



The IMMS Messenger, Virtual Edition 3

January 22, 2021



Photo by Piper Willenbucher, IMMS 6th grade

IMMS Drama Club members prepare for the virtual presentation of High School Musical Junior using Zoom.

Preparing the play virtually

By Piper Willenbucher
IMMS Grade 6

As many of you know, Indian Mound Middle School is putting on a version of High School Musical Junior. Young actors and actresses are taking to the online stage to make a masterpiece with their acting, singing, and dancing skills. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the IMMS drama club has had to adapt to this new world. Since this year is different the cast is performing virtually.

Director Dee Dee Bouzak, music director

Katrina Lemens, and choreographer Nora Wroblewski have been working hard to create the best show possible. The cast and crew meets Mondays through Thursdays every week on Zoom.

The cast is staying optimistic and has kept coming to rehearsals. As they say in show business: "The show must go on!"

The show is planned to finish sometime in February. It will be a recorded video for you to watch with your family.

Cool activities for playing in the cold

By **Ada Geiger**
IMMS Grade 6

Winter is upon us!

The ground is cold; the air is dry, and all you might want to do is curl up inside. But, if you're like me, I NEED fresh air! And winter and snow comes with so many new activities to do in the cold!

Even though the McFarland indoor ice arena is temporarily not offering open skate, you can still possibly get out on the ice! With all of the big and little ponds around McFarland, it's easy to grab your skates and go out for a little while. Always make sure you don't go alone and, if you are unsure about the ice conditions, ALWAYS ask an adult. If the temperature has stayed consistently below freezing lately, the ice conditions are probably going to be OK, but still check with an adult first. Also, if the ice conditions look unsafe, DON'T GO ON IT!

If you have a pair of skates, then skating would be perfect! Otherwise, there is always the option of renting ice skates.

Another "cool" activity you could do is go sledding! Going sledding is always an easy, fun activity to do with friends and family. It's also so easy because McFarland is filled with hills of all sizes to meet your level of adventure. But, if you

don't own a sled, and you are looking to go out on the hills, then lots of hardware stores, like Menards and Home Depot, sell a variety of sleds.

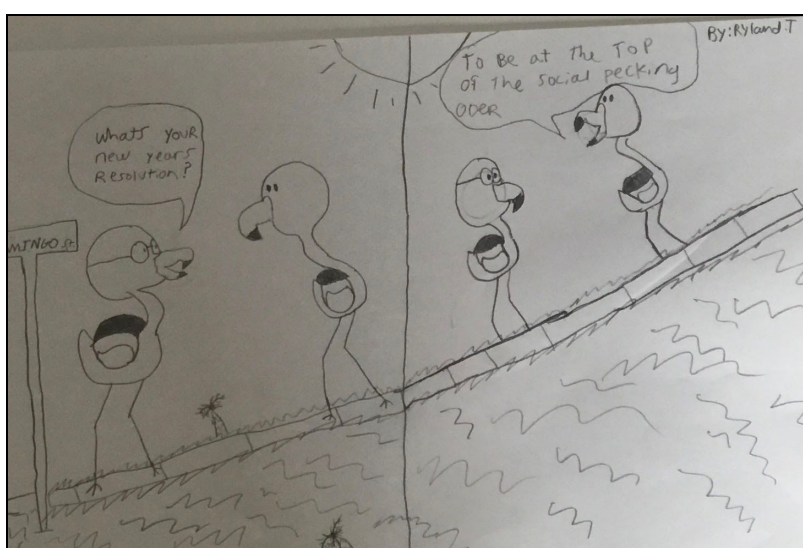
If you *are* looking to sled, then here are a list of addresses that have good sledding hills in Madison:

- Aldo Leopold Park, 2906 Traceway Drive
- Elver Park, 1250 McKenna Boulevard
- Gurner Park, 333 S. Rosa Road
- Olbrich Park, 3527 Atwood Avenue

Another similar activity that is a little bit more adventurous is tubing! Tubing is super fun and thrilling, and you often end up going somewhere to tube. Some ski hills that are open and provide tubing are Tyrol Basin and Cascade Mountain. If you are interested, then you can look those ski hills up and look at the link to their webpage to get tickets to tube.

