our students plan to transfer to a four-year institution to continue their education,” said WCC President Rose Bellanca in a press release announcement. “Most universities and their programs do not accept pass/fail grades on a transcript due to accreditation requirements.

CARES grant supplies aid for eligible students

Many WCC students felt the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Some students lost jobs. The parents of dependent students may have lost a job. Yet many college students were excluded from some of the support provided by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES Act.

If an individual can be claimed as a dependent on someone else’s tax return, they are considered ineligible for the one-time \$1,200 stimulus check which the CARES act provides. Students under the age of 24 can be claimed as dependents—and it doesn’t matter if they were claimed as a dependent or not, just that they could be.

The exact number of WCC students who didn’t receive a stimulus check is unknown, but in the fall semester, 62% of enrolled students were under the age of 25, according to the 2019 Fall Student Profile report.

The CARES act did establish other provisions for college students. Through the act, WCC can receive up to \$4.9 million in total funds, out of which a minimum of \$2.4 million must be issued directly to students in the form of grants. The other half can be used by the college for eligible purposes.

The grants are meant to assist low-income students with expenses specifically incurred because of the college’s change in campus operations due to COVID-19, according to Blakey.

SEE WCC RESPONSE, A7

COVID-19 TIMELINE IN MICHIGAN

Compiled by Lilly Kujawski

DEC. 31 A cluster of pneumonia cases of an unknown cause are reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. Later, the novel coronavirus was identified as the cause.

JAN. 11 First coronavirus death reported in China.

JAN. 21 The first U.S. coronavirus case is identified in Washington State.

FEB. 3 Michigan activates Community Health Emergency Coordination Center to prepare for COVID-19.

MARCH 2 WCC issues a “monitoring coronavirus” alert with prevention tips and reminders.

MARCH 10 First two coronavirus cases confirmed in the state; Gov. Gretchen Whitmer declares a state of emergency. WCC issues a notice about additional cleaning efforts and increased safety measures for campus food and facilities.

MARCH 11 WCC cancels class for the rest of the week, suspends in-person classes and announces that on March 16 classes will move to alternative delivery methods. The World Health Organization declares COVID-19 a pandemic.

MARCH 12 Whitmer announces that all K-12 school buildings in the state will close from March 16 to April 6. WCC suspends all college-sponsored international travel and all nonessential college-sponsored domestic travel. All campus events with an anticipated audience of more than 100 people are cancelled.

MARCH 13 Whitmer bans gatherings of more than 250 people.

MARCH 14 WCC closes the Health and Fitness Center.

MARCH 15 WCC temporarily suspends on-campus operations. Whitmer issues an executive order that restricts price gouging.

MARCH 16 Remote instruction begins for WCC students. Whitmer issues executive orders which: ban gatherings of more than 50 people; order the closure of bars, theaters, casinos and other public spaces; restrict restaurants to delivery and take-out orders only; and expand unemployment benefits. The college suspends on-campus operations through at least April 5.

MARCH 18 Michigan’s first coronavirus death is reported.

MARCH 20 Whitmer temporarily suspends evictions and orders restrictions on nonessential medical and dental procedures.

MARCH 21 Whitmer issues executive order to close hair, nail and tanning salons, and similar businesses.

MARCH 22 The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Michigan passes 1,000.

MARCH 23 Whitmer issues a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” executive order. The order “directs Michiganders to stay in their homes unless they’re a part of that critical infrastructure workforce, engaged in an outdoor activity, or performing tasks necessary to the health and safety of themselves or their family, like going to the hospital or grocery store.” It also requires businesses to suspend in-person operations that aren’t “necessary to sustain or protect life.”

MARCH 25 Confirmed cases in Michigan surpasses 2,000, with a death toll of 43. WCC health sciences division donates medical supplies, including masks, gloves, surgical gowns and more, to area hospitals.

MARCH 26 WCC President Rose Bellanca announces that classes and campus operations will continue remotely through the end of the winter semester. Commencement ceremony is postponed to the fall semester. Whitmer requests a “major disaster declaration” from the federal government.

MARCH 27 Whitmer expands absentee voting for the May 5 election. President Donald Trump signs CARES stimulus package.

MARCH 28 Michigan’s death toll passes 100. Trump approves Whitmer’s request for a major disaster declaration. Whitmer signs an executive order requiring services be reconnected for residents whose water has been shut off due to non-payment or damaged infrastructure.

MARCH 29 Whitmer signs an executive order that temporarily suspends scope of practice laws so physician assistants, nurses and other healthcare providers can care for coronavirus patients.

MARCH 30 Trump approves Whitmer’s request for use of Michigan National Guard; Whitmer bans nonessential veterinary procedures.

MARCH 31 The state death toll hits and exceeds 200.

APRIL 1 Whitmer expands COVID-19 emergency declarations and declares a state of disaster.

APRIL 2 Statewide coronavirus cases pass 10,000. WCC announces that the summer semester will be held entirely online and in virtual classrooms. Whitmer suspends K-12 in-person learning for the rest of the school year.

APRIL 3 Whitmer signs executive order “prohibiting employers from discharging, disciplining, or otherwise retaliating against an employee for staying home from work if they or one of their close contacts tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of the disease.”

APRIL 8 The number of statewide cases surpasses 20,000.

APRIL 9 Whitmer extends the stay-at-home order through the end of April. Whitmer creates the Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities, chaired by Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II. The task force is meant to address the disproportionate effect of the coronavirus on the Black community and communities of color—on April 9, 40% of COVID-19 deaths in Michigan were African Americans, who make up only 14% of the population, according to reports from the Governor’s office.

APRIL 10 As Michigan sees its deadliest day of the pandemic, with 205 deaths, WCC extends the suspension of on-operations to May 4.

APRIL 11 The first five grocery store worker deaths in the state are reported—four Kroger employees and one Meijer employee.

APRIL 15 Vehicles gridlock Michigan’s capital in protest of Whitmer’s extended stay-at-home order.

APRIL 16 The state coronavirus death toll passes 2,000. WCC co-hosts a blood drive with St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, practicing social distancing and enacting extra safety measures.

APRIL 17 Statewide cases count surpasses 30,000.

APRIL 23 Whitmer orders \$2-per-hour pay increase for direct care workers providing Medicaid-funded in-home behavioral health and long term care.

APRIL 24 Michigan’s death toll exceeds 3,000. Whitmer extends stay at home order through May 15 and requires residents to wear masks in enclosed public spaces. Restrictions on lawn care, golfing and boating are lifted.

APRIL 27 Whitmer extends the validity of existing personal protection orders that are nearing expiration.

APRIL 28 WCC suspends on-campus operations through May 15. WCC board of trustees votes to freeze tuition and fee rates for the 2020-21 school year, citing the financial impact COVID-19 has on students.

APRIL 29 State confirmed cases hit 40,000. Whitmer announces proposal for a “Future for Frontliners” program, which would provide tuition for essential workers without a college degree. She also signs an executive order requiring health care facilities to create non-discriminatory protocols in the event that the demand for resources exceeds availability.

APRIL 30 Armed protesters gather in the Michigan Capitol building to oppose Whitmer’s stay-at-home order as lawmakers meet to debate extending the state of emergency. Michigan Legislature chooses not to vote on extension request, allowing the orders to expire. Whitmer extends emergency declaration through May 28 anyway, and extends stay-at-home order through May 15.

MAY 1 Whitmer issues executive order to reopen construction and Real Estate with limitations, effective May 7. A security guard at a Family Dollar in Flint is shot and killed after insisting a customer wear a mask in the store. On campus, another previously in-person event goes online. Student Nik Kopka wins first place in WCC’s digital talent show; Joshua Sikulimba wins second place, Ian Tubbs places third and Claire Sparklin is named an honorable mention.

MAY 2 Michigan coronavirus death toll passes 4,000. Rapper Gmac Cash releases a song called “Big Gretch” in support of Whitmer.

MAY 4 Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel rules Whitmer’s stay-at-home order extension valid and enforceable.

MAY 6 Several Michigan Republican lawmakers file a lawsuit against Whitmer, claiming she exceeded her power by extending the state of emergency declaration and stay-at-home order past 28 days.

MAY 7 Whitmer extends stay-at-home order through May 28. She also announces a six-phase plan to restart the Michigan economy, says the state is at phase three, and announces reopening of manufacturing operations, effective May 11.

MAY 13 Whitmer announces Michigan’s participation in the federal Unemployment Insurance Agency Work Share program. The program requires state employees to take two mandatory days of furlough per pay-period; missing wages can be made up by federal unemployment benefits.

MAY 14 Whitmer expands telehealth options.

MAY 15 Michigan exceeds 50,000 confirmed coronavirus cases. The “Return to Learning Advisory Council” is created, made up of students, parents, educators, administrators and public health officials, to formalize a plan for reopening schools in the fall.

MAY 16 WCC hosts digital “graduation salute” for 2020 graduates.

