



WE A.R.E. SPARTANS

— ACHIEVEMENT RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY EMPATHY —

The IMMS Messenger, Virtual Edition 4

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Photo submitted by Rachel Stolyarov, grade 6

To reduce the spread of the coronavirus, students at IMMS wear masks, frequently use hand sanitizer, and practice social distancing in their assigned cohorts, which can limit interactions with friends at school.

For more timely friendship tips from Ms. Runde, see page 2.

Dealing with social distance

Messenger Staff

Making friends can be difficult, and navigating friendships during school social distancing is even more difficult. We asked IMMS School Counselor Jill Runde for advice.

Ms. Runde says, two key elements can help us improve our friendships.

First, you could focus on developing your friendship skills to your next best level. Ms. Runde says, “Sometimes students worry about who is reaching out to them or including them in activities, but a person can’t control that. They can control only what they do to create more friends and that is by focusing on improving their own friendship skills.” She advises these first steps: Being thoughtful, kind, and a planner (plan and invite others to activities).

Second, you could develop courage to reach out to others that maybe you haven’t hung out with before. And if you are on the receiving end of someone new inviting you to an activity or to hang out, have the courage to say YES! “Too often I see students ‘play it safe’ by only staying with the group of friends they have had for years and not expanding the group. This makes it hard to include others but it also limits their own ability to increase the number of friends they have and opportunities to get to know other students,” Ms. Runde says. She advises: If you have a friend that is reaching out to others, don’t feel offended or jealous; instead, welcome the chance to together make new friends.

Tips for staying in touch with friends

Messenger Staff

We asked IMMS Counselor Jill Runde questions about staying in touch with friends during this time of social distancing. Here are her responses.

Q: Have you seen more kids than usual ask for help with loneliness or depression?

A: It's hard to ask for help, so we have not had students asking as much; but we know by talking to students that this has been a very lonely and sometimes sad time. But we urge you to ask for help so we can help you through these challenges. We are here to help and support you.

Q: Have you seen any improvements since students have started attending in person?

A: Yes--Kids are excited to be here, enjoying seeing their friends and classmates even though they are physically distanced. Academic improvements, too.

Q: What recommendations do you have for students to connect with each other? (In cohorts? Outside of cohorts?)

A: Try these:

- Clubs (on announcements).
- Do homework together over Zoom.
- Be creative and do something unique and fun on Zoom (cook a meal/snack together, play games, watch a movie/show at the same time)
- More opportunities now that it's nicer outside (go on a physically distanced walk or bike ride, have lunch at a park distanced, play basketball or baseball/softball at a local park)

Q: Students want to connect during school; what are some challenges to that?

A: Smaller classes (which means you can really get to know your classmates), shorter days at school (but that means more time outside of school to connect). There are positives to these challenges.

Q: Can students use texting apps on their iPad after or before school?

A: The district has a strict download policy, so the only option is emailing friends on the iPad/chromebook. I recommend communicating with friends as much as possible before and after school.

Q: Are there apps that students should not be using during school?

A: Non-school related apps or apps the teacher does not ask you to use during class. Same rules apply to iPads as they do to cell-phones. Only school-related apps doing school-related things/work.

Q: What could make recess a possibility for students to connect?

A: Recess/lunch can return when students are here full days.

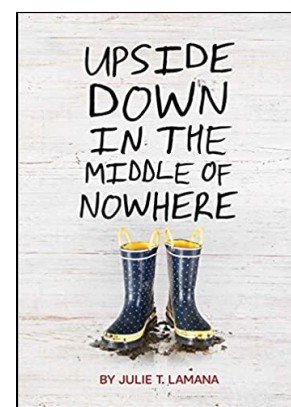
Q: What is the status of clubs now and how can students get more involved with those?

A: Clubs are still meeting virtually, check announcements for times and links. Great way to meet new friends at school while doing something fun! We challenge you to try a new one out, if you don't like it you don't have to attend again.

Book Talk: *Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere*

By Kate Mischnick
IMMS Grade 6

Hello, students of IMMS and welcome to this issue's book talk. Today I would like to discuss the book *Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere* by Julie T. Lamana. This book is a story about Armani Curtis, a 10-year-old girl who finds herself in the middle of Hurricane Katrina. At first, her family thinks it will be just some rain and wind, so they continue her tenth birthday party as planned. But as the storm gets worse, Armani finds herself alone in a crowd of strangers with only her two younger sisters for company. She experiences things no 10-year-old should experience; she meets friends in a surprising place, and she finds her way back to a fragmented family. But things in Armani's life will never be the same again. Hope you find this book as intriguing as I did.



Valentines Day candy in the states

By Ada Geiger

IMMS Grade 6

According to the National Retail Federation, candy is given by more people as a Valentine's Day gift than any other item. They estimate about 52 percent of U.S. customers will spend about \$1.8 billion dollars on candy! So, just for fun, here is a chart showing the preferred valentine's candy by state.

