

LEVEL 3

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2020

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE NEWS

Greetings, Level 3 Families!

It's been a long time since we've sent you a real *regular* newsletter, and it's good to get back in the groove! It's been almost exactly one month since we moved to online classes, and the experience has been much smoother than we had anticipated. In math and language, we've had productive one-on-one times, and great small group lessons and math "workshops." We're seeing students make huge strides understanding and using more abstract concepts, especially in math. Some things go much faster on line, such as giving a science or history lesson where we incorporate a video or powerpoint. And we've noticed in both smaller and larger groups, everyone is now kinder to the others. What we do miss, though, is the person-to-person contact and interactions, either when playing or working. We miss the spontaneous discussions that give us a fascinating window into their thinking. We miss seeing them at recess, either playing vigorously or hanging out, just talking or laughing together. Even though we don't specifically say it, we are all grieving the loss of those powerful, shared, end-of-year experiences, such as the musical, the big trip, and the eighth grade graduation, that will not take place this year.

In Personal World assignments, we've encouraged students to articulate their feelings about all of the changes. Some have written about it thoroughly, and some less so.

Psychologists say that more than half of our communication is non-verbal. This means that when we're together online, we work extra hard at verbal communication, because we have to compensate for missing non-verbal components. We're not sure, but we imagine that has to be extra tiring for adolescents. Given this and other factors mentioned above, we are constantly searching for new, fun things for our students to do and to look forward to.

One of the changes we've implemented is the Wednesday Independent Project Day. Our first Independent Project Day was quite successful, with a wide spectrum of projects chosen by our students. We're also investigating several virtual field trips that we'll let students know about next week. Another activity we're planning to participate in is "Mismatch," an online program which pairs classrooms from different demographic groups, in order to guide them through CIVIL political discourse. (We found out about this last one from *UPFRONT Magazine*.)

So if you should happen to hear of something along these lines, please share it with us. We'd love to hear from you.

Finally, despite our isolation, by being on line we've all shared personal aspects of our lives we might not have otherwise. We've now seen each other's family pets, people's bedrooms, and their favorite stuffed animals!

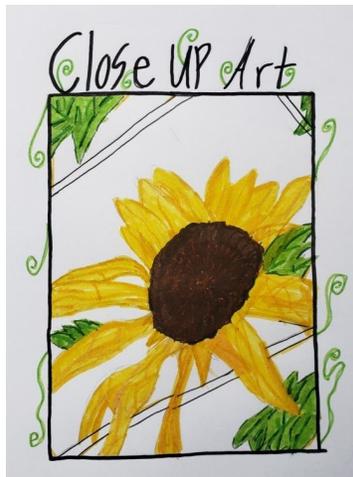
Academics

As part of our final cycle, "Systems and Relationships," students are learning about economic systems (capitalism, communism, socialism, etc.). This week, students had lessons on the Great Depression, and how The New Deal was instituted to address different economic weaknesses. Students are currently working in small groups (online) to prepare creative presentations about different aspects of The New Deal.

Last week our art lesson and assignment was on macro photography and extreme close-up drawings. Students were invited to both photograph and draw a portion of a common household or garden object, at extreme close range. They especially were encouraged to play with composition in a way that would pique a viewer's interest. Here are several pieces that were submitted:



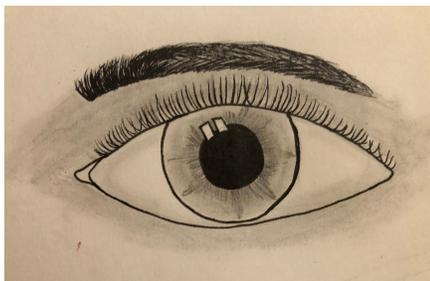
Drawing by Diver



Drawing by Petra



Photograph by Petra



Drawing by Ale



Photograph by Diver

Students have also been sending in other art pieces on which they've been working since the beginning of online school. Here are several:



Drawing by Alex



Drawing by Ale

Thank you to...



♥ the ALL of our students and families, for your flexibility and adaptability, your support, and your patience during this extraordinary time. We love you all, and we miss seeing each of you in person.

Level 3 Families, we are always grateful for all you contribute to our middle school program.

Questions?

PARENTS AND STUDENTS: We encourage you to contact us with any questions and concerns. The best time to call us is in the evening; alternatively, you can email or text us any time:

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-The Level 3 Team (Robin, Deana, Erica, and Beronica)

Please send any email address changes and updates to redidin@centermontessori.org