MAY 18 Whitmer signs executive order allowing retail, restaurants and offices to reopen in the Upper Peninsula and Traverse City region, effective May 22, with additional workplace safety measures. Michigan begins steady decline in new coronavirus cases.

MAY 19 Michigan death toll exceeds 5,000.

MAY 21 Michigan court rejects a lawsuit from the Republican lawmakers who claim Whitmer unlawfully extended her state of emergency and stay-at-home order. Judge rules that Whitmer acted constitutionally under the Emergency Powers of Governors Act, but violated the Emergency Management Act.

MAY 22 Whitmer extends stay-at-home order through June 15 and state of emergency through June 19.

MAY 26 Michigan reports 20 new coronavirus cases, the lowest daily count since early March.

COLUMN

Social distance without a disconnect



BY CLAIRE CONVIS
Deputy Editor

As some gathering restrictions are lifted and people begin to emerge back into society during this pandemic, it's important to be cautious and remember that the COVID-19 virus won't disappear overnight. But complete self-isolation can trigger loneliness in students who are used to working jobs, going to classes, attending gatherings and seeing their friends. It's crucial to use safety measures, but also balance the desire to socialize, and stay in contact with loved ones, and slowly work our way back towards our "normal" lifestyles.

Regulations can feel restricting, but it is important to remember that this situation we're in isn't going to last forever. There are a variety of ways to stay connected with friends and family during this time, as well as fulfilling your own emotional needs—without compromising your safety.

Technology is your multi-purpose tool; you can call, Snapchat, DM, or text your loved ones for some support and connection at a distance. Pick a TV show to watch with a friend over the free Google Chrome extension Netflix Party, or choose a book to read and have your own little book club over FaceTime.

It might seem old-fashioned, but try writing letters to the people that you miss. Everyone loves to get some snail-mail that's not an electrical bill or an ad for a hardware store. Recently, I wrote some short messages on postcards and sent them out to the friends and family members I haven't been able to see.

Devin Streur, a counselor at WCC, suggested maintaining healthy boundaries when it comes to how much time you spend on social media.

"Social media... can be nice to stay connected to people, but tends to make us feel worse about situations," said Streur. "Certainly, when there's nothing but doom and gloom [on social media] that can be especially difficult."

While scrolling for hours might leave you feeling down, social media can provide "a lot of different ways you can see somebody and not physically be next to them," said Streur, which is perfect for staying in touch with people, while still taking safety pre-

cautions.

Streur mentioned GoTo-Meeting, Zoom, FaceTime and other virtual avenues that can assist students in staying connected.

When you do feel ready to start seeing your friends in person again, consider choosing a select group of friends to hang out with, rather than a large gathering of acquaintances. Brainstorm outdoor activities which allow you to maintain a safe distance and feel comfortable and safe as you ease your way back into face-to-face interactions.

When a friend whose family I'm close with lost their uncle, I made them a meal, wrote them a card, left it on their doorstep, and called them while I drove away. Another friend asked me to go for a walk at a state park soon, with plans to bring masks and walk at least six feet apart from each other.

My sister has an autoimmune disorder and therefore has a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, so when meeting her for lunch after not seeing each other in months, we stayed a safe distance apart, wore masks and stayed outside the entire time. A picnic can be a safer way to meet with friends—especially as the weather is increasingly warmer—instead of inside an enclosed space.

Don't feel rushed into at-



A park visitor wrote "April distance brings May existence" on the bridge at Mary Beth Doyle park to encourage social distancing.

tending gatherings or having a birthday party before you're ready; just because it's legal doesn't mean that you need to hang out with a group of people before you are comfortable.

Remember to prioritize your mental health and your personal boundaries, especially during this time. Take walks outside, have a mini meditation session, get creative and draw, paint or make a craft from an idea on Pinterest. Turn up your favorite album and have a solo dance party, take a 30-minute shower, bake something yummy for yourself. Do whatever you need to do to take a mental break in the midst of all this uncertainty. Whether it's journaling, doing a puzzle, solving a crossword, cleaning out your closet or starting a new TV

series, make time for yourself and look after your wellbeing.

There are support resources available for students, such as the campus assistance program (CAP).

"If [students] feel like they're a little bit too isolated and depressed, and not feeling like themselves, CAP is a wonderful resource that students should be looking to access during this challenging time," said Streur.

Remember, we're all in this mess together, and we can still stay connected with others while we help to flatten the curve.

If you are experiencing emotional distress or having trouble coping, don't hesitate to reach out. See page B4 for a full list of mental health resources.

EDITORIAL

Proceed with care in the post-lockdown world

States may reopen, but the danger hasn't disappeared

As quarantine measures relax and the economy begins to reopen, it's still just as important as ever to act with caution and remain diligent in our social-distancing efforts.

We've all likely sacrificed something in the name of slowing the virus spread. After months of staying home, the return to a normal routine can't come soon enough for most of us. However, as anxious as we are to get our lives back, it's important to understand that the world will not be what it was before the pandemic hit.

When stores reopen and residents emerge from their homes again, we face the potential threat of a second wave of mass infection. If we don't act carefully, we could jeopardize all of our efforts with another curve, after we've worked so hard to flatten this one.

It might be tempting to jump right into our old lifestyles straight away. And while it might seem safe to do so, as the government gives the OK on various activities again, a better bet might be to ease back in slowly, being intentional about what we introduce into our lives again and how soon.

Some government officials have proven strong, capable leaders through the pandemic and have consistently acted with the health and wellbeing of the general public as a first priority. However, if this crisis has taught us anything, it's that we can't always rely on government entities and leaders to make the right calls when it comes to our health and safety.

We must take our safety into our own hands, too. We should conduct our own research using credible sources



A message on the State Theater marquee advises patrons to help "flatten the curve." Even as stores and businesses begin to reopen, it's still important to act with caution and practice social distancing to help prevent a second wave of mass infection.

and fact-check claims from political leaders that seem murky or ridiculous.

Individuals must decide for themselves when they feel comfortable entering the world again. We recommend taking it slowly. For some, this means continuing to purchase groceries using the pickup option. Many consumers have had good luck with it so far, so it's an option that makes sense. Why not avoid an unnecessary trip into a store whenever possible? Instead, save the in-person shopping for local shops that don't offer pickup orders and for purchases that make less sense online or over the phone—like trying on a new pair of jeans.

We should continue hand-washing and wearing masks as we have been. Carrying around a small bottle of hand sanitizer and monitoring yourself for symptoms are good ideas, too. As you begin to spend time with people outside of your household, you might also consider choosing a tight circle of friends and family with whom you socialize, as to limit your interactions with other people to a small, trustworthy bubble. The idea is that the people in

your bubble will do the same—but be mindful of who else the people in your circle might be interacting with.

When it's feasible and makes sense, choose virtual alternatives for activities like meetings and catching up with someone over coffee. Opt for a picnic outdoors over a meal inside.

Caution isn't simply to protect grandma (though we're dismayed by those who argue she's the worth protecting). With such limited knowledge we have of this new disease, its effects can be unpredictable. Though the majority who become infected experience only mild symptoms, COVID-19 has sickened and killed all ages.

The virus has weakened economies and stolen precious moments, like graduation ceremonies and baby showers. It's, tragically, provided a wedge for those who'd like to divide people. A public health crisis has in many ways become a political battlefield. However, our enemy is the virus—not each other. Our compassion for one another and the precautions we can take to protect ourselves are our weapons against it.

COLUMN

Stop the spread: Disinformation poses threat to public health



BY DEBRA DESTEFANI
Contributor

Online influencers, click-bait, meme farms, and troll farms. Most all of us have been exposed to manipulative ads online and seen misinformation in our friends and family's social media feeds.

False claims and COVID-19

The spread of misinformation is already harmful enough on a good day, but in the midst of a public health crisis, it can be downright dangerous.

In fact, 36% of individuals who frequently use social media held at least one false belief about the coronavirus, according to a survey published in March by the Reboot Foundation. And another survey, conducted by the Pew Research Center, revealed that 48% of American adults said they've seen at least some made-up news about COVID-19.

Whether it's posts touting a "miracle drug" cure for the disease—without medical or scientific evidence backing the claim—or a misconception that individuals of a certain race cannot become infected, the spread of misinformation can pose severe health consequences.

When politicians say one thing, and health officials say another, it's hard to know what to believe. We must remain diligent and informed as we combat the "disinformation epidemic," too.

Fake news isn't new

Disinformation spread is similarly pervasive when it comes to political content. The impact that political advertisements on Facebook had on the 2016 presidential election is still a hot topic to this day.

"2016 was when things came to a head," said Mary Lou Nagy, a journalism instructor at WCC. "For younger people, sharing online had more of an effect on elections than before."

In 2019, Facebook rolled out its Facebook News section of the website. The idea was to create a more personalized way to receive news and to allow for users to have "the ability to explore a wider range of their news interests, directly within the Facebook app."

Now, for some users, Facebook is their primary news source. Shelby Keil, a 20-year-old WCC student, doesn't have cable at home and relies on her phone for news updates. But not all of what people share is truly reliable news, she said.

