



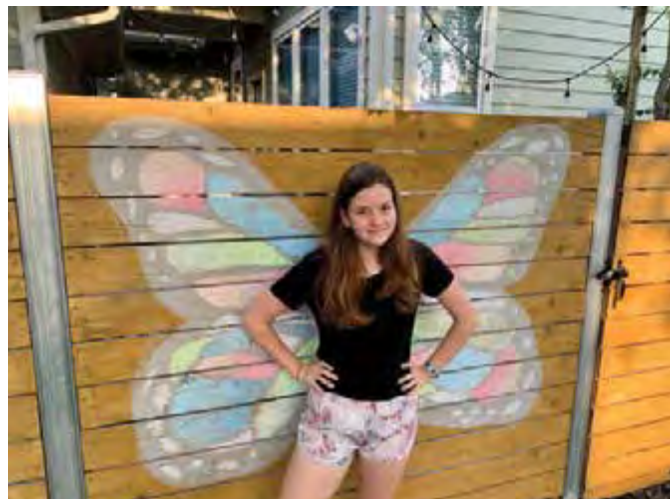
THE MUELLER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

the FRONT PORCH FLYER

MUELLER STAYS AT HOME



"We are all in this together." Another way and more powerful way of expressing this is: We Are All ONE heart wave. Provided by Ani Colt and Preston Tyree



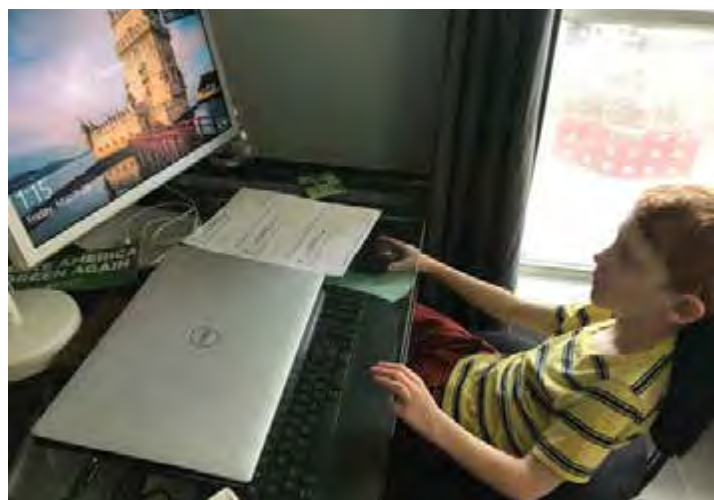
Anna Bausman creating street art for neighbors to enjoy by Greg Bausman



Standing guard at my apartment door at Overture Mueller with a mask on, "Lily" says Hoppy Easter! By Linda Breen



Adapting to working from home has been a challenge, but the Brummett family recognizes how fortunate we are to have jobs we can still perform remotely. Elizabeth's coworkers include Timothy, Benjamin, and Finch the cat. Benjamin turned six in the midst of the Stay Home-Work Safe order and looks forward to a party with his friends when it's safe to gather again. Photos by Elizabeth Brummett



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the FRONT PORCH FLYER

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Letter from the Chair

I hope you are doing well and staying safe.

All of us are facing the task of readjusting to the new realities of life during these challenging times. However, some of our neighbors may have already experienced and/or continue to experience the economic, physical, and emotional effects of this pandemic more acutely than others.

Even though we may find ourselves in different circumstances, we can stand in solidarity with one another. We can hold ourselves accountable when it comes to being smart about responding to this pandemic and following the advice of public health authorities. We can perform acts of kindness – checking in on a loved one, a family member, a friend, or a neighbor. In short, we can choose to be good neighbors.

Let's continue to lift one another up and be kind to each other.

Take care,

John Wooding

Calendar of Events

No events are being held or scheduled at this time, due to COVID-19

Senior Year During COVID-19

By Kathy Sokolic

Not to give away my age, but my senior year of high school was quite long ago. No matter how far away it gets, I'll always remember my prom, competing in one-act drama tournaments, and having the freedom to drive down the road to see my friends and just hang out. It was a great time, and I'll cherish those memories forever.

