

March 2020
DRE Report to the Board

Dear Board members,

I know I'm not the only one feeling, as I write this, that "normal" life is hard to access! The disruption to our routines is unprecedented right now. It's my pleasure to be part of a staff team of colleagues dedicated to adapting and changing and finding new ways to connect.

On that note, I want to let you know what RE is doing to keep families connected during this time. As part of the staff team, I am collaborating on bringing elements of Worship to everyone online, including Story for All Ages. I'm excited for the possibilities for connecting and sharing that the online platform will present to us; it's a good time to provide solace to our wider community too (and show them how awesome what goes on in our building is!).

I will also be emailing some thematic prompts out to families, letting them know about teaching elements that we've been using in RE over the last few weeks that they may be able to use as conversation springboards with their kids. This is particularly a time to provide comfort and assurance to kids, as they more than any of us can pick up on feelings of instability. The themes I'm sharing include things like: *Resilience: what do we hold on to during hard times?* We've talked about coping skills, like laughter, play, cuddling with pets, and spending time in Nature. We've talked about "holding onto" our 7 UU Principles when we need guidance, that they can tell us what to do when we're not sure. Right now, they may be telling us how to take care of each other and appreciate our inter-connectedness (especially as a way to explain social distancing! It's part of taking care of each other and acknowledging the whole we are a part of). Our kids have some grasp on this language from our activities in RE, so it's a great way in for parents to discuss the scarier dimensions of the world crisis we are experiencing.

And my one item of "regular" business is to let you know that we are beginning to explore switching our physical classrooms around downstairs, and furnishing the middle (largest) room as our main classroom. We regularly have large groups of up to 22 kids (often plus 2-3 parents as well!), and fitting around our opening circle has gotten more difficult (to the point where I fear it is beginning to feel exclusive towards late-comers, who end up sitting literally in the corner). To re-arrange the space, I may be soliciting donations of comfort items like rugs, bean bags, cushions, yoga mats, etc. We are still in the exploratory phase, but stay tuned for more.

Thanks for all everyone is doing to respond to the challenges of these times with grace and compassion! It's a pleasure to be a part of a community like this, especially during trying times.

With love,
Bethany