



**Special Edition of the  
Rutgers Center for Literacy Development Newsletter:  
The Pandemic Quick Writes**

May 2020  
Vol. 3



**A BRIEF NOTE FROM  
THE DIRECTOR**

Dear Colleagues,

This is our last Special Edition about children's thoughts about the Pandemic. As you know we asked school children to do some quick writes about the lock down. Here is one we received from Declan S., Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township School District.

*"This spring is a time of loss. I have lost my baseball and soccer seasons. I can only see my friends and teachers through the computer and we can't go eat in our favorite restaurants. Before the pandemic, we never worried about doing our daily activities, but now we need to stay home to keep ourselves and others safe. I understand why we need to follow these rules, but it's hard to stay positive during this time."*

Faculty Advisor, Lori Elkins-Solomon sent an email regarding the April issue of STRIPES. This is a literary magazine published online by the East Brunswick Technical High School. Lori's students wrote poetry and journal entries about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Click on the link and enjoy the entries. <https://ebtechstripes.edublogs.org/>

Thank you to the teachers who motivated their students to write. They are: Jenny Ahn from Cliffside Park Schools; Nicole DeLorenzi from Woodbridge Township Schools; Mrs. Carroll, Mrs. Thompson, Ms. Kelly, Eileen Bancalari and Kelly Leary from Bethlehem Township Schools; Christina Kalavrouziotis, Mr. Burns, and Mr. Gathen from Hanover Township Schools; Amy Swanson from Tinton Falls Schools; Mary Lynn Ellis from Abington Friends School; and Lori-Elkins-Solomon from East Brunswick Technical High School.

This is the third and last special edition of our newsletters. We have teacher responses to teaching online and will put them in our newsletter for the summer.

Thanks to Brianna Rinaldo and the Center for Literacy staff for putting this issue together.

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## PANDEMIC QUICK WRITES

I am wondering about what could Mrs. Ahn be doing when we are not in the classroom? I feel odd in the school weeks just waking up and not going to school and working from home.

**Isabella Crespo, Grade 3, Cliffside Park School #3, Cliffside Park School District**

What I like about this Pandemic is I get to wear my pajamas all day and I can go outside whenever I want!

**Miranda Arredondo, Grade 1, Pennsylvania Avenue School #27, Woodbridge Township School District**

One thing I learned during distance learning is how to be more focused doing my work. I also got to enjoy Zoom time with my friends, teachers, and loved ones.

**Shayla Alomar, Grade 1, Pennsylvania Avenue School #27, Woodbridge Township School District**

Something I don't like about this Pandemic is that I don't get to see my friends and teacher. I miss them a whole lot.

**Madan Arredondo, Grade 2, Pennsylvania Avenue School #27, Woodbridge Township School District**

My favorite thing about online lessons is letting my mom teach me because it's good to try a new thing. Second, is doing Zoom classes because it is a fun way to see your friends and teachers.

**Chole Iglesias, Grade 2, Thomas B. Conley School, Bethlehem Township Schools**

First, I love staying home because I get to work with my dad. Second, I love having the time to play outside more. Next, we all get to spend more time with each other. Last, I have more time to play with my tablet.

**Isaac Huff, Grade 2, Thomas B. Conley School, Bethlehem Township Schools**

I like school at home because I get to be with my family more. You get to have a bunch of recesses and like 20 snacks a day and lunches that are better than school lunches.

**William Scanlon, Grade 2, Thomas B. Conley School, Bethlehem Township Schools**

One good thing about online learning is that after you finish your school work you can play with your family all you want. We get to play outside more and we take more breaks. We can have snacks when we work and no homework after school. But I really miss my teachers.

**Aaron MacQueen, Grade 2, Thomas B. Conley School, Bethlehem Township Schools**

Hi, my name is Ryleigh and I'm in second grade. These are some reasons I really like homeschooling. I like it because it's quieter so I can focus more. Another thing is I have A LOT of books so my reading gets more educated. The last thing is I get to be closer to my family. And that is why I like homeschooling so much!

**Ryleigh Santoro, Grade 2, Thomas B. Conley School, Bethlehem Township Schools**

One thing about remote learning that I like is that I have a quieter workspace. In class sometimes people start talking during times when we are supposed to be doing work quietly. At my own home, I get a much, MUCH, quieter space to do math worksheets and L.A. worksheets.

