



OLIVERIAN

Dear Oli Family,

A few weeks ago, I hooked our bright yellow Minnie Winnebago to our F-150, loaded up Beth, Colton, and Liam, and began a rumbling, rambling journey through New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Alabama to my parents' farm in Kentucky.



Along the way, we "camped"--the term RVers use when they plug their rig into water and electricity and sewer and cable TV and wireless internet to make things as unlike actual camping as possible.

Our ultimate destination would put us in close quarters with a group of people whose ages--80, 85, 94, and 102--made them acutely vulnerable to infection. If we brought COVID-19 to the farm, we knew, it would be catastrophic.

So we took all of the standard recommended precautions to heart--especially distancing, mask wearing, handwashing, and disinfecting. Along the way, however, we discovered that while some communities we traveled through shared our standards, others decidedly did not. In certain regions we fit right in with our masks and expansive personal space. One Starbucks, in fact, far exceeded our standards and felt like a NASA disinfection module, with masked, shielded, and gloved servers barking instructions to customers and treating utensils and coffee cups like radioactive moon rocks.

In other places, it was about a 50/50 split in terms of COVID-safe practices. Finally, there were regions where we must have looked

like bank robbers with social anxiety, standing sheepishly in our face masks, backing away from unmasked close talkers who wanted to pinch my son's tan little cheeks (hard to blame them).

At one campground, the pool and pool deck were packed with slippery swimmers mashed together like well-nourished pallid seals on a crowded rock. They were having a great time, working simultaneously on their sunburns and herd immunity while graciously shouting for us to join them. Colton was sorely tempted, but his parents politely declined. In the same state I spotted an SUV with "F-U Fauci!" written in giant letters with a grease pen. (too edgy, some of our readers may take offense.)

Driving from New Hampshire to Kentucky, navigating this patchwork of hazards, felt a little like traveling the Fire Swamp in The Princess Bride. But instead of flame spurts, lightening sand, and rodents of unusual size, we faced airborne droplets, unsanitized surfaces, and unmasked crowds of unusual size. Our great discovery, however, was that managing risk does not really depend on other people. We knew what our family commitments were and why they were important to us, and we stuck to them without incident.

Nobody challenged us and we easily, if awkwardly, maintained our own standards regardless of what those around us were or were not doing. Even the driver of the "F-U Fauci" car was polite and deferential to those wearing masks around her, giving them the space their masks seemed to request; she was just expressing her opinion, not insisting that others agree.

In that same spirit of being internally clear and consistent about our "Oli Family" standards, I want to share our current COVID-19 safeguards for the fall. As long as we are internally clear and consistent, we can make Oliverian a relatively safe haven for students and staff and visitors regardless of what is happening in the world around us--especially given our relative seclusion from that world!

Our protocols are simple and straightforward, adhering to the recommendations of authoritative sources like the CDC, Department of Health, Department of Education, and--yes--Dr. Fauci. Those recommendations include testing, distancing, masks, hand washing, group size limits, and disinfecting as topline protections. They also include a pre-enrollment screening and post-enrollment screening process as well as infection response protocols.

Visit the [COVID page of our website](#) to stay up-to-date on our COVID response plan. I have also attached our three "COVID Top Sheets" to further elucidate Oliverian's COVID-safe commitments: [COVID Protocol](#), [Opening Protocol](#), and [Campus](#)

[Baseline](#). Each top sheet is a summary of a much more detailed list of steps and policies and trainings and physical plant modifications designed to safeguard your child, my faculty, and you from this (and other) infections while preserving a sense of comfort, ease, and normalcy! We meet weekly to review and revise these working documents and, having reviewed the plans of many other institutions, we feel very confident in our approach.

We are so looking forward to September 10 -14 when many of you will arrive on campus with your child! As those days approach, we will continue to communicate on at least a weekly basis to help you understand our policies so that we can be internally consistent--our only and best way to reduce risk and create a safe haven at Oli.

Weeks after our visit to Kentucky, I am happy to report that we all remain quite healthy--most remarkably, my unstoppable 102 year old grandmother!

Take care! We will see you soon.

Warmly and hopefully,

Will

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