



Dear HCA Families,

Congratulations on meeting the challenge of week one of our new normal with such good spirits, creativity, hard work, and cooperation. The photos and videos you shared of your students working hard and having fun have cheered us, amazed us, and inspired us to keep developing the best resources possible for your families. While our teachers are working very hard to provide instruction and engaging educational activities for your students, this is redefining what we mean when we say you are our “partners” in your children’s education, and we are grateful.

After a week of intense focus, today’s rainy weather seems to be encouraging us to sit back and take a breather from the formal remote learning activities and observe our planned spring break. I hope you and your families are able to settle into a more relaxed routine, being kind to yourselves and restoring your spirits. I also hope this break enables you to think about what you will need from us in the weeks ahead. We will be reaching out to you soon to get some feedback as we prepare the next round of lessons and activities.

Today, Governor Wolf extended the time frame for school buildings to remain closed for another two weeks, with students able to return no sooner than April 9th. Given that time frame, I’ve decided to include our Easter holiday, so we are currently planning for a **student return to HCA on Tuesday, April 14th**. While I am fervently hoping that we will be able to be back on campus by then, it’s certainly possible that we may be required to extend even beyond that date. I’m sure we all recognize that these decisions will be out of our control, and we can only do everything in our power to follow the advice of the public health agencies - stay home, practice social distancing and good hygiene, and create routines that allow for a balance of exercise, work, and fun.

I realize these steps are small comfort in the face of such a huge challenge. We are accustomed to planning, anticipating, taking charge of our futures and our families’ well being. I’m sure many of you have begun to find different sources of comfort to manage this and stay strong - prayer, meditation, music, physical activity, phone calls to friends and loved ones. I’ve been following the daily Lenten reflections of a young theologian, Megan Westra, who shared a timely quote of the great poet, mystic, and Trappist monk, Thomas Merton: “You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.”

Ms. Westra observed how hard it is for us to live with uncertainty, with tentativeness, but she offers the following prayer

“We do not have to know all the answers, though that’s uncomfortable for us. ...This moment is enough. ... Rather than scrunching and bunching in stress, help my eyes open wider and wider still to see and embrace all that is in this moment. For better or worse. Because as Merton reminds us, every moment contains both concern and possibility, though it remains up to us whether we embrace them or not.”

In the midst of this uncertainty and challenge, I continue to offer my prayers for health, above all, and for the strength and peace to manage these days with grace and hope.

We will continue to be in touch throughout this week and in the weeks ahead.

With every good wish,

Margaret Fox-Tully