The class of 2020? Unfortunately, they're going to remember being cooped up inside with their family for much of the year.

I reached out to a few high school seniors who are feeling the effects of the world-wide pandemic. I asked what the biggest disappointments have been so far. Each one said they were losing out on opportunities they "should" have. Saxon Ballew mentioned the lack of prom or a "normal" graduation, and Audrey Reese isn't "getting to have the senior year [she] expected." Even Fiona Adams mentioned not "getting the rest of my high school experience with my teachers and friends."

While these kids didn't really miss the school work and projects from physical attendance at school, all of them missed their friends and teachers. "I am saddened because when our school year was abruptly cut off I lost those budding connections and a proper chance to say goodbye," said Gage Bausman. Another senior mentioned there would be no more new connections before he heads off to college in the fall. Fiona misses the closeness of her classmates.

Sometimes it's the extracurricular activities that give people the most satisfaction. Audrey is missing orchestra and choir the most. "Those two classes were so lovely and I'm upset that I never really get to perform with those people again," she said.

High school seniors can be incredibly busy - hanging with friends, tons of homework, all those after-school activities... but the kids all mentioned that now they have more time to focus on what's important to them, and they have less stress. Gage has been able to practice guitar and work on his coding skills, and Audrey is finishing projects she didn't have time for before. And Saxon suggested that the social distancing wasn't too tough, and he enjoys being able to chill.

We're all looking forward to getting back to "normal," and things are no different for these seniors. All of them mentioned being able to spend time with their friends again, and Gage stressed that FaceTime just isn't the same. Audrey can't wait to hug her friends again and Saxon's ready for a haircut. Me too, Saxon. Me too.

FRONT PORCH FLYER

(Continued from Cover)



*Chris Sears plays guitar during a nightly Porch Dance Party on Antone.
By Gabriel Pérez, KUT News*



Mueller Bunny deemed essential! Donning a mask and gloves, the Bunny couldn't miss an important visit. By Kathy Sokolic



*Garden Court 1 neighbors thank our essential City of Austin employees.
Provided by Laura Atlas*



*Neighbors along Camacho fly their American flags and tie white ribbons around their trees to honor all healthcare workers and public servants.
Date: April 10th. By Dusty Harshman*

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 An image showing various plumbing tools like wrenches and a pipe. Logos for American Express, Discover, and Visa are also visible.

MUELLER PSYCHOTHERAPY

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 The background features a bicycle wheel with a blue and white pattern.

Building Community While Social Distancing

By Lila Valencia

Community building was on full display as neighbors looked for creative ways to remain connected even in times of social distancing and stay-at-home orders. As families found themselves stuck at home, they looked for ways to keep their children entertained.

Neighbor Leena Pacak shared her idea for a “bear hunt” on social media. The idea was to have neighbors place a plush bear at their window to be found by children strolling through the neighborhood. Pacak’s idea was shared with her by a friend, but the original idea is believed to have been inspired by the 1989 book “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt” by Michael Rosen.

Pacak’s social media post generated over 150 address points that were shared on a map, indicating neighbors had placed a bear to be found at these locations. The “bear hunt” took place on Wednesday, March 25, 2020. Neighborhood children took to the streets in search of the bears. They found a variety of bears. Some neighbors placed a single plush bear at their windows. Others placed a collection of bears. One neighbor even put a six-foot plush bear on their front porch swing chair. The bear hunt brought excitement to the neighborhood children and helped to build community for their parents.