Another super easy activity is just to get your snow gear on and play outside in the snow! Even if you live in an apartment, there are lots of parks and grassy areas that ought to be good for snow fort building.

It is SUPER important that you get some fresh air outside because it's not only healthy for you but after you do it, you will realize it's super fun! So whatever you decide on doing, have fun!



Flamingo resolution

IMMS student Ryland Turner offers this comic take on the new year tradition.

Six strategies for relieving stress

By Rachel Stolyarov

IMMS Grade 6

Everyone gets stressed out at some point. You can often get stressed out from school, work, other activities, siblings, and even lack of activities.

Here are some ways to relieve stress and calm yourself down.

Taking a deep breath. Many people find that taking a deep breath helps them to think clearly when stressed. Taking a deep breath actually lowers your heart rate and blood pressure calming your body down. This method works great if you don't have time to take a walk or if you don't have a stress relief object. When you take a deep breath, breathe in through your nose counting **1 2 3**. Then let out your breath through your mouth slowly counting **1 2 3**.

Taking a walk. A walk is a great way to calm yourself down. Taking a walk is beneficial in many ways. One benefit of walking outside is the fresh air. Fresh air is good for your mood. Also when you walk outside in the sun you get vitamin D, which is otherwise very hard to obtain. In addition, looking at nature and outdoor animals calms your body down. When you take walks regularly, try to take different routes to change up the scenery.

Stress relief object. Having a stress relief object is very helpful, too. When your stress makes you mad and frustrated, it is helpful to have a squishy to squish or a pillow to punch. In this way you take out your anger on an object, not a person. Taking out your anger on a person will not help you feel better and will ruin the person's mood. You can usually find stress relief objects online or in most stores.

Hanging out with friends. Hanging out with your friends is a great way to brighten your mood. You might not want to, but the moment you start being with that person you will be much happier. It is important, however, to have good friends. Friends are people who build you up and keep you accountable for your actions. You enjoy being with them. If you hang out with the wrong people, you might get more stressed instead of losing stress. You can do many different things with your friends, such as sledding (in the winter),



Photo by Rachel Stolyarov, IMMS 6th grade

swimming (in the summer), baking together, and quiet activities like puzzles and crafts. Friends are a sure way to lighten up your mood.

Talking to a person. Sometimes it is helpful just to have someone listen to you, about what you are feeling. That person can comfort you and even give you suggestions to help solve your problems that you are stressed about. This person can be your Mom, Dad, Aunt, Uncle, Grandma or Grandpa, Guardian, and even a close friend. Some people prefer talking to their pets, such as a dog or a cat. Some even just snuggle with a pet, preferably something soft.

Reading a book. Reading a book is another way to calm your body down. Reading a book distracts you from your stress and gets you engrossed in an epic adventure of your mind. Make sure when you read a book for stress relief you choose a paper or hardcover book. Do not read for stress relief on an electronic device. Reading on an electronic device speeds up your brain, instead of calming it down.

There are many ways to control and let out your stress. These ways are just a few. Each person has their own preferences on what methods work best for them.

The One That Got Away

By Maggie St. Clair

IMMS Grade 6

I'm never gonna truly understand life, but I am sure of one thing ... I loved my popi. We all did.

This became clear with events started Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020. My mom told me, my brother, and my cousin, "Get in the car. We are going to see Popi."

I asked, "Why?"

She said, "Popi might be going to the hospital, and he wants to see you."

We said, "OK," and we hopped in the car in our jammies.

When we got there, I got scared; Popi sounded odd. He was short of breath.

My mom asked some serious questions: "Did you take your meds? Are you OK? Do I need to call an ambulance?"

My nanny told him to take his meds with juice, while my mom dialed 911.

My cousin Isla and I went to the basement, and we sat, wondering what would happen.

At some point, I went back upstairs.

My mom said, "Open the garage door so they know where to come in."

I went to the front door. I saw them. "They're here!"

I went to my popi's rocking chair; he sat there for hours as the day went by. It was his spot, but I needed it.

Everyone started to say, "I love you Popi/Daddy!" as they walked him out.

I ran to the front door and said, "I love you Popi!" One last time.

And with his quiet voice, "I love you, too, Goofy." And they took him away.