"I see friends sharing fake news," Keil said. "The problem is that people share satire as fact without checking the sources."

There are steps that Facebook is taking to reduce the amount of misinformation and deception that is spread on the platform. The company claimed that it is working to stop the spread of misinformation by "helping people make more informed decisions when they encounter false news."

While the company is indeed making steps toward having more control over its content, the driving factor of the spread of misinformation online are the users themselves.

In times of crisis, when people can be more likely to

be driven by fear-based and emotional responses, misleading data or deceptive claims can have particularly detrimental consequences. It's our responsibility to be wary about the information we share and consume.

What can you do to stop the vicious cycle of sharing disinformation?

First, it's important to research an article and its facts before sharing it on your feed.

"When you see a post that seems geared toward emotion, check it out first before you immediately post," Nagy said. "Take a look at the link. Read info about the site. Is it a credible source?"

Most misinformation is spread on accident, usually without malicious intent by the person posting it. That's why it's important to think critically about the information that is presented to you.

Take a moment and ask yourself if a report seems slanted, tells you how to think, or is published by an untrustworthy source—content riddled with grammatical and spelling errors can be a tip-off that a source lacks credibility.

Find out who sponsors or funds the source, and what their motives might be; is it publicly funded research conducted by experts? Or a private interest group looking to fulfill a political agenda?

Look at other publications to see if the information has been reported elsewhere by credible, well-known sources. Verify claims with a fact-checking site. Often, if a claim seems too outrageous to be true, that's because it isn't.

A good source for how to be more conscientious of online news is through the News Literacy Project, at newslit.org.

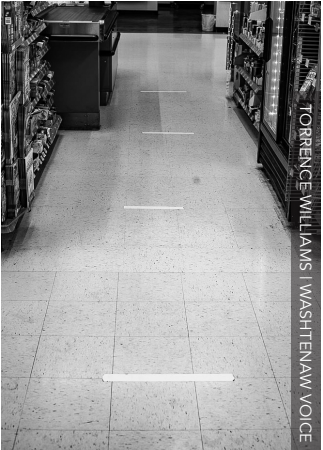
COLUMN

What it’s like to be a grocery store worker during COVID-19 outbreak

BY AIDAN ROSS
Contributor

I’ve worked at a Kroger since before the pandemic. I changed jobs within the store, from bagger (bagging groceries and cleaning) to produce clerk (stocking the produce shelves), shortly after the start of the shutdowns.

The first thing that I remember is the panic that occurred at the very beginning of the outbreak. I was working as a bagger then. The store was flooded with people, trying to stock up on things they didn’t really need. Toilet paper, milk, meat, and bottled water were



Distance markers in Wal-Mart in Canton indicate six foot intervals to encourage social distancing between shoppers.

being fought over. A customer told me that someone had tried to steal a gallon of water from her cart.

Due to people buying large amounts of these things to hoard, the supply chain just couldn’t get things to the shelves fast enough, and they were empty. We limited the number of high-demand items each customer could buy so that more people could have rice, gloves, cleaning supplies, and the like. These panics left me and my fellow workers exhausted and angry.

After the shutdowns were put into place, people began staying home all week, and the rhythm within the store changed. Before the pandemic, business at my store usually ebbed and flowed with the standard work week, with the middle of the week being slowest, and Sundays being busiest. This was reversed very quickly.

When the shutdowns began, the stores’ business hours were limited, screening began, and masks and gloves were distributed to workers. However, the use of masks has not been enforced. The use of masks seems to be par-

ticularly lax among baggers. I was told by a bagger friend of mine that I looked like an idiot wearing mine.

Customers, generally, do wear masks, but there is a group, maybe 8% or so, who don’t. Some will bring their whole family into the store. Others will wear their masks under the chin rather than covering the mouth. This scares me. The entire purpose of a mask is to prevent spraying the moisture which carries the virus, so not wearing one, and exposing children to it as well, could increase the spread dramatically.

There has been no long term study of COVID-19. Nobody knows what chronic effects it has, or what it could do if contracted more than once. It’s irresponsible and dangerous not to take the proper precautions, especially as there are workers who have respiratory problems or are minors. On top of that, people are leaving masks and gloves on the ground in the parking lot to be blown to the houses across the street.

One of the biggest changes is that now grocery workers are widely considered heroes.



Shoppers line up outside Sam's Club in Canton. When panic of the virus first struck, many customers crowded the grocery stores to stock up in preparation.

Due to the pandemic, the job is now dangerous. My friends constantly tell me to be careful at work.

In the past, it wasn’t often that people told us that what we did was important, but now it happens once a week. This is a good change, but it’s sad that it comes at such a cost. Many of my coworkers work long hours to provide for their families. They are often treated very badly by customers—though many customers are nice, too.

Operating a grocery store is a large amount of work, which absolutely has to be

done, and the workers are rarely afforded nearly enough respect for doing it. Even something as small as pushing a shopping cart into a corralle when you leave, rather than just leaving it in the middle of the parking lot, is greatly appreciated by the worker who has to bring those carts inside.



The next time you go shopping, be extra considerate to those around you. This pandemic has made even the most innocuous of activities potentially harmful. Leave enough of each item you buy so that others can have some, too. Protect other shoppers

and the employees keeping things running by wearing a mask. Minimize the number of trips made to the store, and the number of people who go in with you. These things are small, but they help in incredibly big ways.











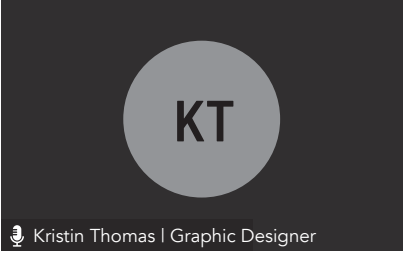
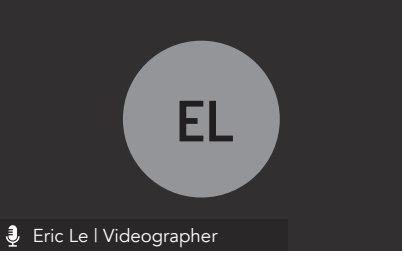


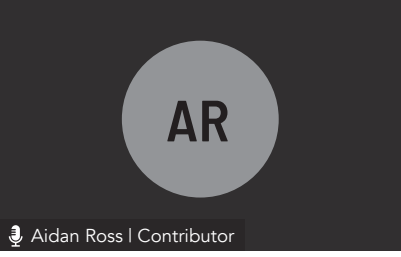
In general, it seems that the world within the grocery store is shifting. I hope that this pandemic will have a lasting effect, in that people don’t take grocery store workers, and others like us, for granted anymore. That alone would greatly improve our lives.

CARTOON

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OUR TEAM AND ITS ROLE

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YOUR VOICE

The Voice welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be a maximum of 400 words and include the author’s name. A phone number and email address are required so letters can be verified before publication. The Voice welcomes news tips and story ideas.

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There's no place like home



to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

When classes move
online, students, teachers
adapted

Social distancing is the most effective tool we
have for slowing the spread of the coronavirus.
And that means staying home, if you can.

Work from home. Play at home. Stay at home.
If you must go out, keep your social distance—
six feet, or two arm-lengths apart. Young.
Elderly. In between. It's going to take every one
of us. If home really is where the heart is, listen
to yours and do the life-saving thing.

Visit **Coronavirus.gov** for the latest tips and
information from the CDC.

#AloneTogether

TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP SLOW THE SPREAD.



COVID crisis threatens area businesses

WCC Entrepreneurship Center co-sponsors emergency fund

BY NICHOLAS KETCHUM
Contributor

When efforts to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus prompted the closure of nonessential shops, many local business owners faced—and continue to face—economic uncertainty.

Some businesses in jeopardy

“A lot of people are worried,” said Charlie Penner, regional director of the Michigan Small Business Development Center, or SBDC, of the Greater Washtenaw Region. WCC is the host institution for the organization.

Penner said many businesses have asked for help during the closures.

“A lot of people are rallying together at this time,” Penner said.

Some well-known names, such as Literati, a bookstore in downtown Ann Arbor, raised funds online as finances deteriorated. The bookstore managed to raise over \$112,000 on a GoFundMe.com fund-raising campaign.

Other local businesses might not fare as well, and some have already closed permanently.

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to slash the number of Michigan restaurants significantly, according to Justin Winslow, president and CEO of Michigan Restaurant and Lodging Association, in a press release.

“There are more than 16,000 restaurants in this state,” said Winslow in the press release. “Under the current circumstances, as many as one-third might not make it through without significant financial help and flexibility from our elected leaders.”

WCC response

Continued from A3

Qualifying expenses include childcare costs, course materials needed for students to continue classes remotely, and technology and online expenses.

Grant eligibility is limited to students who meet particular qualifications, Blakey said.

“The Department of Education basically sets the parameters of how schools can use the money, and that has been kind of a moving target,” Blakey said. “It has gotten narrower and narrower, in terms of who’s eligible.”