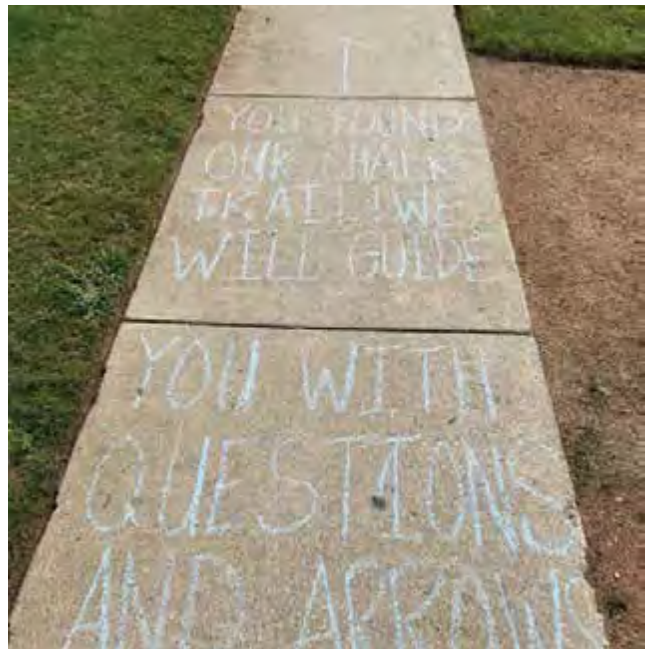


Sleepy Bear, by Lila Valencia

The bear hunt was just one way neighbors created connections during this time of social distancing. A walk around the neighborhood revealed other ways in which neighbors were reaching out to one another. Trivia scavenger hunts could be found written in chalk along the sidewalks. Alleyways displayed chalk-drawn ninja warrior obstacle courses. With extra time at home, neighbors also were inspired to join a previously-created jigsaw puzzle exchange. Some neighbors held front porch dance parties, all while maintaining social distance.



Giant Bear, by Lila Valencia



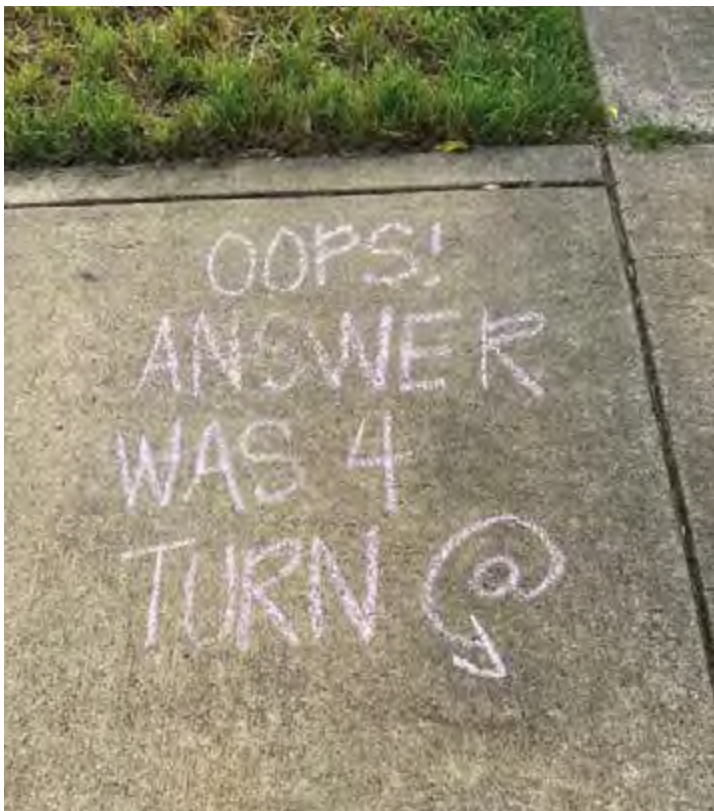
Chalk Walk Trivia by Lisa Dreher

(Continued on Page 5)


(Continued from Page 4)



Chalk Walk Trivia by Lila Valencia







Chalk Walk Trivia - Wrong Answer! by Lisa Dreher



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How to Flatten the Anxiety Curve

By Judith Katzman

We've spent a few months, that have felt like years, changing our lives. Our need for social interaction can't be fully satisfied. Our need to caretake can't be taken care of in person. People who thrive on social distance suddenly find themselves surrounded by loved ones all day. Our emotional supply chain is interrupted. Hair color grows out, and the formerly groomed are looking scruffy. We've been stressed and anxious.

Stress is the response to outside pressure which we cannot control. Anxiety is our reaction to that stress. At times like these, they keep us alert, informed, and safe. But too much anxiety can be debilitating.