**Masha Krutovsky, Grade 4, Thomas B. Conley School, Bethlehem Township Schools**

Something that is difficult during the pandemic is not seeing my friends. All my friends are kind, funny and make me feel good. Not seeing them makes everything a little boring. Calling my friends is my favorite thing to do during the day. It is technically the only time I get to talk to my friends, but if we are all careful and patient we can all see our loved ones once again.

**Luca T., Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

There are learning moments, good things and trying things all in the period of this pandemic. Something good that has come out of this pandemic is that since we have to stay inside for social distancing, I get to spend more time with my family. I also learned that it's crucial to exercise to keep in shape. Something that has been difficult for me is that you have to stand 6 ft away from other people to stay safe. This is difficult because sometimes you don't know what 6 ft is and sometimes you could forget.

**Megan, Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

Something good that has happened during the pandemic is I have gotten closer to my family. Since my sister and I are homeschooling, sports are postponed and my parents are working at home we get to spend more time together. We have been watching movies, playing board games, backyard games and going on my bike. During this terrible time good things are still happening like spending time with my family.

**Joseph, Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

All that we hear everywhere is that people are getting sick and dying. They are sad and depressed, and can't meet their loved ones during these difficult times. But as every cloud has a silver lining, I feel that this pandemic has taught us that when everyone goes through the time of intense danger together, we tend to forget our differences and come together to help each other. **We are in this together.**

**Aayush, Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

Something positive that has come of the COVID-19 pandemic is that now people are starting to learn how important the things we have around us are. People have discovered how lucky and fortunate they are to have clean water, food, and shelter. I'm grateful for my family and friends that I have during this pandemic. For example, usually, your family and friends are out of the house doing activities and all sorts of things. During this pandemic, we get to spend time with our family and friends, and without that, this pandemic would be 100 times worse.

**Matthew, Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

During this arduous and struggling time, we learned many things we were aware of to not let this happen again, this is truly a horrible, horrific, and hard time to be in. We should wash our hands to be as clean as a whistle even if the pandemic has ceased already. We've learned to be grateful for what we have, like a roof on top of our heads or delicious food we could eat. We are grateful for our family because they keep you company and safe during this dangerous time. They play super-fun-and-able-to-past-time games and go on bike rides with you.

**Kevin, Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

Something I learned that happened during this pandemic is that it could be hard to try to stay home as much as possible. I know if you have everything you need, you don't. Such as, you think you have a lot of food but, a week later, you don't have that much food left. Something good that happened during this pandemic is how much time I get to hang out with my family at home. I love my family and I think it's worth more getting together. Something difficult is visiting other friends and family. Not all the time we get together, since we can't visit friends and family we have to do social distancing. Sadly we can't talk to them as much because we have work to do and we don't have all day to talk to them. So that is life for me so far.

**Mia R. Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

During my quarantine time I have enjoyed being home with my family. We have spent a lot of quality time together playing games, watching movies, and going on long walks. I learned during this pandemic how special family and friends are. I miss going to school, seeing my family, and playing my sports. I can't wait to see all my friends and teammates soon. We had a very difficult time during the pandemic because my dad and mom got Covid-19. It showed me how to be strong during a very difficult time. No one should have to watch their parents go through this pain that the virus gave them. This also showed me how lucky we were that they were able to recover from home and not like many people who had to be hospitalized. If you need to go out make sure you wear your mask and gloves. Please stay home and safe!!!

**Dylan G. Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

Something that is good is that my family goes on more walks and bike rides. We also get to spend more time together. Something I learned during the pandemic is that you have to be really careful. You can't get too close to people which is kinda sad. Something that is difficult during the pandemic is that I can't participate in sports like softball. I also can't see my friends. Learning from home is sorta hard too. I have to be on time for a lot of meetings and it is not the same as it would be at school.

**Madison M. Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

Something good that happened during this pandemic is that I had the time to work hard to paint a symbol of a team from a game. It took me 40 minutes to paint and I really liked how it turned out. Something I learned from this pandemic is how to bake a cake all by myself. My family ate it and they liked it. Another thing I learned this pandemic is how to do a front roll and it only took me a few tries. Something difficult this pandemic is trying to find something to prevent me from being bored. I like to sleep but Mom says it doesn't count.

**Danny C., Grade 4, Mountview Road School, Hanover Township**

**Students were asked to write their own version after reading this by Laura Kelly Fanucci:**

“When this is over,  
May we never again take for granted;  
A handshake with a stranger, Full shelves at the store,  
Conversations with neighbors,  
A crowded theater, Friday night out,  
The taste of communion, A routine checkup,  
The school rush each morning, Coffee with a friend,  
The stadium roaring, Each deep breath! A boring Tuesday. Life itself.  
When this ends, may we find that we have become more like the people we wanted to be,  
we were called to be,  
we hope to be,  
and may we stay that way — better for each other because of the worst.”

