

Press Clippings 04/18/20 to 04/20/20

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There are no U-46 related news stories.

---Daily Herald---04/19/2020

Naperville trail attack on Chinese American man leaves many uneasy



Nancy Chen



Elgin Unit District U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders says the district is seeing gaps in e-learning participation among low-income families and minorities.



Dr. Courtney Coke



Daily Herald Diversity Editor Madhu Krishnamurthy

A March 21 attack on a Chinese American man jogging along a Naperville trail has left the Asian community there uneasy, says resident Nancy Chen.

The women spit on and threw sticks at the man and told him “to go back to China,” Chen said. “It just does not reflect the kind of Naperville that I have been calling home for almost now 50 years,” she said.

A Naperville Crime Stoppers poster shows two unidentified women who are wanted for questioning and offers a \$1,000 reward for information leading to an arrest. Naperville police are investigating.

Chen, an advisory board member of United Chinese Americans Illinois Chapter, is urging the Naperville City Council to adopt a resolution condemning racism and supporting Asian Americans.

Viral racism: Since March 19, the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council’s STOP AAPI HATE reporting center has received more than 1,100 reports nationwide of coronavirus-related discrimination against Asian Americans.

A majority of incidents occurred in grocery stores, pharmacies and big box retail stores, the center reports.

Chen said there’s been a rise in anti-Asian sentiment and hate crimes in the wake of President Donald Trump and other politicians labeling COVID-19 a “Chinese virus.”

To report a hate crime, visit a3pcon.org/stopaapihate.

E-learning access gaps: Suburban educators are realizing gaps in student access to e-learning due to technological challenges affecting low-income and minority families.

At Elgin Area School District U-46, officials are seeing a significant drop in participation among Hispanic and African American students. Attendance rates post-COVID-19 lockdown declined during the first week of distance learning — from 95% to 90% among Asians, from 94% to 89% among whites, from 92% to 76% among Hispanics, and from 90% to 66% among blacks.

“Internet access is obviously a big issue with some families,” U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders said. “We are working on a solution for that. We are doing a second round of technology distribution this week. Another one is planned when additional devices arrive.”

Free food: The Islamic Foundation in Villa Park will begin distributing free food and groceries to community members in need starting today.

The event will run from 1 to 4 p.m. at the mosque on 300 W. Highridge Road.

“We have been doing this for the last three years all through the year,” foundation Chairman Aftab Khan said. “This year, we have distributed food and groceries to over 1,000 needy families.”

The foundation is seeking donations for its Chicago Food Distribution Program, which has collected nearly \$12,700 toward a \$100,000 goal.

COVID-19 support helpline: A coalition of religious, civic and social service organizations from the greater Chicago area has formed a task force to coordinate COVID-19 support services. It includes free tele-health consultations, access to medical, mental health and dental care, food distribution, emergency monetary assistance, and help filing for unemployment benefits. To access services, call the helpline, (847) 737-1785, staffed by professionals and volunteers.

The task force comprises members of Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, local and national relief agencies, associations of medical and dental professionals and community service groups.

More black docs: Being comfortable with one’s doctor is key to dealing with any health crisis. For blacks, it’s harder to build that trust when most doctors don’t look like them, and that can be an issue in the suburbs, experts say.

“To open yourself up and be vulnerable, you want to do that typically among people who understand the nuances,” said Dr. Courtney Coke, an African American radiation oncologist at Advocate Sherman Hospital in Elgin. “That vulnerability requires certain sensibility on the part of physicians.

Historically, patients who are of diverse backgrounds may not feel comfortable venturing outside of their traditional spaces.”

Having a culturally competent physician empowers patients, he added.

- Share stories, news and happenings from the suburban mosaic with Madhu Krishnamurthy at mkrishnamurthy@dailyherald.com.

---The Courier-News---04/19/2020

Goldie Hawn shares positive words with U-46

Star in Zoom call: ‘Things are going to change — please believe it’

By Rafael Guerrero



Actress Goldie Hawn shared a brief message with School District U-46 families Tuesday during a video chat with Superintendent Tony Sanders. (School District U-46)

Goldie Hawn had a decades-long acting and producing career but over the past two decades, the Academy Award winner’s Hawn Foundation has shifted some of her attention to youth education and well-being improvement strategies for students.

Hawn shared some of those foundation messages of positivity and encouragement with the U-46 community Tuesday via a Zoom call with Superintendent Tony Sanders. Parts of the video-conference call were posted on the district's website and social media pages as it looks to assist families struggling with the uncertainties associated with the coronavirus.

"I want to wish you the best future," Hawn said in the three-minute video message. "Hold tight, things are going to change — please believe it."