Where you focus your attention says a lot about how you are going to feel. Research points to the benefits of

1. finding what is working well
2. noticing positive, unexpected outcomes.

We can expand our attention to include the complementary point of each very real loss. For instance, being told you cannot see your grandkids is stressful, but it is an expression of love and caring for a generation that was starting to feel invisible. Isolation shows a new awareness of community health, as well as one's own. Being forced by circumstances into making major changes is stressful, but also, remarkable, because we see ourselves do things we'd never imagined. We are tough.

We flatten the anxiety curve by defining how we choose to look at stress, how we give it meaning. For instance, what's good about not getting my morning cappuccino at WhichCraft? Not much. But something valuable does come from the loss. It's the awareness of how grateful I am that they're there, how much I love the brief morning interactions as well as the coffee. That feeling expands to include the neighborhood restaurants and businesses that have been an important part of defining how we live. The walks in the park, the people whose dogs interact with our dog Yuki, and the casual meetings that have led to friendships. When it all comes back, it will be with a new level of gratitude.

We have made discoveries about our food, our shopping, and our relationships. Maybe we had been outsourcing a part of our daily life in a way that left us disconnected from something essential. People are discovering important things about how they want to live, going forward.

When the moment comes to re-enter and get closer, let's remember what we are learning. We are learning that we're capable of making difficult, unimagined changes. We are capable of caring about the common good and not just our needs. And we are capable of looking at our choices and deciding if they're worth sustaining. Awareness of this ability keeps us resilient and healthy.



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Good Practices for a Protected Home

By Shawn Collins

Mueller feels like a safe bubble, an urban paradise, but if you use the Citizen app or get alerts from a Ring doorbell you know there is property crime happening with frequency in and around here.

That’s inevitable in any city, so it’s a good idea to take some steps to improve your home security and minimize your risk of becoming a police statistic. There were 21 incidences of “Burglary: Breaking & Entering” in 78723 in March 2020, according to the Austin Police Department Crime Search at austintexas.gov.

While you can’t guarantee you won’t be a victim in the future, you can take precautions to make your home less attractive to burglars.

Here are some steps I’ve taken at my house...

- Shine a light: I have a couple of motion-activated lights, as well as keeping my front porch and alley light on at night, so there are less dark places for people to creep around.
- Sound the alarm: I got wired up with ADT and planted the signs and stickers around to let prospective burglars know breaking into my place will be met with an ear-piercing siren and automatic call to the police.
- Locking the gate door: I put a simple padlock on my gate door so entry into the yard is more of a hassle than it’s worth.

• Big Brother is watching: I have a Ring doorbell, as well as a handful of Google Nest cameras to cover outside areas and let any passersby know they are on camera. I have them inside, too, and there is an option to tie to your phone so the internal cameras can be shut off automatically when your phone is home.

• Locks your doors: My parents were from New York City, and even with growing up in the suburbs I learned from a young age that you lock the door whenever you come and go. Some people think that’s paranoid. I think it’s a good way to keep uninvited guests from entering my home.

• Take away their view: I have a camera in my garage and I get notifications when movement is detected. One time I got that notification because a stranger was peeking in my garage door windows to see what I had. Right away I went online and ordered some frosted window film to keep prying eyes off my things.

• Wag the dog: a barking dog can be a nuisance, but that furry face and noisy snout can also get criminals to think twice about trying to get into your home. My German Shepherd Dog ate through some wooden shutters in my front room to show her face more – I was not pleased about the destruction, but happy she likes to show her pretty face to anybody casing the house.

Think about taking these steps to keep your home and family safe and make the burglars know you’re not an easy target.



Mueller Neighborhood Association Membership Form

To become a voting MNA member, a Mueller resident must complete this form and submit annual dues. New members must then wait 14 days before they may vote. Annual dues are \$5.00 per resident, 18 years or older. These funds are used to help pay for the Front Porch Flyer, MNA Grants, funding neighborhood events, and operating costs such as printing, record-keeping, and the MNA P.O. Box. You may give your dues to your Block Captain, bring it to an MNA meeting, or mail it to: MNA, PO Box 49123, Austin, TX 78755. Checks may be written to “Mueller Neighborhood Association.”