That week felt fine, knowing he was in good hands with UW Hospital.

On Thursday, Dec. 17, we made a webex to talk with him. He was not even strong enough to hold the camera up; the nurse held it up for us. He looked so different: he had an oxygen mask on really high air. That's when I checked out. I said "I love you Popi," and he said, "I love you, too, Goofy. Good night." I left.

That night, I thought a lot about Popi and what life would be like without a Popi; I didn't like that.

On Friday, Dec. 18, I spent the morning like any other. Up at 8:15, found my elf, Violet, turned on a TV show, ate my treat from Violet during the first one. During the second, I ate cereal. I watched a couple more because it was a pj day for the last day before break.

After that, I called my bff, Meryn, and we played Among Us and Roblox. And then it was time for school.

About half way through school, my dad came up and said I could log off and that mom was coming home. I kinda had a feeling that Popi died, so I asked and my dad nodded. I thought my first reaction would be crying ... but I was shocked.

I came downstairs, and my mom came through the door sobbing. She sat us down on the couch and told us the bad news.

I turned around and called Nanny, Popi's sad sad wife. I asked, "Nanny, are you OK?"

She said she was sorry she couldn't be strong. And that was the big part of the call; I let her be and ended the call.

I was scared; it was terrifying to see everyone like this. And that's when I broke down. But I had to be strong for my mom. She lost her dad. I couldn't imagine how that felt. I ended up logging back into school and playing a lot of games. I forgot about what happened, and then most of the day was crying.

After talking and eating with my mom's sister, niece, and old friends, I called Meryn. She knew how to make me laugh. We watched funny videos until I couldn't anymore. I cried and cried, and Meryn said she could not see me like this and that I was going to make her cry. So I said I would go and I would talk to her the next day.

I fell asleep around midnight and woke up at 4 a.m. I cried while thinking about my popi and how I was never going to hear his voice again or see him. At that moment, it felt so so fake and that he was at home rocking in his chair, calling me to say, "It's OK, Goofy." Soon after, my mom came in. She told me losing a dad is hard but losing a spouse was harder. And that made me think of Nanny and how she was doing. We sat and cried until 6 a.m. We decided to go back to sleep.

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The next day was OK, crying here and there, but towards the end of the day, it got harsh. I spent a long time crying for about an hour, and then I told my mom I needed to go to my nanny and popi's, which was now just Nanny's. So at 11:30 p.m., she took Nanny, Kayla, Isla, and me to my nanny's house.

When we got there, I sat in my popi's rocking chair and said, "I love you, Popi" out loud, and my mom said, "I love you, Daddy."

Then my nanny went to her room and grabbed three white t-shirts. Popi only liked to wear white t-shirts. White shirts with a zip up hoodie and some shorts.

It was minutes away from midnight, and I hadn't eaten or had a drink all day, so my nanny prepared saltine crackers (Popi's favorite) and a glass of water.

After that, we came home. I fell asleep with my mom in my bed while my dad slept with my brother, Franklin. At 2 a.m., they ended up going to their bed.

Wednesday, Dec. 23, was the last day I was going to see my popi.

Isla and I had had so many sleepovers with more to come, so we woke up together at 6 a.m., played some Minecraft, watched youtube, and played Among Us. At 7:40 a.m., we got out of bed, looked for Violet, my elf, claimed our candy, and took turns taking showers and getting dressed. Then I did our hair. We had a small breakfast because some family was coming over for quiche. We sat and played Minecraft until they came and then we got ready for the funeral. We got in our black clothing, and I did are hair again but more formal.

When we got to the church where the funeral was held, I saw the bunch of poster boards we made about Popi the night before. I looked in the main part of the church and saw the top of my popi's head. Then my Nanny went down the hall and to the casket; she started to cry. I felt bad and wanted to go down, but I was told to let her be for a little bit to let her say goodbye to her husband. And then we were allowed to go and see him. I was scared. I walked slowly down the hall with my clenched sweaty palms, and I thought, "I will

see a dead person for the first time." I didn't know if I wanted to feel him either.

When I got down there, my popi looked so real; it looked like he was taking a nap, but I knew that he was not going to wake up. The day before, I was told that they would put makeup on him to make him look real and not lifeless.