She urged families to take some time off during their days to do breathing exercises — a "brain break," as Hawn called it — with their children, which can be done on a daily basis.

"If you feel angry, breathe. If you feel scared, breathe. Help your children do the same thing," she said.

"Stress is not a good thing for your brain, it's not a good thing for your body, it's not a good thing for how you relate to each other," she added.

Sanders said he was introduced to Hawn through a mutual friend and the two connected via email. He had been trying to make contact with the Hawn Foundation, he said.

"When the pandemic hit, I sent her a note telling her how our communities are struggling and asked if she would perhaps share the work of her foundation, MindUP (the foundation's signature program), and perhaps activities families could use in these stressful times," he said.

The two ultimately found time to chat virtually on Tuesday, Sanders said. The Zoom call coincided with the district promoting the Illinois Department of Human Services' new Call4Calm support line. Call4Calm allows callers in English or Spanish to reach a mental health professional via a phone call or text; a mental health professional will then reply back within 24 hours.

The district's COVID-19 website now includes a wellness page with well-being resources for children and parents.

---Daily Herald---04/18/2020

Schools closed for rest of spring

'Learning will never stop': Suburban districts disappointed but ready

By: Marni Pyke



Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Friday announced schools serving students in kindergarten through grade 12 will remain physically closed for the remainder of the academic year to reduce the spread of COVID-19

Public and private schools serving students in kindergarten through grade 12 will remain physically closed for the remainder of the academic year to reduce the spread of COVID-19, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Friday.

E-learning, now going on in many suburban school districts, will continue, officials said.

“I’ve said time and time again, our decisions must follow the science and the science says our students can’t go back to their normal routine this school year,” Pritzker said.

The decision comes as the state announced its biggest jump in cases of the respiratory disease, 1,842, which is linked to increased testing. Overall, 1,134 Illinoisans have died from COVID-19 and there are 27,575 infections statewide.

The seismic move will affect everyone from high school juniors and seniors with their eyes on college, to primary students who had been anticipating field days and end-of-year concerts.

“While the buildings are closed, learning will never stop,” Downers Grove School District 58 Superintendent Kevin Russell told parents in an email message after the announcement.

“While this is disappointing news, the district recognizes that the health and wellness of our students, staff, families and community members is the most important thing during this unprecedented time.”

Barrington Area Unit District 220 Superintendent Brian Harris told parents “given the current public health crisis ... I’m sure this news does not come as a surprise. However, I share your disappointment, as I know many of you, including myself, were holding out hope that somehow our students and staff would be able return to our school buildings before the end of the year.”

As for what the move means for report cards or grades, each school district is developing its own remote learning plan using Illinois State Board of Education guidelines.

“Our recommendation is that grades be used as an opportunity to give feedback, not a tool for compliance, and that no educational harm should come to any child,” ISBE spokeswoman Jackie Matthews said. “Grades should only be used to increase a student’s academic standing.”

Anticipating Friday’s news didn’t make it any less sad for students, staff members and parents, Palatine Elementary District 15 Chief Communications Officer Morgan Delack said. Generally speaking, it’s believed to be more difficult to replicate the classroom experience via virtual learning at the elementary level than at the high school level, she said, but she pointed to steps the district is taking to make distance learning more interactive.

The reality “is still emotionally difficult for all of us,” Palatine Township Elementary District 15 Superintendent Laurie Heinz told parents in a message. “We deeply value the face-to-face connection that school provides.”

Some school districts were already moving to reschedule graduations and proms.

Waubonsie Valley, Metea Valley and Neuqua Valley high schools, for instance, will all have graduation July 18 and proms will be held July 9 and 16. St. Charles District 303 rescheduled graduation to July 25 and canceled its proms.

Kevin Myers, superintendent of Mundelein High School District 120 and Mundelein Elementary District 75, said the district is exploring ways to hold events such as prom, eighth-grade promotion and graduation in June or July.

Elgin Area School District U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders said returning to school would have required providing masks for nearly 39,000 students, taking their temperature daily and getting students to comply with safety requirements. “We have a difficult time getting high school students and middle school students to wear IDs,” he said.

And Sanders said districts might have to consider the possibility of not reopening schools or limiting attendance in the fall.

“We’ve already rethought public education to make this transition to distance learning,” he said. “Maybe not all students need to be in a school at the same time.”

Statewide school closures began in March when Pritzker issued a stay-at-home order through April 30 affecting schools, businesses and nonessential workers. Weeks later, the numbers of people dying from the respiratory disease and confirmed cases continue to grow, but Pritzker and Illinois Department of Public Health Director Ngozi Ezike said the state is experiencing a leveling off.

The puzzle for public health experts is how to reopen businesses and public areas without causing a second wave of COVID-19.