In particular, students must meet the requirements to fill out the FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Filling out the FAFSA verifies a student’s Social Security number and citizenship and requires men to sign up for the Selective Service.

That means international students, undocumented students, and students in the high school program at WCC are not eligible to apply for a CARES grant. Students must also show “satisfactory academic progress” and be enrolled in a valid program to qualify for a CARES grant, Blakey said.

The CARES grants issued will be mailed as checks to students or direct-deposited into their bank account, Blakey said.

“By law, by the Department of Ed., we cannot pay tuition with the CARES grant money,” Blakey said. The college also cannot apply the money to an outstanding balance on a student’s MyWCC account.

In the fall and winter semesters, about 42% of WCC students receive some form of federal financial aid, Blakey said. But she anticipates



Conor O'Neill's, an Irish pub in downtown Ann Arbor, is one of the local restaurants that has temporarily closed for the duration of Michigan's stay-at-home order.

Kristin Gapske, director of the Entrepreneurship Center at WCC, said her office has received many calls from people running into business trouble.

Gapske said the EC’s physical offices are closed, including the coworking space, but other activities, such as one-on-one mentoring and resource distribution, are happening remotely.

“The EC’s mission is more relevant than ever,” Gapske said. “We’re concentrating on emergency crisis needs right now.”

Local emergency funding

One source of crisis assistance came from the Washtenaw Small Business Emergency Relief Fund.

The fund is a joint effort between WCC’s Entrepreneurship Center and SBDC, Ann Arbor SPARK, and the Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development.

The fund provides working capital grants in amounts up to \$5,000 to qualifying small businesses experiencing “financial hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis.”

Businesses must be located in Washtenaw County, as well as meet maximum employee and income requirements to qualify for assistance.

The fund was made possible by a \$1 million gift from the Song Family Foundation.

Gapske said she hopes other local philanthropists will provide additional financial support to the fund.

Many businesses have already submitted grant applications, and fund organizers are reviewing and following up within a couple days, Penner said.

He said similar funds exist in Jackson County, Livingston County and Detroit.

For local nonprofits, The United Way of Washtenaw County established a “COVID-19 Community

Relief Fund,” also funded in part by the Song Family Foundation. The fund will support local nonprofits in helping vulnerable community members.

Federal emergency funding

Businesses and workers also found support from the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act,” or the “CARES Act” passed by Congress.

The act includes sweeping financial assistance for small and large companies, as well as additional support for healthcare providers.

The act also provides a \$1,200 check for independent individuals making up to \$75,000 adjusted gross income, as well as an expansion in unemployment funds.

In addition, the U.S. Small Business Administration set up a disaster assistance fund, providing low-interest loans to businesses and homeowners.



A notice of WCC's suspended on-campus operations is posted on the front door of the student center.

we never had requests for that kind of technology,” Snyder said. As classes moved online due to the pandemic, students who didn’t have a laptop before needed one in order to continue with classes.

Utility bills and food shortages were the top expenses students needed help with during the crisis, Snyder said. Grocery store gift cards are mailed directly to students who are approved and other payments are made directly to the service provider, Snyder said.

“Students [should] come to us as soon as they’re aware of an issue, so we can either help them or refer them,” Snyder said. “Don’t wait until things are out of hand.”

See B4 for information on how to apply for an emergency fund grant.

No tuition, fee rate increase for upcoming school year

The WCC board of trustees voted unanimously to freeze all tuition rates and fees for the upcoming 2020-21 school year.

The trustees voted during their monthly meeting, held virtually on April 28.

“As an ongoing commitment to affordability and

in recognition of the severe impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on our students, the college is recommending no increase for fiscal-21 in any tuition rates and fees,” said Bill Johnson, chief financial officer for the college, during the meeting. “This will be the fourth year in a row that we are proposing to hold our in-district rate at \$95 for on-campus students.”

The board moved the tuition and fee recommendation to an action item on the agenda and approved it.

Trustee Dave DeVarti said he thinks freezing tuition rates for the upcoming school year will be a benefit to students and help improve enrollment rates for the fall.

“I think it’s a very courageous proposal and I think it will mean a lot to our taxpayers that we’re taking this step at this time of economic distress,” DeVarti said at the meeting. “It’s very respectful to our students and our taxpayers.”

Tuition rates for classes that switched to online delivery during the winter semester due to COVID-19 were unchanged.

See B4 for per credit hour tuition costs for the 2020-21 school year.

Claire Convis | Deputy Editor contributed reporting to this story.

WCC Conversation Club connects for coronavirus chat

BY CLAIRE CONVIS
Deputy Editor

WCC students, faculty and staff came together for a group video call in an effort to connect in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis.

“Everyone’s invited,” said Veronica Boissonneau of the virtual group meeting. Boissonneau, the coordinator of student organizations and the adviser to Phi Theta Kappa Honor’s Society at WCC, encouraged students to reach out to each other virtually for some “social interaction,” in the time of social distancing.

Pete Leshkevich, head of student activities at WCC, joined the conversation lab and said that during this time of everyone staying in their homes, he has noticed “more people taking time to call loved ones, have Zoom dance parties, and taking walks outside.”

To start the conversation lab off, everyone introduced themselves and shared what they were enjoying most about quarantine. Students mentioned spending more time with their families, watching Netflix, focusing on online classes, and starting new hobbies, such as growing their own food.

WCC student and president of the International Student Association Ali Kurmasha led the group discussion, centering around questions including “What are your thoughts about COVID-19?” “Why do you think cases are increasing in the United States?” and “What do you think the future of education will be after we lift quarantine?”

The group discussed how people are stocking up on supplies such as toilet paper, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer, to the point where some shelves in grocery stores are bare.

Another discussion focused on the questions “What lasting impact do you think this pandemic will leave on the world? How do you think it will affect the economy?”

Some speculated that the pandemic will leave effects similar the Great Depression, including high unemployment rates, food insecurity for some people and an unstable stock market.

“I think the general public underestimated the value of health regulations, so we loos-

ened up, and then a pandemic happened,” said Kurmasha.

Wearing a mask is now recommended by the Centers for Disease Control in an effort to help slow the spread of the virus.

Those in the video chat shared helpful tips and resources with each other. An app for iPhones called “COVID-19” features steps to screen symptoms, safety tips and procedures, answers to frequently asked questions about the pandemic, and connects users to resources.

For some downtime, the Chrome extension Netflix Party was brought up as a fun way to watch movies with your friends even when you’re miles apart. And a Ted Talk give by Gary Liu called, “What the world can learn from China’s response to the coronavirus,” was also recommended.

Olivia Habart, president of the A2 Entrepreneurs Club at WCC, posed a discussion about how small businesses in the community are faring during this time.

Some of the students in the conversation lab said that they are missing their friends, and that it can be difficult to stay focussed on schoolwork without the usual resources and study spots available.

With the transition to online classes, several students said it’s harder to get into the school mindset when they’re at home. Campus is the place for going to class, doing homework and studying with classmates, whereas home is a place more associated with fun and relaxation, which can make focusing on school difficult.

“You can adapt, but it takes effort and time and energy and support,” said Teresa Herzog, adviser for the Collegiate Recovery Program at WCC. Herzog also encouraged the group to avoid looking into “conspiracy theories” and other content on the internet that might only serve to increase a student’s anxiety.

Social isolation can take a toll on a students mental health, and during this time in quarantine students should be monitoring their mental health even more and checking in with their family and friends. Online counseling services are still available to students through the WCC website. *See B4 for a full list of resources.*

Unemployment

Continued from A3

“I told them that I didn’t want to work, because I didn’t feel comfortable still going out to people’s cars and talking to them,” Annala said. “It wasn’t enough for me to want to keep going there with everything going on... it doesn’t outweigh the risk at this point.”

Annala said she filed for unemployment to supplement her income until she can return to work.

“I’m receiving some money, but not as much as what I would be if I was working four or five days a week like I normally would,” Annala said. “I do have a job to go back to, thankfully.”

According to State Sen. Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor), Michigan’s Unemployment Insurance Agency usually handles a few hundred to 10,000 claims per week under normal circumstances, but during the COVID-19 it’s averaged about 300,000 per week—well surpassing the Great Recession’s weekly high of about 77,000 claims.

The high volume resulted in some delay in processing claims and doling out payments to approved applicants, Irwin said.

The state unemployment system operates as an insurance pool, with qualifying workers paying in a small percentage of their paycheck every pay period, Irwin said. Because of the pandemic, state and federal governments expanded benefits so previously ineligible workers could receive funds, too, he said.

“Some folks have been waiting a particularly long time because they were not previously paying into the unemployment insurance system; they were not buying unemployment insurance,” Irwin said. “These would be low wage workers, 10-99 workers and self-employed individuals.”

Independent contractors, self-employed workers and others had to wait longer before they could apply for benefits as the state awaited federal guidance on allocating funds, Irwin said. *See B4 for information on how to apply for unemployment.*



From left, Ann Arbor residents Lisa Zeldes, Ken Raynor, Lois Pershin and Laura Pershin Raynor get creative as they celebrate a family member's birthday while also practicing social distancing.

