May 1, 2020

Dear Members of the Ransom Everglades Community,

During this period of quarantine and social distancing, there has been an abundance of time for reflection. The more time I have spent thinking about REMote School, the distance from our students, our empty campuses, and the path forward, the more my thoughts have drifted back to my own high school experience. I entered a boarding school in the hills of western Massachusetts in its first year of coeducation; the girls' school to which I had applied and been accepted merged with a similar-sized boys' school five miles up the road. Sound familiar to some of you reading this? The new classroom dynamics and the consolidation of two campuses, separated by the Connecticut River, were challenging, and some of the traditions of both schools were lost in the shuffle.

One that did remain, at least during my four years, was May Day. Traditionally a festival of spring across many parts of the world, May Day at Northfield Mount Hermon was a showcase of baskets of flowers and delicious cakes. The grand old magnolia outside Marquand Hall, my dormitory, was always in full bloom, and daffodils were out. For us, it was a hopeful day. After a long, cold and snowy winter, spring was finally arriving. I checked the temperature at NMH before I started to write this; it was a not surprising 48 degrees. Nonetheless, May Day energized us: it was spring, and the end of the year and everything associated with it was upon us.

Today is indeed a hopeful day. Miami is beginning to recover from COVID-19, and I think we are all feeling more optimistic about the path forward. For seniors, May 1 is National College Signing Day, the day most college matriculation decisions are due. Our college counseling office has been tracking our seniors' college destinations; you may enjoy perusing this evolving map. May 1 also marks the beginning of what is always the busiest month of the year, and there is no difference during REMote School.

This morning we launched our Tucker Elementary Weekend Meals program, which provides 200 families from Frances S. Tucker Elementary School in Coconut Grove an abundant weekend food bag. Volunteers from Ransom Everglades Parents’ Association gathered in the upper school dining hall – wearing masks and observing proper social distancing – to pack the bags, and another team of parents distributed later in the day. I cannot fully express the gratitude we saw from many of our neighbors in Coconut Grove as they drove through the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church parking lot this afternoon to pick up their meals. To learn more about this community initiative, see my April 17 letter.

A request: don’t forget to share your reflections on how you have experienced this time of social distancing and virtual engagement. The time I’ve had to reflect, as I
noted above, has sent me down memory lane. What thoughts have been at the forefront of your mind during this unusual time? Please send them to me by going here (narrative, photos and poetry are welcome).

Please also watch your calendars and emails for dates and updates (RE parents: This Week @ RE will make a return beginning Sunday), and make sure that your children do not miss any of the scheduled events and celebrations.

Here is a partial list of what’s to come:

**Monday, May 4, 7 p.m.: Senior Panel.** RE parents will have an opportunity to hear from 10 seniors who will talk about their years at Ransom Everglades and answer parents’ questions. Parents can find the link in the myCOMPASS calendar and in This Week @ RE.

**Tuesday, May 5, 7 p.m.: Parent Network | RE 11th-Grade Update.** Link in myCOMPASS and This Week @ RE.

**Wednesday, May 6, 7 p.m.: Paul Ransom Digital Podium| COVID-19 and the Restaurant Industry.** The entire RE community is invited to join this webinar to hear from two longtime Miami restaurateurs with ties to our school, Steve Sawitz ’75 of Joe’s Stone Crab and RE parent Shareef Malnik of The Forge. They will discuss COVID-19’s toll on the industry, how the industry has adapted and what the future holds. You can register here.

**Thursday, May 7, 11 a.m.: Upper School Awards Ceremony.** All upper school families are invited to tune in to this celebration of the upper school student body. We will present a number of awards, recognize retiring faculty and hear from departing student-body president Preston Edmunds ’20 as we look back on 2019-20. Upper school students are required to attend. Families can find information on how to join in This Week @ RE and on myCOMPASS.

**Thursday, May 7, 7 p.m.: Parent Network | RE 6th- and 7th-Grade Update.** Link in myCOMPASS and This Week @ RE.

**Sunday, May 17, 10 a.m. to mid-afternoon: Senior Send-Off.** This will be a special day for the Class of 2020. More information to come.

Have a pleasant weekend, and Happy May Day!

Penny