 <p>Source: https://map.candystore.com</p> <p>Conversation hearts The most popular in these 12 states: Wisconsin, Illinois, Florida, Minnesota, Montana, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, North Dakota, California, and Louisiana.</p>	 <p>Source: https://map.candystore.com</p> <p>Heart shaped box of chocolates The most popular in these eight states: Alaska, New York, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Ohio, North Carolina, and Kansas.</p>	 <p>Source: https://map.candystore.com</p> <p>M&Ms The most popular in these four states: Idaho, Maryland, Iowa, and Pennsylvania.</p>
 <p>Source: https://map.candystore.com</p> <p>Hershey's Kisses The most popular in these three states: South Dakota, Arkansas, and Delaware.</p>	 <p>Source: https://map.candystore.com</p> <p>Chocolate hearts The most popular in these two states: Nebraska and Maine.</p>	 <p>Source: https://map.candystore.com</p> <p>Chocolate roses The most popular in these two states: Oregon and Wyoming.</p>

Resources for this article include: From conversation hearts to chocolate: Most popular Valentine's Day candy in each state article and candystore.com

IMMS Winter/Spring Messenger Staff and Contributors

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The bling and blah of spring

By Rachel Stolyarov
IMMS Grade 6

There are many things to do in the Spring. Especially in Wisconsin! If you're feeling really daring, you can go outside. You can dance in the rain, make a snow angel and play with a hose all in minutes! (Just watch out for tornados.)

There are a lot of inside opportunities too! You can watch TV, make a puzzle, bake, watch the rain, and even watch paint dry! It's like quarantining! Maybe you can risk biking to your friend's house and make it there before it snows? Or you could go sledding with a friend for 20 minutes before the snow turns to mud? There are definitely a lot of opportunities in the beautiful month of March.



By Sofia Bexson
IMMS Grade 8

Spring cleaning: the thing we all dread to do. Here are a few reasons why you should clean, in the spring.

First, if you do it now you don't have to do it later.

Second, you can find all types of random things you didn't know you had. You might even find some hand sanitizer, which will be helpful right now.

Third, it will surprise and impress your parents if you do it without them asking you to. Who knows, if you do it they might even let you do something you want to do. So, if you do some spring cleaning (which you should), don't forget to clean under your bed and in the back of your closet.

Spartan Spotlight: Piper Willenbacher shares swimming interest

By Rachel Stolyarov
IMMS Grade 6

In this issue's Spartan Spotlight, sixth-grader Piper Willenbacher shares her love of swimming.

Q: What got you interested in swimming?

A: I had a lot of friends in swimming and when COVID hit I was doing basketball and it got shut down. I wanted to do a sport, so I chose swimming.

Q: What is your favorite part of swimming?

A: I like it because it's fast paced and you have to give it your all. I also like it because it's not a team sport; it's all on your ability to swim.

Q: What is your favorite swim stroke?

A: I like butterfly stroke because it's one continuous motion and looks very graceful.

Q: How did you get on to the McFarland Sharks Extreme team?

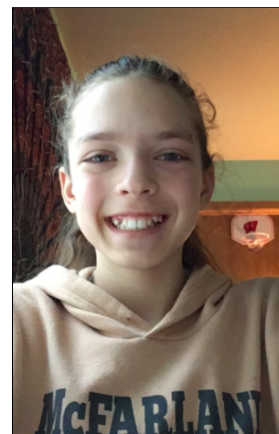
A: I started on the Travelers swim team; it was my first time on a swim team, and I worked my way up.

Q: How many times do you practice?

A: I practice Monday through Friday for an hour at the high school pool and some Saturday mornings for an hour and a half.

Q: What makes swimming challenging?

A: If you take any sport and hardly breathe while doing it, it makes it ten times harder.



Piper Willenbacher

Keep waterways clean for river otters

By **Kate Mischnick**
IMMS Grade 6

Seeing certain pieces of nature can be simply fascinating. One of these is the beauty of a playful river otter splashing in a river or lake. Imagine a scene like this: you are kayaking in a northern river or lake and you come upon a small family of playing otters. If you are quiet, you can watch the little ones tumbling in the water. As you picture that, how do you see the water? Is it crystal clear? Clean? Possibly. But now think about waterways near you. Are they as perfectly clean as you imagine?

And now, can you see otters playing in dirty, polluted water? Probably not, right? Because river otters can't stand the pollution we make. They will actually leave their homes and travel distances to find a cleaner, safer home. Sadly, there are beginning to be fewer and fewer places that are safe for river otters.

North American river otters are some of the most fascinating creatures that exist (in my very humble opinion, at least). They are intelligent, sociable creatures with a playful spirit. If you have seen otters in the wild, consider yourself lucky, for river otters are very shy and are easily spooked by us great, bumbling humans.

According to several sites, river otters are very perceptive to pollution. If an area they live in becomes too polluted and dirty, the otters will leave the place. As more rivers and lakes become polluted, the river otters will have more trouble finding places to move into. Eventually, if this pollution continues, the otters will have nowhere to go. These beautiful, fascinating creatures will be forced to places they cannot live in, and eventually, extinction. River otters, like many species before them, will be marked as lost to our planet. One more species will have fallen.



Wikimedia Commons

So what can we do? We can pollute waterways less. It may not seem like much, but if everyone reading this was aware of the things they threw away, the random garbage thrown into waterways, and the harmful products that make water undrinkable, we could stop this change that is going through the world. We could protect the species that need protection. The world would be a cleaner place. More people would have access to safe water. It isn't hard to pick up a single piece of litter. If everyone in the world could do the same thing, and clean up just one small amount of garbage, you wouldn't be able to recognize the planet, it would be so clean.

Now, what are you waiting for? Go and be an inspiration for others. Help our world be the absolute best it can be.

Otters are legendary in historical tales

Like many animals, otters have a history.

In Scottish folktales, otter-like beings called the Otter Kings had the ability to grant wishes. If you captured one of these black-furred otters, they would grant you anything for their freedom. According to a Trees for Life article, there were seven Otter Kings, and each had a pelt that was better than a suit of armor (and less bulky as well). Their only vulnerable place was a spot under their chin, making them very difficult to kill in the stories.

Otters are not only starred in Scottish tales, but are also mentioned Welsh, Celtic, and Norse stories.

~Kate Mischnick