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AOC Times

S'Camp Edition

S'Camp Debuts at AoC

by: **Jaelyn Castillo & Sebastian Moore**



For the first time, AoC offered students a summer "S'Camp," a variety of online classes and clubs.

Ms. Lisa Beaubian, SETSS teacher and head of Camp Cali felt Summer S'Camp was a good idea because "it's good to stay connected to one another." In the past, in-person summer camp was offered at the school, but because of the pandemic, it could not this year. That's when Mr. Zimmerman, Executive Director, asked her if she would run an online summer camp.

Beaubian designed an online catalog of clubs that teachers created. Parents and students could choose whatever clubs they were interested in and then had to make their own schedule.

At first, Beaubian was worried about how to get the supplies to the school, and eventually the students. However, by the time S'Camp started, teachers had ordered supplies and students were able to pick them up at school.

Teachers saw the benefit of keeping students active during the summer. Ms. Pily Quintanilla, who taught a few classes including string art and cooking, said it "felt good to share recipes and I liked seeing parents connect with their kids." Ms. Maria Tejada taught a "Number the Stars" book club because she "loves the book we're reading and loves when students also enjoy the book."

Overall, students seemed to enjoy S'Camp because they were able to pick classes they were interested in. "It is productive and cool and you will learn a lot in a fun way," said Isaac Peguero, 5th grader.

One parent, Brenda Kusumi, said she liked the online summer camp because her daughter stayed active in class. And she always looked forward to hearing about what she learned after every class.

AoC Announces School Year Will Start Remotely

by: **Jon Marcus Diaz & Brandon Tined**

On July 29th, AoC announced they would continue with remote learning for next year due to COVID-19 at a Zoom Town Hall meeting. The meeting, which was an hour and a half long, had over 150 participants who learned about the school's plans regarding COVID-19. Middle School Principal St. Claire Adriaan did not feel safe going back to school at this time. "I have seen some schools open and have to close shortly after that because of someone testing positive."

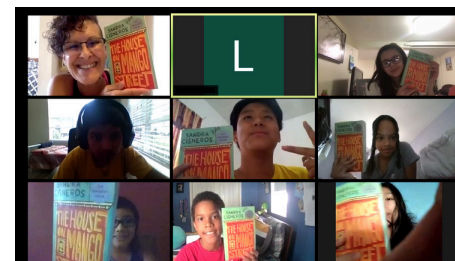
The majority of parents at the meeting agreed with the school's decision. Parents of Madison Gomez, 7th Grader, like some other parents and teachers, say that they aren't very excited about school next year. "I feel that they [students] don't learn anything when doing remote learning, but on the other hand, I don't want to [send her back], but everyone is in danger with the COVID. I would hope that this gets better very soon so that kids can go back to school or a somewhat normal life. I know it's hard on them just like it is for us, the adults."

The school announced that AoC would be online for three months before reevaluating the COVID situation. According to Kerrie

Fabrizi, Special Education Coordinator, next year will be very different than last spring. She said that 8-hour schedules (8am - 4pm) will now have breaks between classes and a larger variety of specials. "I worked very closely with the principals to make sure we met all of the requirements for the students," stated Fabrizi.

Adriaan echoed Fabrizi's statements. "There will be more structure, rules and expectations. This information will all be published in a "Remote Learning Student Handbook" to ensure every student and family is fully aware of the expectations. Teachers and students now have some experience with remote learning, as well as more time to prepare for effective teaching and learning. Typical assignments will be on a teacher's website, as well as the policy for completion and make-up assignments.

If students are having trouble, Adriaan explained that there will be staff members available to support students on all levels throughout the remote learning experience. If any students need help with their work, they can go to the staff during an extra time called "office hours." Behavior expectations will also be in



a restorative manner.

According to Adriaan, a decision to go back to the building will happen only when "we can guarantee the safety of all students, staff and visitors to our building." This means that all CDC guidelines regarding preparing and keeping the building safe are followed. "We will also have to take everyone's temperature as they enter the building, and wearing a mask will be mandatory. He explained that there will be a designated area for anyone that is feeling sick until they are picked up from school.

When asked about remote learning next year, Kyllie Schnieder, 6th grader, rated remote learning as a 5/10. "Last year wasn't exactly smooth with the online learning, and next year since we're in middle school, there's going to be a lot of stress," answered Schnieder.

For a list of frequently asked questions regarding re-opening, visit www.academyofthecity.org.

Mr. Paul Returns as Data Manager

by: **Tenzin Namdol**

After a three month absence, Mr. Paul Ajon has returned to AoC as the new Data Manager for both schools along with Ms. Emi Oki in Operations.

In January, Mr. Paul Ajon left AoC because he wanted to become a full-time home inspector. He wanted to come back to AOC because "I missed everyone and they showed me they needed help back at AoC." Mr. Ajon is also pleased that he came back because he loves all the students, teachers and staff.

