April 8, 2020

Dear Ransom Everglades Community,

I want to wish you well as we enter our first holiday weekend since the COVID-19 outbreak. Many of you will celebrate Passover or Easter in entirely new ways, attending online services, gathering virtually and reinventing your family traditions. The celebrations will feel different, yet I am confident that we will come away with a greater appreciation for what truly matters.

Two of our sixth graders, Isabella Rojas-Cueva ’26 and Mateo Saucedo ’26, made quick cameos in a *Today Show* segment this morning that examined how Americans are adapting their spiritual lives during this crisis. (You can watch the entire segment [here](https); the children can be seen at 1:10 and 1:11 of the clip.)

As I mentioned in previous communications, we have created *For the REcord*, a vehicle to collect and preserve elements of our community experience during this challenging time. I invite any and all of you – students, parents, alumni or other members of our community – to take a few moments to share a paragraph, poem, photograph or even piece of art that captures how you and your family experience this unprecedented holiday weekend. Please follow [this link](https) to contribute to our shared story; I will send additional prompts on other topics in the coming weeks, and in time we will share what we have gathered with all of you.

I’d also like to take this opportunity to mention that we are pairing, for the first time, each new Ransom Everglades middle school student with an upper school mentor/tutor: REady for RE Pals. Our plan is to connect new students with RE pals to help them prepare for the fall – whether through tutoring, or simply getting to know a new friend. More information to come.

On a final note: I hope you appreciate the photos of the freshly painted cannon, attached below. Our new families may not realize that the cannon – a relic from a 17th-century British shipwreck retrieved by an RE alumnus in 1938 – is an iconic part of RE’s upper school, and for more than 50 years students have painted it to share messages with the larger community. With our students learning from home, I have picked up the spray paint, now and then, to keep that tradition alive during this outbreak. See my latest messages below.

As you gather this weekend, I know you will treasure even virtual moments together as a family. I also know that many of you will pause to pray for relatives or friends who are ill, or working on the medical front lines. I am extremely grateful for the many medical professionals and public servants in the RE community who are going above and beyond what anyone would have expected. Mike and I will be joining you in your prayers, and share the good wishes of our entire community.

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*Penry*