Celebrating at a distance

CLAIRE CONVIS
Deputy Editor

COVID-19 has turned the world as we know it upside down. Weddings, graduations, birthday parties and baby showers now face cancellations or major changes due to social gathering restrictions. While it may feel strange to celebrate holidays and birthdays during such uncertain times, there are still ways to stay connected and share joy with loved ones.

The following suggestions are meant to offer some tips on how to celebrate from a distance.

For younger children, consider doing a drive-by birthday party. You can collaborate with the parents of your child's friends that live nearby, asking them to make "Happy Birthday" posters and stand in their driveways. You can drive your child around to see their friends who love and support them during this tough time.

Their friends can say hi from a distance and maybe even exchange gifts, while still respecting social distancing rules. End the drive-by with dinner and dessert back in your home.

You can have a virtual birthday party, brunch with friends, game night, etc. over Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Hangouts or another online platform. Everyone can grab their own version of snacks or dinner, and look to their laptops to see everyone's smiling

faces. It's a great way to feel a sense of community without getting physically close.

"I've even heard of stories where people are doing that for dinner parties, or a happy hour," said Devin Streur, a professional counselor at WCC. Streur said he encourages students and friends to stay connected with each other virtually as they stay home and stay safe.

Exchange addresses with

friends and family so you can send each other letters, packages or cards to celebrate birthdays and other events—or just to brighten someone's day.

For some gatherings such as bridal showers or marriage ceremonies, live-streaming or postponing the occasion might be the best option for you to share the special day with your loved ones who are quarantined in their homes.

WCC co-hosts blood drive

PHOTOS BY TORRENCE WILLIAMS
Photo Editor

WCC and St. Joseph Mercy Hospital recently co-hosted a blood drive, held in WCC's Morris Lawrence building. Due to COVID-19, volunteers took special measures to conduct the blood drive safely.

Donors waited in their cars until their appointment time and had their temperatures taken before getting out. Volunteers and nurses wore masks and gloves, surfaces were sanitized between each donor, and tables and chairs remained six feet apart from each other.



Donors had their temperatures taken at the entrance before they could donate.



Veronica Boissoneau, a Student Organizations coordinator at WCC, instructs a donor at the blood drive.



To minimize risk, a volunteer interacts with donors while they are still in their cars.



WCC's blood drive took place in the Morris Lawrence Building.



A volunteer sets up a station to take donors' temperatures.

Local business serves up hope for hungry residents

BY KRISTY KING
Staff Writer

As many residents face with unemployment and food insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some local business owners are finding ways to help.

Sheldon Alexander, owner of Foodies, a catering company in Ann Arbor, saw a need in the community and decided to fill it.

"We wanted to make a difference for people and give them hope through a very dark time," said Alexander.

Alexander has handed out more than 3,000 free meals during the COVID-19 pandemic to first responders, residents, and workers in the service industry.

It started when Foodies was hired to cook for an assisted living home in mid-March. The home shut down the kitchen as a precautionary measure to thoroughly sanitize everything in preparation for the pandemic.

Foodies operates as a portable catering service, not a walk-up food truck. However, Alexander's experience working at the assisted living home inspired him to use his business as a walk-up food truck to support the community.

"It got me thinking how we could make this work and give back to people that we've been working with for years in Ann Arbor," Alexander said. "I contacted current and former clients about donations for food.

"I knew I couldn't do it on my own so I contacted my

staff and asked if they wanted to do something like this," he said.

Foodies has approximately 26 full-time and contracted employees. Alexander decided to keep his full-time staff and pay their salaries out of pocket as long as the donations came in for the purchase of food.

"Chef Alexander asked us, and we were all on the same page that we should do some-

thing," said Eman Gordon, head of service at Foodies.

On March 27, Foodies served its first meal for free with the intent to run only until mid-April. However, when Gov. Gretchen Whitmer extended the stay at home order until May 1, Alexander and his team decided to continue providing meals.

"This is the only meal some of these people get all day. So there's a need, and if there's a need, we'll be here," Alexander said.

Alexander begins his day around 9 a.m. to go shopping



Eman Gordon, head of service at Foodies catering company, hands out a free meal. Foodies catering company started giving out free food to support residents impacted financially by COVID-19 in late March.

for the food he'll need. He said he tries to limit his grocery trips as much as possible. However, with high demand for groceries and stores struggling to keep shelves stocked, Alexander said he often has to adjust brands and meals based on what's available.

"We begin every shift with a pre-screening that we received when we were hired at the elderly home, which was directed down from the health department," Chef Alexander said. "We make sure no one has any obvious symptoms, and then we're wearing masks, and obviously gloves, to protect ourselves."

Every day, Foodies produces between 200-300 entrees.

For resident Heather Hoelzer, the meals from Foodies have been a big help.

"I heard about Foodies meals through a Facebook group for the service industry workers in Ann Arbor who had been laid off," Hoelzer said. "My boyfriend was laid

off of his job downtown and we knew countless others in the same boat. With us both out of work, the free meals offered by Foodies were a huge blessing."

Hoelzer operates a Dairy Queen in Dexter, which is temporarily closed due to COVID-19, and was inspired to support Foodies' efforts.

"I wanted to return the favor by providing a treat toward the cause," Hoelzer said.

Hoelzer's father owns the ice cream shop and they decided to donate 100 Blizzards to Foodies and the remaining food to local food pantries.

"Everyone has been great, but I wish more people knew," Gordon said. "I'm so happy with what we're doing."

Other local community members are helping the cause, too. Kevin Jacobi-Klan, the funeral arranger at Muehlig Funeral Home, allowed Foodies to park its truck at the funeral home at no charge to help Alexander and his staff.

"This is the example I want to set for my three boys," Alexander said. "My sons have been looking to me for advice on how to get through this and I want to show them that people come together. We help each other and care for our community."

The meals are given out on a first come, first served basis, so when Foodies runs out, they close up for the day. If there are any meals left over, Foodies delivers them to the Ann Arbor Police Department.

March–May 2020:



Michigan Creamery in downtown Ann Arbor moved to carryout orders only. The storefront was decorated with messages of support for the community.

Documenting a world in limbo

Photos by Lilly Kujawski



The Detroit Metro Airport was uncharacteristically empty on March 22, as many travelers canceled or postponed flights due to the coronavirus.



A tent is set up outside at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital for COVID-19 symptom screening.



"We support that woman from Michigan," says a sign posted near WCC. The sign is a reference to a quote from President Donald Trump. He referred to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer as "the woman in Michigan" to the press on various occasions during the COVID-19 crisis.



Protesters gridlocked the streets of Lansing with vehicles to demonstrate opposition to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's stay-at-home order on April 15. Some protesters also gathered outside of their cars with signs. Michigan continued to see more outcry from some against the stay-at-home order, including a gathering of armed protesters in the capitol building and a recall threat against the governor.



An Ann Arbor resident displays support for essential workers with a homemade sign in the front yard.

The pandemic response sparked a divide between many Michiganders. There was outcry against the stay-at-home order from protesters in Lansing, and others around the state signified support for Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and solidarity for essential workers.

Businesses had to adapt quickly to COVID-19. Many restaurants moved to carry-out and delivery only while others closed. Non-essential stores were shuttered or moved to online sales only.



Heart-shaped thank you notes on display in the store window of Go Blow on Main Street in downtown Ann Arbor.



South State Street in downtown Ann Arbor was unusually empty during the COVID-19 crisis.



Steak and Shake on Ellsworth Road offered curbside carryout orders and delivery.



On March 16, the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority made 150 on-street parking spots free to use for curbside pick up orders. In the background, Bivouac displays a sign encouraging customers to shop on its website.

As the world faced challenges unlike any we've seen before, the Voice asked students to share what life is like for them living through COVID-19.

Read their stories, B2–B3

Students in their own words:



Stephanie Britten
43, *Communications Media & Theater Arts*

Originally, when all of this started, it was hard to know how serious things were. Slowly but surely, it became clear that this was something none of us had ever dealt with before. Being a wife and mother of two sons, my first thoughts were just making sure my family had enough resources to get through the originally projected two-week lockdown. But as time went on, schools closed, classes moved online, grocery store shelves became bare and I had to come to terms with something for which I wasn't prepared.

As a woman with a history of anxiety, I thought if I can just maintain my sanity, I could continue to at least show strength to comfort my boys during the surreal and uncertain situation we had been catapulted into. I figured I could lean on my husband for support and we could unite to keep things stable. It all worked for the first two weeks of the lockdown. We were determined to exercise more, have more quality family time, stay on top of work and school assignments, and keep some semblance of normalcy.

Then the anxiety started creeping in. I started waking up with pounding headaches that radiated from my neck to the top of my head. My joints started to ache and my motivation took a nosedive. I realized I had been grinding my teeth in my sleep and would find my shoulders and rest of my body tense up involuntarily throughout the day. Things that I hadn't worried about in months began to cycle over and over in my mind nonstop.