I went to sit on a bench nearby and then it was my mom's turn. She got on her knees and put her hands on her daddy's arms and said, "I love you, Daddy! Please come back!" Then she started to cry. It was hard to see people like this. It still felt fake even though I saw him lying there in the casket.

A little bit later, we had a ceremony with songs. Popi's twin and his other two brothers were there, too.

Afterward, we had a small amount of time to say goodbye, so I rubbed my popi's shoulder. It felt different, like cardboard almost. Then they closed the casket, walked him out to the van, and then took him away.

We all shouted, "Bye! I love you, Popi/Frank/Daddy!"

Then we packed up flowers and left. I was in a car with Kayla and Isla; my uncle Darek, brother to my mom and Kayla, was supposed to be in the car with us, but Kayla drove away without him.

When we got to my nanny's house, he said, "My ride left without me; what happened there kayla?"

She said sorry, and we all laughed.

When we got back to my house, Isla and I got back into our clothes that were not black. I thought black was a sad color, and I thought we should have worn yellow because it's a happy color and Popi would have wanted us to be happy.

On Christmas Day, we spent the morning like a normal Christmas. But when we got to my nanny's and I started to hand out presents like I always do, I started to find presents with Popi's name on them. I handed them to my nanny. We all agreed that that day was odd without Popi.

The rest of Christmas break was kind of odd; it felt normal, with my mind playing tricks with me that Popi was still here. We got his ashes in a bird shape because it was his job to feed the birds.

I wrote out these events, wanting to say, "I love you, Popi, and I always will."

Creature comforters amidst Covid

Many IMMS families have adopted pets during the pandemic. Here, we'll introduce a few.



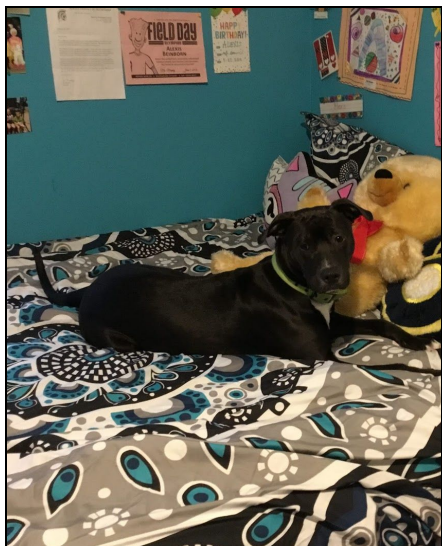
IMMS sixth-grader Rachel Stolyarov and her family adopted this puppy over winter break. His name is Oakley, and he is a corgi.



Liam McKenzie, grade 7, said his 1-month-old barn cat is named Ralphie. "His parents died. So when our friends found the litter, their dog raised him; so he acts like a dog sometimes," Liam explained.



This is Sunshine, a seven-month-old albino leopard gecko, adopted by Emma Matz and family when she was four months old. Emma said, "She was not the healthiest gecko, but my sister has wanted a leopard gecko for a long time and finally we adopted Sunshine. Sunshine is very lazy and enjoys crawling into pockets and taking naps. She also likes to climb in stuff that she shouldn't like parts of my roller coaster, shoes and desk drawers. We love having Sunshine around during quarantine because she makes us all happy."



Alexis Beinborn, grade 7, and her family adopted Deuce in early September. He is a pit bull and lab mix and is now 10 months old.



Brooke DeShong shares this closeup of her dog Astro, an Australian Shepherd and Border Collie mix, that their family adopted in September at the estimated age of 3 years.

Tips for returning to in-person school

IMMS Messenger Staff

With a return to in-person school at IMMS scheduled to begin the week of Feb. 15, we brainstormed some ways to be prepared.

1. Go to the bathroom before leaving for school.
2. Have a clean mask.
3. Have your water bottle.
4. Have materials organized. Pack them when you are done for the night or morning.
5. Charge your device.
6. Bring only what you need: your device, headphones/earbuds, notebooks, papers in folder, pencils, and materials requested by your teachers.
7. Use hand sanitizer (they even have those clip-on bottles for your backpack).
8. Have a plan for how you will spend your time after school.

IMMS Winter Messenger Staff and Contributors

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