



Neighbors Helping Neighbors | Educators Continue to Serve Students During Coronavirus

#Inthistogether

As communities combat the coronavirus outbreak, HUD is highlighting stories of communities coming together to help their neighbors in need.

Bloomington, Indiana— During the coronavirus outbreak, schools across the country are transitioning to distance learning to complete the school year. Teachers in many communities are experimenting with new, creative ways of keeping their students engaged given the current circumstances. In Indiana, 5th grade teacher Diane Siddons came to the home of one of her students who was struggling with grasping an assignment through e-Learning. Fox 59 reports that the teacher maintained social distancing while working with the child individually from her yard. The teacher did not leave until the student was confident she had mastered the concept. [Read the full story from FOX 59](#)



[Photo courtesy of Fox 59](#)

New Bedford, Massachusetts - In New Bedford, public school teachers are adapting art and music courses to remote learning in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Each week, teachers present different art or music challenges with past challenges ranging from students being asked to use recyclable materials to make a sculpture and dress up as their favorite performing artist to re-creating a famous piece of artwork. Students and families are encouraged to post their responses to the challenges using #NBartchallenge and #NBmusicchallenge or send them to their teacher. *"It's just something to keep that creativity flowing,"* said Jennifer Cosentino, who teaches art at Carney Academy. Lacey Fournier, the art teacher at Lincoln Elementary, uses household items like shaving cream to paint and then creates video lessons on YouTube for students. Jennifer Murphy, who teaches chorus and band at Taylor Elementary and teaches band at both Winslow and Jacobs Elementary, started "water glass Wednesday." In her water glass challenge, Murphy uses spoons to tap glasses filled with water to play a song that students are familiar with and invites them to respond with a song of their own. [Read the full story from South Coast Today.](#)



[Photo courtesy of South Coast Today](#)

Naples, Florida – Rayna Overmyer, a fifth-grade teacher at Laurel Oak Elementary School in Naples, wanted to bring a smile to her students' faces despite the school transitioning to online classes for the rest of the school year to comply with statewide coronavirus procedures. "Mrs. O" drove to each of her students' homes and left creative sidewalk chalk messages to remind each of the children she was thinking about them and missed them. "She was just so excited," Daniela Sapkar, the parent of one of Overmyer's students, told the Naples Daily News. "She got really nostalgic, saying she just wants to go back to school." [Read the full story from Naples Daily News](#)



[Photo courtesy of Naples Daily News and Rayna Overmyer](#)

Broomfield, Colorado – Mrs. Jean Witt has served as a kindergarten teacher at Broomfield’s Aspen Creek PK-8 School for 20 years. This year was her last year of teaching, but she didn’t want to leave for retirement without seeing her students just one more time. Witt thoughtfully packaged 27 care packages to deliver to the homes of her 27 students. The packages contained sanitized educational books and games. *“It’s really hard not to be able to see my students and for them not to see me or their friends,”* Witt said. *“So I thought, ‘I want to go see my kids one more time.’ So, we made this plan to go visit and drop off bags.”* [Read the full story from Fox News](#)



[Photo Courtesy of Instagram/Nicole Curtis](#)

Lafayette, Louisiana –During the coronavirus outbreak, schools across Louisiana are transitioning to virtual education options to finish out the school year. While students are working remotely on their studies, they're still finding ways to communicate with their friends. Lafayette Parish decided to turn to a cherished way of communicating – letter writing. *"I had a lot of teachers who did special things for me, so I wanted to do something special for my students,"* said Raegan Abshire, a student-teacher. Abshire hand wrote each of her 39 third graders a letter to ensure they each knew they were missed and even included a bookmark to remind her students to continue practicing their reading. [Read the full story from The Lafayette Daily Advertiser](#)



[Photo courtesy Lafayette Daily Advertiser](#)

Kansas City, Missouri – aSTEAM Village, a designated EnVision Center, has been instrumental in inspiring students and families to pursue education and career pathways in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM), through community-based project learning and innovative programs. During the COVID-19 outbreak, aSTEAM Village recently launched a free Virtual School for students and parents. *"Since the coronavirus hit, schools have been canceled and students are at home. Many parents are working from home or lost their jobs and are at home searching for a new career,"* said William Wells, aSTEAM Village founder and executive director. *"We have free online tools and one low-cost online certification program for teens and adults."* [Read more from KSHB](#)



[Photo courtesy of KSHB](#)

Atlanta, Georgia – When the coronavirus began to spread around the U.S., universities like Morehouse College canceled in-person classes to abide by federal guidelines and keep both students and educators safe. Many colleges have continued the semester by offering virtual, video to students. But initially, “distance learning” proved to be a challenge for students who didn’t have access to housing, computers and internet outside of the Atlanta University Center campus and would not be able to continue studying upon its closure. However, a large donation from alumni and supporters as part of its “Funds for Morehouse” campaign has enabled such students to remain in virtual class. *“Our generous alumni and supporters have donated more than \$260,000 to help the men of Morehouse make a successful transition to online instruction,”* said Monique Dozier, vice president of Morehouse’s Office of Institutional Advancement. *“More than 700 people made donations. The contributions are still coming in proving that even during a global crisis, the benevolent brotherhood at Morehouse College remains strong.”* [**Read the full story from BET online.**](#)



[Photo courtesy of BET](#)

Phillipsburg, New Jersey – During the coronavirus, the Joseph H. Firth Youth Center (FYC), which is an EnVision Center, has been responsive to the needs of its community. The organization expanded its outreach by serving the community through its distribution of meals, books, and other services. To date, the Center has served 2,500 meals, distributed 500 free books and school supplies to children in the neighborhood, and continued to offer internet access for children engaging in distance learning.



[Photo courtesy of the Firth Youth Center](#)

Silver Spring, Maryland – The Phillipsburg EnVision Center, located in New Jersey, one of the hardest hit states of the pandemic, does not tackle COVID-19 alone. Partners like the Joseph H. Firth Youth Center (FYC), have been responsive to the needs of the Phillipsburg community. The organization expanded its outreach by teaming up with the Phillipsburg EnVision Center to serve the community through the distribution of meals, books, and other services. To date, the Center has served 2,500 meals, distributed 500 free books and school supplies to children in the neighborhood, and continued to offer internet access for children engaging in distance learning.



Photo courtesy KCRA

The Book Rich Environments Initiative – The Department has partnered with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (GLR), the National Book Foundation (NBF), the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) as part of the Book Rich Environments initiative, which provides books and literacy tools to children and families living in HUD-assisted housing. To learn more about the Book Rich Environments Initiative, visit www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/bren



Secretary Carson participates in a Book Rich Environments (BRE) event in June 2018

HUD Resources – HUD continues to work closely with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) to counsel communities and states on protecting their most vulnerable citizens from infectious diseases.

*To find HUD resources related to the coronavirus, visit
www.hud.gov/coronavirus.*

*Read more stories of #NeighborsHelpingNeighbors by following @HUDgov
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