I wish I could say that all of this has changed, but at least I have noticed it less and less over the past week. It's really hard to use positive reframing when there's so much uncertainty surrounding the situation we're all in. If all you can say to yourself is, "it could be worse," it doesn't exactly provide a lot of reassurance. But through it all, I am still blessed. My family is healthy and we are getting through this one day at a time.

Debra Destefani
26, *Journalism*

The weeks seem like months. Life as we know it has been upended and become a day-to-day whirlwind of uncertainty. Future plans are on hold. I was beginning to settle into my second semester at WCC, and my job working in the catering department of a well-known Ann Arbor business was just starting to pick up for the season. Then came the pandemic. For now, my "old life" and its priorities have taken a back seat.

In addition to my classes being moved online, I was furloughed from my catering gig. Luckier than those still out of work, I was adopted by my employer's mail order service, which provides expensive, imported foods to people who can afford it. I now spend my days putting together orders of hand-made pastas, wild artichokes preserved in olive oil, hundred-dollar prosciuttos, and vinegars to be shipped to places such as San Francisco and Boston.

I marvel at the differences daily between what I can't afford, and what others can buy in such vast quantities. I am in awe as I prepare thousands of dollars of "necessities" to be shipped across the country, and while doing so I plan what type of cheap dinner I will be making this evening. There is a strong possibility that leftovers and rice will be involved.

I frequently imagine these big boxes I am packing being shipped to a house far larger than any I have ever been inside of and being delivered to a doorstep of a person who makes far more money than any single person would ever need. I am told that what I am doing is "essential," and that people need this service. But as I look around the warehouse at the hundreds of thousands of dollars of product on the shelves, I know that none of this is truly essential. I am not providing what a small fraction of our society needs, but what people want. I am providing for the 1%.

I have my Worker's Pass, my face mask and a stash of gloves in my purse. I video chat with the people I am close with. But I'd rather see my family and friends in person, hug loved ones, and be able to enjoy life again. In times of crisis, it's human nature to come together and extend our support to one another. I believe this is the most challenging aspect of the COVID pandemic—we are unable to be there for one another and share our collective experiences face to face.

Yet I find an odd sense of freedom in most of us being in the same sinking ship together. My situation is anything but unique. None of us can be singled out for being unemployed, unable to pay rent or bills. Too many of us just simply can't. There are massive social and economic changes happening in our society, and I doubt things will ever be "back to normal" again. The systems which unfairly undermined those who are "less fortunate" are beginning to crumble and temporarily fall away. There are acts of selflessness happening on a scale that I've never seen before. I am looking forward to the new life our society will build once this is over. And for that, I am grateful.



Nik Greer
23, *Communications*

What has this been like for me as a WCC student? Incredibly hard. I am not someone who learns well by reading a book and taking a test. I thrive in the classroom setting. After this all happened, I pretty much gave up on my classes because I knew I won't be able to focus and do well. I am an honor roll student. I have never failed a class in my life. I pay out of pocket for my classes and now not only do I not get that money back, but I also don't get the credit.

I also am a major depressive with severe anxiety and it's mainly triggered when something life-altering happens. I've gone back to therapy via the telehealth because thankfully, my parents have good insurance. My dad had been laid off and so have I. My mom is an ER nurse at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing and she risks her life every shift to help those in need. She was diagnosed with stage one lung cancer in 2016 and has now been living with one functioning lung, on top of her asthma. She is 100% immunocompromised and it worries my whole family. I strive to have the kind of strength she does and be the bold, noble and heroic person she is.

I'm hoping to make a comeback, get my GPA back up, and continue the hard work I've been doing at WCC for the past three years.

DJ Broussard
20, *Performance Arts*

My quarantine experience has been a pretty unexciting one. I mainly stay in my bed and sleep a lot. I also have struggled to eat healthy, which has caused me to feel bloated at times or even chubby.

I was always a big procrastinator with school but now it's even worse as you can imagine. My motivation has been very low. The main struggle has been being away from my girlfriend for so long. We've been dating for five months and it feels like we haven't seen each other in six. FaceTime and texting is all we have to communicate, but it's better than nothing.

The one positive about all of this is spending time with my family. They help make this quarantine doable. The whole pandemic has really made me realize just how much was available to me in my life—all the places I could go to and fun things I could do. I miss going to my favorite restaurants and seeing my family. It's a situation where you don't really appreciate something until it's gone. I anticipate the day when I can get back to normalcy and really appreciate the many blessings I have in my life.



Sabrina Lanker
19, *Math and Natural Sciences*

Online classes are not going great, but they're not terrible. It is hard to stay focused, but I'm not failing yet. I miss social interaction a lot! I always complain about school and work, but for the first time, I wish I was there.

Now, I attend my classes from the desk in my room. I put my desk right in front of my window, so I get some light and I'm able to look outside. I have been riding my bike when it is nice outside, and hiking near my house. I made a drawing for my favorite band, Neck Deep, and sent it to them. I also redecorated my bathroom and bedroom recently.

Alison Gray
18, *Education*

The coronavirus crisis has pretty much taken over everything. Online classes aren't easy, especially when your teachers weren't prepared, so we all have to work together to get through it. Not only are we feeling the weight of the classwork, but we have the weight of running the classes a whole new way. Trying to do video chats with 20-plus students isn't easy.

We have to find ways to do presentations and labs. We have to come up with ways to do these things at home, when some of us don't even have a laptop or internet. I can say it's a whole new level of stress for me.



Elizabeth Meier-Austic
43, *Digital Video Production*

I am a single mom with two young children. I attend school full-time at WCC. I have a few temp-position jobs that have allowed me the flexibility to work while in school. This is my last semester to complete my certificate at WCC.

Right before in-person classes were suspended, I spent two days feeling fine, but noticed I had a sporadic dry cough. I think it was on the last day of in-person classes that I stayed home because my cough worsened, and I had restricted breathing, chills, muscle aches, and a low-grade fever.

I went in for a check-up the next morning and they took a nose swab. The doctor said he could not test me for COVID-19 through our clinic, but could test me for Influenza A and B, RSV, and a dozen other things that could be causing my symptoms. Just as my children and then my mother began showing similar symptoms, I received my test results back: all negative. I waited for hours to talk to a nurse to request a COVID-19 test, only to be told that unless I had severe enough symptoms that I needed to be hospitalized, they could not provide me with a test. I was told that they needed to save the tests for people whose treatment for critical conditions would be informed by the test results. I felt like I was getting better, so that did not apply to me.

Being the total geek that I am, I made a simple website about the symptoms and progression of COVID-19 while I was most sick, perhaps to ease some of my anxiety about my symptoms and my family's symptoms, and whether they would worsen.

I had symptoms off and on for weeks (worse the first week), but fortunately, my worst and most lasting symptoms were mainly fatigue and chills (the restricted breathing only lasted a day and only returned briefly and sporadically after that). The symptoms for my family were even milder. Now weeks have passed, and everyone seems to be recovered with no major relapses, with the exception that my mother keeps feeling a sporadic

burning sensation in her throat.

My best advice based on my experience, if I did indeed have COVID-19, is to get a ton of rest, try to not stress yourself, ask for any help you need to rest and recover (from a distance), and plan for a long recovery—of up to a month or more—with strange symptoms and unexpected relapses. And stay home, of course!

Right before coronavirus came to Michigan, I interviewed for a new job at the University of Michigan as a data project manager. The unit produces webinars and instructional videos, so my recent training in video production seemed interesting to them. Just as the COVID-19 started to become a serious concern here in Michigan, I was offered the job, and accepted it the same day. I started my job part-time on April 1 remotely, and I'm moving to full-time in May. I feel very grateful to have secured a full-time job with benefits right as so many people are losing their jobs, and as layoffs, furloughs, and hiring freezes are occurring at colleges and universities.

