

April 10, 2020

Dear Salmonberry Families and Friends,

I hope and trust each of you is doing well as you “shelter in place” here in our verdant Shangri-La. I know there are still significant stressors impacting each of your lives and families, which may continue for some time, but I hope the spring peepers, “pink moons” and daffodils are helping to buoy you a bit. There’s quite low tide tomorrow around 2:00 PM. I hope you have a chance to explore your favorite rocky cove with your child! Send a photo of what you see to your child’s teacher and we’ll get some up on the web portal!

Well, Salmonberry has officially made, what I feel is a mostly successful transition to distributed learning and teaching and now it’s time for a break. Just a reminder that there is no school next week (in any form.) Teachers in fact are under strict orders to actually take a few of the next ten days and turn off the screens and breathe. We will resume, possibly with a few program adjustments when **we return on Monday, April 20.**

Speaking of which, thank you to those of you who have taken the time to complete the survey that you received on Wednesday. If you have not had a chance, **please do give us some important feedback on what we’re doing by completing the survey.**

And now, the proud teacher just has to share...Our sixth and seventh graders have recently completed a spectacular multi-disciplinary unit on exploring “core, essence and self” through poetry. I just received the following writing from Salmonberry 7th grader Juliette Mckenney in response to a request to reflect on the [Mary Oliver Poem, "Hurricane"](#) (this is just a small excerpt. The full essay continues for several more paragraphs):

*“For some things, there are no wrong seasons. Which is what I dream of for me.” In life, there are many phases in a person’s personality. Evolutions over many years and brief storms when one’s core comes out completely remolded and altered. In Mary Oliver’s “Hurricane,” one such storm is described. Oliver conjures the roiling confusion of self-revolution and growth. She sculpts her words to delve into life-altering occurrences we can all relate to. Ms. Oliver calls forth the journey of losing one’s self to the changing tides of growing older and the pleasant disregard of breaking your shell and hurling yourself head-on into the swirling gale of a life lived without the carefully smoothed mask of uniformity so many wear.*

And in a reflection about the study as a whole, seventh grader Lily Bouchard wrote this:

*Our teacher, Paul led us on a journey of self discovery and self expression through many different types of poetry all with one key strand: finding your “soul” or “true self.” And step by step we worked on finding our own soul with mindfulness, meditation, poetry and research. But only after our third or fourth week on the subject, a world-wide disease hit called Covid-19. School was cancelled and our “normal” lives were put on pause. Being able to reflect and be mindful at this time has helped me so much.*

Have a peaceful break from school. See you all on the far side.

With love and gratitude,

Paul