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igniting your purpose!

March 20, 2020

Dear Parents & Friends,

As we conclude our first week of remote learning, I want to thank all of you for the effort, understanding, and cooperation you have shown. While Spark Academy certainly began this journey with the advantage of having many online resources available, they have been employed, so far, as an addition to our time together in class. Now that remote learning is the norm for our school experience at the moment, the staff must work to ensure as much of the human element as possible to our Spark Community. All of us on the Spark staff are in education with a focus on the interpersonal side of teacher, where we can field our student's question in the classroom and where their faces tell us whether they understand something or not. Class discussions bring many benefits, not the least of which is an element of humor that helps us relax and learn better.



I want to thank our parents for providing the human interaction that helps bring structure and balance to our students' journey through difficult times. As I've said repeatedly through email to my students, "We miss you and will be very happy to see your smiling faces again!"

### **What we are doing...**

1. The staff is holding daily Zoom sessions to plan together in a way that doesn't overwhelm our students. That being said, it is important for our Spark students to bring appropriate expectations to each weekday and to work responsibly. That isn't always easy to do without being in school.
2. Mrs. Larochelle has sent out two emails to both students and parents with suggestions on how to build a productive and balanced daily schedule that leads not only to productive learning time, but also to time away from school work.
3. We continue to reach out to both students and parents with communication relative not only to providing assignments, but to seek feedback on the way that all of you are experiencing "Spark Remote."
4. Weekly Zoom sessions are already taking place with Mr. Larochelle and the students. Mr. Pouliot and Mrs. Harnois will be doing the same. They will be scheduling those meetings together with me so as to create a schedule that works well for our students. I have asked the students to let me know if they would like to Zoom with me once a week or work on a weekly blog together on a weekly question that I will pose. Zooming is great, but there can be so many sessions that they become a source of stress along with other work the students need to complete.



5. We are exploring screen sharing as a means to help with math and biology instruction, and Mrs. Harnois has sent a recorded lesson home for the students to "enjoy."

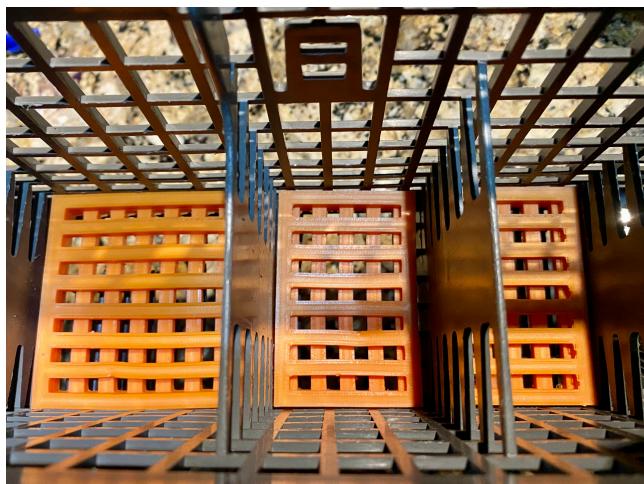
6. Humanities class will be designed to be meaningful while, hopefully, providing enjoyment for our students with videos, presentations, and assignments that will bring history, literature, and the arts to the students in a pleasant way. I will be sending out unlocked PowerPoint presentations with embedded media, knowing that our students will be tempted to edit and share them in amusing (yet tasteful) ways. If that is a way of relieving stress and of making fun of their

Humanities teacher, I quite understand. In fact, I invite the students to share those with me. We could make it a weekly competition to help us enjoy each other's company in a new way!

I can't emphasize enough how much we want to make this experience a good one for all of you. Feel free to give the teachers your feedback and to let me know how things are going, especially if there are any problems.



On another topic, we will be conducting our meetings with incoming students and parents through Zoom. We will post that announcement on Facebook and the Spark website. Please let prospective families know that they can still move ahead with the application process.



I have shared a few photos from last week as our students worked in their biology lab as well as their sad faces as they left us. As always, more photos are available on Facebook. Obviously, I won't be able to take photos next week. However, I invite students and parents alike to send selfies from home for us to share on our Facebook Page and in next week's newsletter. Just remember that your photos have to be appropriate for us to see and post. I'm including a shot from Raden that his mother has sent us. It seems that Raden was able to apply his SolidWorks knowledge to a home problem by fixing the dishwasher. Good work! Sorry if I embarrassed you!

Let's all do our best together and grow even stronger with a new dimension to our Spark Community!

Yours in Spark,

Denis Mailloux  
Director