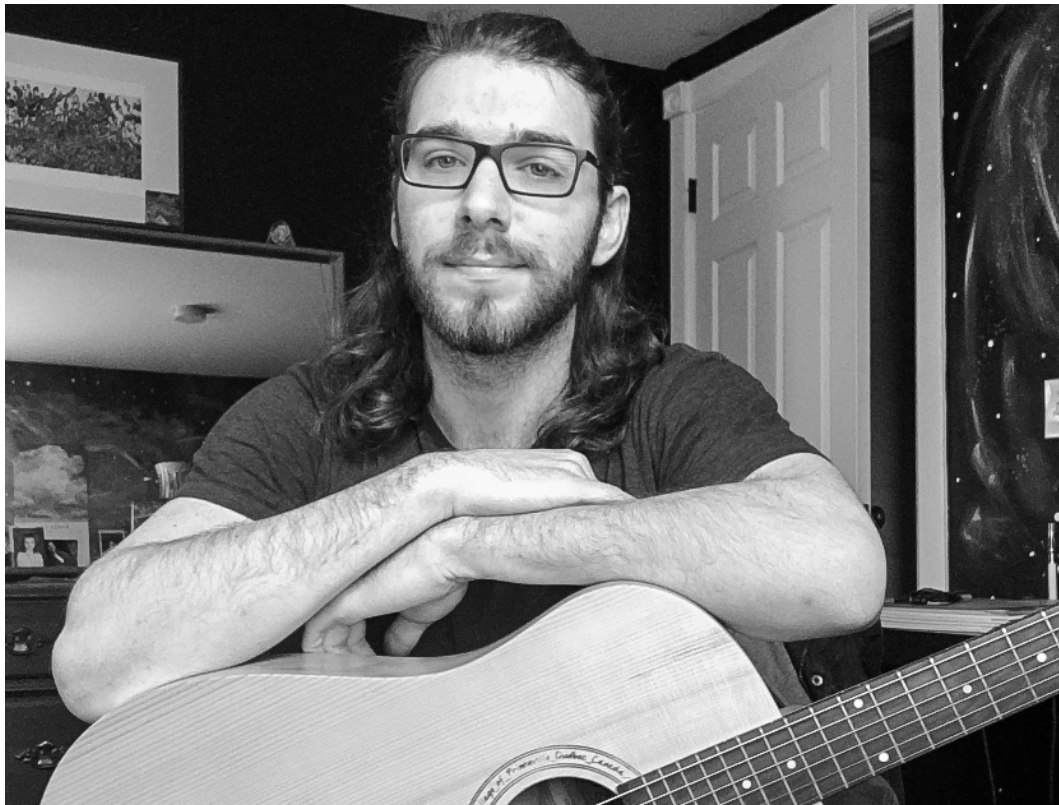
It's strange starting a new job completely remotely. I feel like I am missing out on the rapport built with co-workers in person. I actually reached out to the career transitions office and had a virtual session with a career counselor to seek advice on how to start (and keep) a job under these strange and stressful circumstances.

I have been putting in extra effort to connect with my co-workers remotely through email, Slack, and video meetings. I've done independent and remote work in the past, though, so I think that is also helping me during this transition.

If it were not for my mother, who is a retired elementary school teacher, offering to homeschool my kids while I work, I am not sure how I could make it in my new job. My heart goes out to all of the parents of younger children who are still working and trying to finish the semester while receiving little to no help with childcare.

I cannot express how incredibly genuine and supportive my WCC instructors have been—not just this semester, but throughout my time at WCC. They amaze me both in terms of their talent, and in how much they are willing to go above and beyond their duties as instructors to support all of their students.

Learning to learn in a new way



Malachi Enright
24, Liberal Arts Transfer

To be honest, the transition to online classes was kind of difficult. Rearranging my schedule and figuring out where things were online was initially frustrating, and it left me feeling scatterbrained. I ended up dropping two of my classes to focus more on my other courses.

Shortly after the online transition, I was laid off work pending further notice, but thankfully the relief bill will supposedly allow unemployment benefits to supplement lost income for a few months.

My biggest worry throughout this has been my family. I keep in contact with them more frequently to see how things are going.

I still make time to unwind from studying and the ceaseless COVID-19 news headlines. I'll practice one of my instruments, browse social media, play a video game, or watch something on TV.

On the brighter side of things, my family has been having dinners together at the table most nights since we're all stuck at home together now. All in all, after a rather turbulent adjustment period, I feel like I'm ready to wait this out, staying at home.

Bianca Pascarella
21, Nursing



I'm from Toledo, Ohio. Before COVID-19 brought new changes, I took two classes on campus. Now, all five of my classes are online. Normally, I commute to campus every Tuesday and Friday for my classes. Now, most of my time is spent completing my assignments online, FaceTiming my friends or sleeping.

I used to play hockey and soccer with my friends two or three times a week, but those activities have since been canceled. Gyms, masjids, hockey rinks, soccer fields and most businesses are closed. I don't know when they will reopen. One routine that has remained consistent, surprisingly, is my ability to hangout with my family and eat our favorite meals.

For the first two weeks of the pandemic, my family struggled to purchase essential items for our house, such as water, lamb, produce, rice and toilet paper.

The nationwide border closures are another challenge. I haven't been able to see my mother and my little brother, who live in Canada. If I go, I won't be able to re-enter the USA because of border restrictions, even though I am a dual citizen.

I'm impressed by the way Canada is handling the crisis. I wish the U.S. would follow suit. Our healthcare systems are overwhelmed, our government is not treating COVID-19 as a serious matter, and we are not testing enough people.

Taylor Turla
22, General Studies

The pandemic has definitely changed a lot in my life. I went from having a very structured schedule to not having anything to do and it was a hard adjustment. I do well with structure and a full schedule, so when everything shut down/switched to online, I didn't know what to do with myself.

My learning style is "hands-on" so switching to online classes was hard because it requires a lot of self-discipline. It's way easier to get off track/distracted with online classes. Some days it almost feels like I'm teaching myself the material and it can be really frustrating.

I'm part of the Collegiate Recovery Program at WCC and a big part of that is staying connected with others. Quarantine has made recovery more challenging, but I'm grateful that we have online meetings and resources. I remind myself that my worth does not come from my level of productivity and that we are all trying our best to deal with this. The most important thing we can do right now is to support one another and show compassion.

Nicole Hart
24, Accounting

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected my job at Panera Bread. I used to work 30-35 hours per week, but now my hours have been cut to less than 15 per week.

Other than the prospect of economic hardship due to reduced hours, I'm not feeling overly worried during this time of uncertainty. The stay at home order hasn't greatly altered my life, because I normally spent most of my time at home anyways, but I appreciate the extra time I have now to complete fun projects, like a coffee-themed puzzle. I also hope to read more books and find some treats to bake.

Rebecca Privatte
22, Nursing



Being a nursing student during this time has been a little difficult. The only time I was on campus before all of this was to do hands-on learning. All the theory was already online before this.

So trying to transfer hands-on learning to an online format has been interesting, to say the least. I'm very grateful for my instructors who have been so understanding and kind during all of this and who are doing their best to still make this a good learning experience for us students.

On another note, I've been very grateful to have so much extra free time. I'm not working as many hours and not able to do any socializing, which has really freed up some time for me. I've enjoyed baking, cooking, being outdoors, exercising, spending more time with my family, making more phone calls, FaceTiming, and sleeping. It's hard being stuck at home and not able to do all the normal activities that I'm used to doing. But there are definitely good things to focus on during this time.

Lauren Spagnoli
35, Nursing

My kids are in a private school and are exempt from the state declaration that distant learning will not count towards the school year. Their teachers are using a combination of Google Classroom and old school lesson plan. As parents, we have to teach the lesson plans to our children and then email the teachers our kids' work every Friday. The curriculum is pared down so I have been supplementing it by looking up their grade level standards and creating additional lesson plans.

It was very hectic trying to organize my full schedule that was changing on a daily basis, as professors tried to take classes online in that first week. Staying on top of emails and new procedures for everyone was nuts. Every GoToMeeting session with one of my classes always has a surprise appearance from one or two or three of my kids.

Now that we have all settled into a routine and know what a normal week will look like, it has been nice to spend more time with my family. The time spent at home has made everyone feel more relaxed. With all extracurricular activities canceled, we have more time to do things together as a family, like play board games or go on a bike ride.

Rabeeha Zindah
20, Early Childhood Education

My challenges right now are to email my teachers to figure out my assignments, work out issues in my courses, and to meet deadlines. But I understand that COVID-19 is affecting everyone, and we all have our own families, health, priorities and worries. Teachers and students are doing their best to adapt to the sudden changes brought on by the coronavirus.

I am worried about how it may affect my family and friends, and how it may affect people financially. At home, I am trying to stick to my normal routine. I exercise, do schoolwork, spend time with my family, read books, do chores, draw, paint, and try to catch up on sleep.

Brian Blaesing
21, Broadcast Media Arts

It's hard to stay calm when your routine is suddenly disrupted. In the last year, I've faced a great deal of personal misfortunes. My mental state had been deteriorating through constant mishandling of my life. I was a mess, and it took me months to pick up the pieces. The constant reminders of a world I don't want to ever go back to haunted me until I was finally able to occupy my time with a full course load at school. I wasn't constantly ruminating anymore; I had better things to think about.

This pandemic, however, has seemingly forced me back into those dangerous patterns of thought. Online classes hold the same amount of content for me, but without a classroom schedule, I am able to finish my tasks significantly faster. This, combined with my inability to go anywhere, has allowed my mind to drift back into forsaken lands. It's almost as if my brain is hyperventilating.

Paranoia and fear seem to creep up on me when I'm most bored. Eventually things will calm down, and I assume my life will continue on and this experience will become seemingly more insignificant as time passes, but for now it's difficult. For now, I have to keep myself safe, and occupied.

Jakob Franklin
16, Liberal Arts Transfer

For starters, staying at home is boring. The first thing I struggled with was finding something to do with all the time I wasn't spending on school or extracurricular activities. My hobbies have really started to take the spotlight in my life. I've been drawing, writing, and exercising more. These are all positives, and to be fair there are a lot of positives.