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ADDRESS: _____

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(Your email will only be used for official MNA communications.)

How to Navigate Challenges to Mental Health During Shelter-In-Place



It is well-known and accepted that mental health and addiction issues can be challenges many face. Whether this is our own journey of challenges, or if we are the family/close friends of one afflicted, it feels that you don't have to look far to come across someone attempting to shoulder such challenges.

The 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 67.1 million (1 in 4) Americans 12 or older were binge drinkers, 53.2 million Americans (19.4% of the US) 12 or older were illicit drug users, and that approximately 47.6 million adults (4.2 million adolescents) suffered from a mental illness.

With the recent mandated stay-at-home orders, mental health and addiction experts are unanimous in their concerns that these numbers will increase. This is because our world, our community in essence is experiencing a prolonged traumatic experience. A leading expert and researcher on trauma, Dr. Diana Fosha, explains trauma as being 'the experience of unbearable emotional suffering in isolation'. Dr. Fosha goes on to say that the healing of trauma essentially happens in one's undoing of their aloneness, which is to say isolation.

Sequestered in our respective homes, we are experiencing uncertainty, fear of the unknown, and social isolation from our normal routines and friends and family. Which is to say, we are all experiencing trauma at varying levels. The following are tips for how we can incorporate into our lives what the research proves works to address challenges to our mental health.

5 Tips for Maintaining Sobriety and Mental Health

- Have a community of support. Seek help from a professional. Mental health therapists and psychiatrists have gone digital. Make sure to have as much digital face-to-face contact as possible with friends and family.

Additionally, 12-step recovery groups are easily accessible via Zoom.

- **Have a spiritual practice.** Reconnecting with your faith, a meditation practice, walking outside, journaling. Seeking a way to determine 'HOW' you are to navigate this uncertainty. Recognizing that panic and anger will not help this, and to instead to feel empowered to get intentional with how you are showing up emotionally.

- **Keep to a daily schedule.** Finding a new normal routine and adhering to that. Have this schedule to make room for alone-time and exercise alone or with your family. Fresh air and outdoor time is a must.

- **Reconnect with yourself, loved ones, and your values.** This can be an opportunity to learn to reconnect with what is truly important to you. An opportunity to really identify or reconnect with your value system. Where there is crisis, those who really flourish are those who look for opportunities for transformation and resilience. Perhaps making and sharing a gratitude list with friends or within your family can be a practice.

- **Finding the courage to share honestly.** For those of us who believe that our safety and security is in being ok and having it all together, this pandemic is challenging that defense in an unprecedented way. In mental health and the healing from addictions, it is clearly known that healing ONLY happens by finding the courage to share one's vulnerabilities. It is in sharing our fears, our anxieties, our struggles that we can feel the most connected and supported by one another. And in this way, we also give others permission to share their vulnerabilities and fears.

-Alana Smith, LCSW, LCDC

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SOAP/SANITIZER,
AT LEAST 20 SECONDS



AVOID CONTACT
WITH SICK PEOPLE



DON'T TOUCH EYES,
NOSE OR MOUTH WITH
UNWASHED HANDS



WEAR A MASK



AVOID
CROWDED PLACES



AVOID CONTACT WITH
ANIMALS AND ANIMAL
PRODUCTS



DO NOT SHARE
EATING UTENSILS
AND FOOD



DON'T EAT RAW FOOD,
THOROUGHLY COOK
MEAT AND EGGS



AVOID TRAVELLING TO
AFFECTED AREAS
UNLESS NECESSARY



IF YOU BECOME SICK
SEEK MEDICAL CARE
IMMEDIATELY

IF YOU ARE INFECTED



STAY AT HOME



AVOID CONTACT
WITH OTHERS



COVER YOUR NOSE
AND MOUTH WITH
TISSUE OR ELBOW
WHEN SNEEZING



PUT TISSUES
IN THE TRASH BIN
AND WASH HANDS



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