When this is over  
Never will I  
Take for granted  
Every day  
Of being alive  
'Cause life's a gift  
Enough food in front of you  
A roof over your head  
Good health  
Even a good family  
These are all things that you and I should be appreciative of, every day, no matter what condition  
There are people out there  
Right now  
Sadly, dying  
Not just from the COVID-19,  
But from all different causes  
And you're complaining?  
About what?  
Not being with friends?  
Not allowed out of the house?  
Stuck with your family?  
Maybe that's a good thing,  
Having a break, 'stuck' with your family  
More bonding time  
You get a break  
Teaching you a lesson, never take any of this stuff for granted  
Sometimes, it's good to have a break.

**Aidan Lenahan, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Markham Place School, Little Silver**

When this is over,  
We will know  
Just how things can change so fast  
How reality can take its burrowing path  
Through our states and into our heads  
How the canals will clear how the roads will bustle  
When this is all over  
We'll all be in a hustle  
To hold a hand  
To share a smile  
Soon we will realize what this was  
It's a calling to tell us exactly what we need  
To tell us to wash and use good hygiene  
But hope will rise through and throughout  
When this is all over

**Abby Johnson, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Markham Place School, Little Silver**

When this is over,  
We will have fully stocked food stores  
Have school in session  
Have after school activities  
The Junior Olympics would still be going on  
I would be swimming  
I would be exhausted on Monday  
We wouldn't have to worry  
We wouldn't have to panic  
We wouldn't have to start selling hand-made masks to make money.  
When this is over,  
We will be able to play with friends  
Have parties  
Celebrate birthdays  
Be in History  
Be able to visit Italy again  
Be able to travel  
Be me  
Have the best time ever.  
How do I know this?  
I am planning for the future.  
I am looking ahead of this terrible time.  
I am imagining a regular life.  
A life without a pandemic,  
A life where I can be free

**Avery Guild, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Markham Place School, Little Silver**

When this is over,  
We will appreciate things,  
That we never have before.  
Going to school  
The adrenalin on a roller coaster.  
To see your family.  
Play basketball with your friends  
To breathe every single day.  
And always experience Mondays.  
When this ends,  
We will find a way to appreciate things.  
That you have experienced everyday.  
People would realize the little things.  
And appreciate them the most  
But that's only going to happen,  
When this is over

**Ethan Mak, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Markham Place School, Little Silver**

In **Mary Lynn Ellis' 11th grade AP Literature class at Abington Friends School**, students have been working on an in-depth study of contemporary American poets. Students were asked to choose a line or more from any poem by any poet that resonated with them in a new way during the present quarantine. <https://www.abingtonfriends.net/featured-story/quarantine-thoughts-poetry/>

**From the Body Rot, Soil**

"From Mary Oliver"

Today is warm, like yesterday. Sometimes it is sunny, and sometimes rainy, and sometimes I hear birdsong through the early morning or late at night over the hum of the news. Spring is the month of rebirth, but I don't understand how the soil is expected to grow anything right now.

It's April.

But it doesn't feel like spring.

**Sophia Mele, Grade 11, Abington Friends School**

Please note the Center for Literacy Development's  
Programs for the upcoming 2020-2021 year

# SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 23, 2020  
53<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
ON READING AND WRITING

## KEYNOTE AND FEATURED SPEAKERS

Register at

<http://rutgerscenterforliteracydevelopment.cvent.com/d/6nqx9m>



**Tanny McGregor**  
Internally-know Teacher  
and Author



**Donalyn Miller**  
Texas Teacher and  
Author



**Wiley Blevins**  
Author



**Diane Lapp**  
Author



**Janet Wong**  
Author



# CENTER FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT 2020-2021 SPEAKER SERIES WORKSHOPS



**Cornelius Minor**  
*We Got This: Equity, Access, and  
the Quest to Be Who Our  
Students Need Us to Be*  
December 10, 2020



**Lucy Calkins**  
*Teaching Writing*  
February 26, 2021



**Kate Roberts**  
*A Novel Approach*  
April 28, 2021



**John Schumacher**  
*"Mr. Schu"*  
Ambassador of Books  
June 3, 2021

Registration for these events may be found at  
<http://rutgerscenterforliteracydevelopment.cvent.com/d/6nqx9m>