My biggest problem right now is the utter lack of human contact. It's wonderful that we live in this age where we can hop online and see the people we care about, but it's not the same. I miss being with them. I miss walking around with my friends and seeing all the people around us.

It's kind of funny. I miss being able to participate in some activities—even things I likely wouldn't have done anyway. Likely, when this is all over, I still won't do them. But to not have the option at all is frustrating. That's the thing though, I don't know when this will all be over and it scares me. I'm excited for the day all of this is relegated to a history book and we are free to be with each other again.

Maggie Kaechele
22, Psychology

COVID-19 has definitely hit significantly harder than I initially thought it would. The office I work at shut down, and since there is increased pressure for those with autoimmune diseases to play it especially safe, I'm spending most of my time alone—although my cats do keep me company.

I've made some hospital visits to the University of Michigan hospital for scans, and I've seen the people standing by the entrance, one side taped off to make sure everyone is checked for symptoms. I received a sticker to indicate that I'm clear of symptoms. It was very much a wake-up call for me as to how serious this situation is.



Katerina Mendel
24, Early Childhood Education

Before the Coronavirus, I was going non-stop. I was taking four classes, working 20 hours per week, and making time to work out at the gym at least three times a week. I was also volunteering at my church on Saturday nights and going to church on Sundays.

I loved my fast-paced life, but that all came to a halt. I found out classes were shifting to online, which was shortly followed by learning that my work was shut down. With that big news, I knew I still needed to exercise, but then I found out my gym was closed, too. The half and full marathons I have been training for were also canceled. Lastly, I found out that my church was closed and services moved online for the time being.

I never thought this day would come, but it has. This time has been tough and I have had to really keep myself focused on what matters—my family. I know that many are worried and so am I, but I'm also thankful that I'm able to help my family through this tough time by staying healthy. This means keeping up with my workouts and running, and more importantly, eating healthy.

I know there are so many reasons to be worried and scared, but I have focused on what I can control through this time. I am slowing my body down and taking time to focus on what I can still do, by keeping up with homework, taking time to go on runs or walks with my dog, and limiting my interactions to the people I live with. I hope you all stay focused on this semester and finish strong. We are all in this together—we can do it.



David Seaman
27, Pre-law

Much is uncertain right now regarding COVID-19. There is an immense amount of information coming in. With each new bit of information presented, the fear surrounding the uncertainty of this illness compounds. I believe we have two choices in how we respond to the fear—we can try to fend for ourselves and become paralyzed by this, or we can help one another through it.

Adjusting to the new expectations in my classes has been difficult. When placed in a situation where your livelihood is at stake and your food, shelter or community is threatened, it is difficult, if not impossible, to retain new information. Before I start any of my classwork, I make sure to first answer the question, "How am I coping today?"

This crisis has given me the chance to recognize where my real priorities reside. Putting self-care first, I use my time to centralize resources for those who have been laid off as a result of this virus, as well as advocating support for returning prisoners and migrant populations. I have also assisted in a battle with insurance companies (Blue Cross Network, primarily), to make sure that essential businesses still in operation that cannot afford both premium insurance rates and payroll to their employees do not have to choose between the two.

Reaching out to those most vulnerable and being available for them has allowed me to recognize just how far we as a country have fallen short; this whole time, students could have been given laptops who could not afford them, people who couldn't afford health insurance could have received treatment, Americans without financial resources and opportunity could have had a guaranteed income. I am sorry that it has taken a pandemic for us to realize these things are possible. But at the same time, now that we know they are possible, we have a real opportunity to shape the country we deserve once we are past all of this.

Those with more—instead of taking more, give more. Those in a position of influence—use it to support those without a voice. History will judge us by how we conduct ourselves during this time.

Be smart, love one another; be safe, help each other. Together we are stronger. If a community crumbles, the individual surely will. Be the heroes in our story.

PHOTO BY KATEMANGOSTAR

Resources *for* students

HEALTH

Mental health resources

Campus assistance program (CAP)

Visit caplife.hmsanet.com and login with the information below:
Username: WCC Password: myresource
Or call 1-866-227-3834 anytime

The WCC Counseling Center

Open to phone calls at 734-677-5102.
Virtual counseling sessions are also available to students.

If you are experiencing emotional distress in the context of the COVID-19 crisis:

Michigan Stay Well Counseling via the COVID-19 Hotline
Call 1-888-535-6136
Press “8” to talk to a Michigan Stay Well counselor.

For meditation, sleep and movement exercises:

Visit headspace.com/mi (currently free for all Michiganders)

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide:

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Call 800-273-TALK (8255)
Or text TALK to 741741

National Suicide Prevention Deaf and Hard of Hearing Hotline
Access 24/7 video relay service
Call 1-800-273-8255 (TTY 1-800-799-4889)

If you are living with serious mental health or substance abuse challenges and feel it will help lower your stress if you talk with someone who understands these issues:

Michigan PEER Warmline
Call 1-888-PEER-753 (888-733-7753)

For a master list of COVID-19 substance abuse disorder and recovery resources from the Michigan Medicine Department of Psychiatry—including virtual recovery meetings, crisis hotlines, recovery support apps, and COVID-19 guidance for people who use substance—**visit tinyurl.com/umich-recovery**

Substance abuse disorder/recovery support resources

For “17 Ways to Stay Sober When You’re Stuck at Home,”

Visit thetemper.com/covid19-sobriety-tips/

If you are living with serious mental health or substance abuse challenges and feel it will help lower your stress if you talk with someone who understands these issues:

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If you think you have the coronavirus:

- Follow CDC guidelines if you’re sick: stay home (except to get medical care); separate yourself from other people; monitor your symptoms; wear a mask or cloth face covering if you must be around other people and/or pets (even at home); cover coughs and sneezes; clean your hands often; avoid sharing personal household items; clean “high-touch” surfaces everyday. Visit cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov for further details and guidance.
- Michigan has expanded testing criteria to include individuals with mild symptoms, and anyone working in public and still reporting to work in person, whether they have symptoms or not.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, call your healthcare provider to find out if you should be tested.
- Find a testing site near you by visiting michigan.gov/coronavirus and following the testing site link.
- If you or someone you know is experiencing COVID-19 emergency signs—which include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face—seek emergency medical care immediately. Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility and be sure to notify them that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

FINANCIAL

How to file for unemployment

- Start the process at miwam.unemployment.state.mi.us
- Find information and answers to frequently asked questions at tinyurl.com/uia-faq
- Make sure you have the information you need to file a claim:
 - » Your Social Security number
 - » Employment information for the past 18 months, including: employer name and address, first/last day worked, gross earnings
 - » Your address, phone number and date of birth
 - » If you aren’t a U.S. citizen, you’ll need your “Alien Registration Number” and the expiration date of your work authorization card
 - » Driver’s license or State ID
- Filing schedule for online claims:
 - » Individuals with last names beginning with A-L: File online on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
 - » Individuals with last names beginning with M-Z: File online on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.
 - » Saturdays are reserved for those unable to file on their assigned days.
- Call center filing schedule (866-500-0017):
 - » Individuals with last names beginning with A-L: Call on Mondays and Wednesdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.
 - » Individuals with last names beginning with M-Z: Call on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.
 - » Fridays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. are reserved for those unable to file on their assigned days.

Information about the WCC CARES grant:

- To apply and for more information, visit tinyurl.com/wcc-cares
- Grants are awarded in amounts of: \$500, \$1,000 and \$1,500.
- To be eligible to apply for a grant for the winter semester, a student:
 - » must be a United States citizen and otherwise qualify for and fill out the FAFSA
 - » must show Satisfactory Academic Progress
 - » must have experienced financial impact from the cease of on-campus operations due to COVID-19
 - » cannot have been enrolled as an online-only student for the winter term prior to the change in campus operations
- Qualifying expenses include:
 - » Childcare costs due to closure of the on-campus childcare center or other childcare center used by a student
 - » Course materials, such as additional software needed to continue a class remotely
 - » Online expenses incurred with the change to remote classes, such as WiFi services or expanding a phone plan to include a personal internet hotspot
 - » Technology needed to continue classes online, such as a laptop

If you do not qualify for a CARES grant but are still in need of financial assistance:

The WCC Foundation Emergency Fund provides up to \$500 to assist students facing economic hardship. Find more details and apply at tinyurl.com/wcc-emergency-fund. The fund pays for urgent expenses such as:

- Eviction notices
- Food shortages
- Utilities/shut off notices
- Unexpected car repairs
- Technology needs; students lacking a laptop may apply for a new Chromebook provided by the fund

Tuition rates for the 2020-21 school year:

- \$95 per credit hour for in-district students
- \$164 per credit hour for out-of-district students
- \$227 per credit hour for out-of-state students
- \$268 per credit hour for international students
- \$108 per credit hour for in-district distance learning students
- \$117 per credit hour for out-of-district distance learning students
- \$123 per credit hour for out-of-state distance learning students
- \$124 per credit hour for international distancing learning students