



## OLIVERIAN

### Updates

Campus Closure: Campus will remain closed until at least until May 4. At this point, any campus opening this term would likely be controlled and partial for specific purposes such as senior project review, a graduation ceremony, or picking up possessions.



*Janice Hatch's fashion forward facemasks.*

Summer Session: We can't wait to welcome students back to campus for Summer Session from June 28 - August 15. We will focus on reconnection, managing stress in a changing world, mindless fun, and academic credit recovery and transcript enhancement. Please contact [Barclay Mackinnon](#) for details.

Dear Parents:

Yesterday I had a call with an Oliverian dad. He started the conversation by saying, "Man, that really stressed me out."

"What did?" I asked.

"Shopping. I just got back from the grocery store."

The purpose of our call was not to discuss the terrors of grocery shopping during a pandemic. But on the other hand, it sort of was. At a time when a quick trip to the store forces us to confront our mortality, other stressors are likely to be magnified--like having a teenager at home 24/7.

It is clear, though, that people of varying temperaments are experiencing these stressors quite differently. On a recent Zoom call, every Oliverian faculty member took a moment to share how they were doing. It was pretty clear that the introverts among us are better equipped to shelter in place. While Brian Gaffey's distress at not having fifty hugs a day was palpable, Dan Chamberlin was clearly psyched to have not only permission, but a government mandate, to socially distance. "I like my apartment!" he said gleefully into his gaming headset.

Just as various people are experiencing this weird time differently, their coping methods are similarly diverse. Here are a few that seem to be working well for certain folks and are worth a try:

**Humor:** One Oli family has made humor their medicine of choice-- they play doorbell ditch while dropping off face masks for friends, they speak in fake British accents to each other, and they assign style points to each other for their "Covid-chic" combinations of business tops with pajama bottoms.

**Structure/Routine:** it helps my three year old immensely to know what's next, hour by hour, to be able to lean into each activity 100%, and to have some sameness from one day to the next. It helps his fifty-five year old dad even more.

**Purpose:** For those still working during this tumult (especially in healthcare or a fragile business sector) you may have almost more "purpose" than you can handle right now. For others, though, the void of uncertainty can be partially filled by serving others. Our own Janice Hatch, for instance, is using her quilting and sewing skills to make very stylish (aka Covid-chic) face masks for the community. Our nurse, Michelle Austin, is volunteering her testing expertise via teleconsultations to overloaded hospitals.

**Spiritual Engagement:** One of our dorm parents is using his isolation to create a mini meditation retreat in his apartment; this morning, my wife attended a virtual church service "with" her dad-- who is in a nursing home in another state.

**Avoid Imposters:** Alcohol sales are up a whopping 55% since the advent of this pandemic! Alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, THC, prescription medicines and, of course, ice cream, can provide momentary relief, but are notorious for seriously exacerbating anxiety and depression when overused. Setting clear limits around these indulgences can help prevent a future crash.

**Connection/Solitude:** The irony of this time is that we can simultaneously have too much and too little of both connection and solitude. It's just all out of whack! It took Beth and me (okay, just me) almost going nutty to finally discover that we have to

carefully schedule family time and solitude and phone-a-friend time to achieve a semblance of balance.

**Grace:** As I told a parent the other day, I recently watched a waiter in hazmat gear carefully place our now cold pizza on a plastic table outside the restaurant like it was nitroglycerin. He held up his hand, meanwhile, signaling my wife to keep her distance until he could careful back his way into the restaurant. It just wasn't our usual easygoing pizza night. But it was still pizza! Few things are going to be quite as good these days as they normally are--our work, our meals, our schooling, our parenting, our exercise, our moods. So extending a little grace to ourselves and each other will help us remember that, yep, it's still pizza and pizza is still good.

**Seek Support:** If you are feeling anxious or lonely or frustrated or perplexed (all of those, you say?), there is plenty of support out there. Attend our bi-weekly parent groups, reach out to your team lead or assigned counselor or any of us, have a phone session with your home therapist. You can also sign up for [Krissy Pozatek's Parallel Process parent coaching course](#); if you sign up this semester, just let Krissy know that you're "one of us" and it will be on Oliverian.

Take care and please let us know what you most need from us.

Warmly and hopefully,

Will

Will Laughlin, Head of School/CEO

STAY CONNECTED:



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