

SPRING 2020

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Newsletter

BPN Messages of Hope

For the past **8** weeks, our dedicated staff of **14** continue to work remotely, meeting virtually with our teams and connecting with our families to provide the support they need, when they need it and where they need it most. While this is not the way we are accustomed to performing this important work, we continue to rise to the occasion. If you aren't doing so already, please visit our website [BPN](#) and stay up-to-date.

It's in the Numbers

Beginning on March 17th our schools began serving breakfast and lunch for students in our community. Through May 1st here is a recap of our numbers:

Highgate Heights grab-n-go meals to date **13,893/8,295** families served

Westminster grab-n-go meals to date **13,518/7,945** families served

Our Parent Achievement Zone team have fielded over **188** COVID-19 calls on topics ranging from:

Unemployment support

Crisis intervention

Home schooling assistance

Housing challenges

Connectivity with Children's Academy staff

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Virtual Distance Learning

Our schools and dedicated staff continue to persevere and help students through this challenging time. We've highlighted a few of the many ways our teachers have connected with students and their families.

Mrs. Burke's Buds

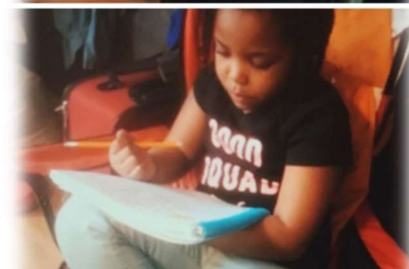
Our Highgate classrooms have gone virtual! While not being able to see each other face-to-face presents a unique challenge for our teachers and students, they are finding ways to stay connected. Mrs. Burke's first grade class is keeping up on their learning from home by staying fresh on their sight words, number charts, and "Magic Penny" reading. They can communicate and share photos of their home-classroom routines via the app, "ClassDojo." Distance learning is helping Mrs. Burke's class stay on track and keep their minds sharp during this unprecedented time. Our school communities and families have risen to the occasion and proved that we can handle anything together!

Our New Normal – Christopher & Kenya Peoples

With the current quarantine, I thought keeping my son Chris (a sixth-grade student at Westminster Community Charter School) engaged in his school work would be a real struggle. However, to my surprise it has been the exact opposite. Westminster has been very proactive in their approach to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When schools were closed by the district, Westminster made packets available for pick up to help maintain continuity of school structure. A few days into the school closure, I received a call from an unfamiliar number, it was Ms. Smyczynski, my son's teacher. Her first concern was how we were doing. As a parent that kind gesture put me at ease, and she made sure I had her contact information in the event we had questions. Sure enough, Chris had a question the very next morning and Ms. Smyczynski walked him through his questions. Since then Chris has been emailing his completed work and using his iPad to access YouTube lead instructed readings.

Our new normal is different to say the least but having the support of the teachers and administration at Westminster has truly been a blessing.

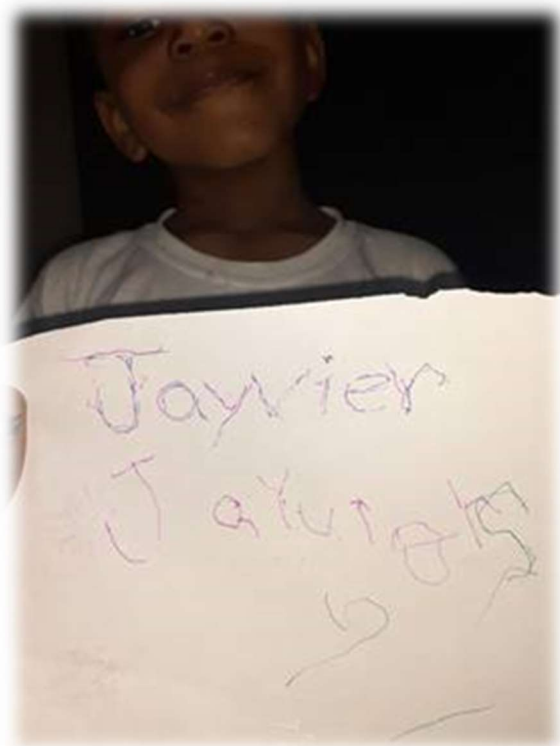


Staying Connected

While distance learning and preschool do not typically go together, our teachers at the Children's Academy have worked tirelessly to keep our young students learning while at home.

The center has hosted multiple packet and material pickups for families, supplying dry erase markers, crayons, glue sticks and hundreds of pages of age appropriate activities. Teachers have made personal phone calls to families to check and see what individualized supports their children may need as they move toward the end of their PreK year. We launched Google Classroom to include videos of circle time as well as math and literacy activities allowing students and families to interact. Our teachers post four to five videos per day and set up a "homework" drop allowing families to take pictures of their children with their work. For fun, we hosted Spirit Week, show and tell, and Hangout for the children to engage with one another.

It's been a challenge ensuring our children hold onto all the progress they've made with us this year, but we are working hard to help our friends be successful in PreK, Kindergarten and beyond!





Staying Connected

Teachers and staff from Westminster Community Charter School filmed a series of short messages to share with students and their families. Here is the link! <https://youtu.be/c0DrEtmlGuE> to the YouTube video – enjoy!

Virtual Saturday Academies began on April 4th and will conclude on June 13th. Additionally, POP Up virtual academies are being held on various weekdays. If you are interested in participating, please be sure to follow the BPS Community School Facebook page [BPS](#)

Both Westminster [WCCS](#) and Highgate [Highgate](#) hosted Virtual Spirit Weeks. If you are looking for a quick pick-me-up or just need to smile, please follow their Facebook pages.

Women's History Month

As an organization and a nation, we celebrated National Women's History month in March. We are so grateful to have many outstanding women who were honored to provide us with their personal Words of Wisdom for our future generations.

Check out "Our Champions" page [Champions](#) to read quotes from 5 amazing women.

Community Resources

Started by neighborhood residents on Buffalo's West Side in 1992, the Massachusetts Avenue Project was incorporated in 2000. MAP's Growing Green Program was founded in 2003 to address the growing land vacancy, high youth unemployment, and food security needs of the community.

Danielle Rovillo manages MAP's Mobile Market – a produce stand on wheels bringing fresh produce to areas of the city that don't have adequate access to fresh, affordable and culturally appropriate food.

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood worked with MAP's Mobile Market for the first-time last summer and held 17 mobile markets in our footprint. Our community received access to an abundance of affordable, high-quality produce and forged new friendships.

We would like to see our produce stand grow to the level that local business owners and elected officials recognize that residents in this community want and need fresh and healthy foods. Maybe the future is a full farmers market or another healthy corner store!

If you are interested in learning more, please visit [MAP](#)

Helpful Resources

Below are a few website links that you might find useful:

- Feedmore WNY [Feedmore](#)
- Buffalo 211 [211WNY](#)
- Explore Buffalo [Explore Buffalo](#)



We're on Facebook and we think you are too!

[Buffalo Promise Neighborhood](#)



We are NOW on Instagram!

[@BuffaloPromise](#)



Don't have either? Not a problem! We're on Twitter!

[@BuffaloPN](#)



Only Have LinkedIn? We are there too!

[Buffalo Promise Neighborhood](#)