Ajon's job as a Data Manager

includes collecting important data from both schools and also helping families at AoC. He'll also be working with teachers to make life with PowerSchool easier and better, according to an email sent to staff.

Operations Associate, Ms. Oki is super excited to have Mr. Paul back at AoC. "He was a valuable member of the team and when he left it felt like we had a big hole in the group. He has a tremendous amount of knowledge about the workings of AoC and is just really awesome to



work with. He gets along very well with parents and staff and is always helpful."

Now that Mr. Ajon has returned, "We will continue to work alongside each other in Operations. He will focus on data management but we will still work together on busing, admissions and other important tasks. "We will try to make AoC the best school it can be," explained Oki."

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Masks: The New Normal

by Chelsea Dunne

In the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic, many people all over the world have adapted to rules to flatten the curve. These rules include washing hands when you can, social distancing and most of all, wearing a mask. Companies such as Urban Outfitters and Gap are making these items more fashionable by adding a cute pattern or a beloved character of a book, movie or tv-show.

According to multiple sources, the purpose of a mask is to prevent particles from entering an individual's nose and mouth. It also provides protection from particles coming out of an individual's nose and mouth to the people around the person.



With many mask options, it can get confusing about which mask is best to wear. The best way to tell how weak or strong a mask is to put the mask up to a light and if a lot of light passes through the mask, it's weak. If barely any light passes through the mask, you have yourself a strong mask. According

to Bella Shimunova, AoC's school nurse, the recommended mask is cloth face coverings because they provide a good amount of protection and it's best to avoid any mask with a hole because it leaks the particles. She added that we must conserve the amount of disposable medical masks because doctors and nurses need them for work.

If AoC students go back to school after the three months of remote learning, masks will be the one key to keeping the teachers, staff and students safe. "We will make sure people know the expectations and rules," said Mr. St. Claire Adriaan, AoC's Middle School Principal. If a child comes to school without a mask there will be disposable masks available. There will also be a guideline for masks; the mask must be "safe and protective, not just cosmetic and for show."

Teachers foresee certain obstacles masks will present when students and teachers eventually return to school. Ms. Megias, sixth grade ELA teacher, said "Masks will have negative effects because it will interfere with the teacher-student connection. I depend on facial expressions to see my student's emotions, and I want them to be able to see mine." Student Tenzin Tashi worries about how masks will affect the volume of people's voices.

Many people have different opinions about masks. According to 4th grader, Mia Machlin, the best mask for her is a homemade one because it's customizable and is easier to get the right fit. However, according to Tenzin Tashi, 7th grader, the disposable blue masks are just fine because they provide some ability to breathe easily. "I tried cloth masks because they make my glasses less foggy," Ms. Megias said, "but it's hot."

No need to worry about masks in school for now, as AoC will continue with remote learning for at least three months.

AoC Hires David Suriel as First AoC Social Worker

by Brandon Tined



During the summer of 2020, AoC announced that they were hiring a new social worker, David Suriel, working with counselor, Orfelina Cisneros, who will be moving to the new middle school along with Suriel on Astoria Blvd.

Suriel, who has been a social worker for over a decade, has worked with children between the ages of 5-18, though he usually enjoys working with middle school students. "They are in a special transition stage of their lives (from child to teenager) and seem to be more open to feedback and guidance," stated Suriel. St. Claire Adriaan, Middle School Principal, said that the combined skill set of Cisneros and Suriel would be beneficial to both students and families.

Mr. Suriel's reason for working here at AoC was

a "moment of choice." Cisneros noted that she felt very excited regarding the addition of Suriel to AoC. "The addition of Mr. Suriel to AoC Middle School will impact how much support we will provide to the students, especially after the pandemic when times for sharing and support is a necessary thing to do."

Suriel hopes to make school a better place. "My main goal is to help positively contribute, as best I can, to the AoC community: fellow staff, students, and families." He observed that there typically is a disconnect between the student's perspective of progress and a parents view of development. This is one of many obstacles he encounters at his job. "Also, as with any helping profession, I can't help anyone unless they want

help. That can be another big obstacle that first needs to be dealt with before progress can even be made."

Adriaan stated that the pandemic has nothing to do with Suriel getting hired, but because middle school-aged kids, who will be transferring to adolescence, needed a trained professional to talk to. He also stated that the elementary school would have a new school counselor.

When not working, Suriel enjoys spending time with his friends and family, traveling and exploring the world, and practicing new hobbies such as photography, coding, and learning.

Summer Quarantine Activity Ideas

by Matteo Cajas

Even though summer vacation is almost over, many students will relax or get some fresh air, but mostly...they play video games! Here are some new video games, creative activities and a book suggestion to read during summer.

Video Games

One new video game that was just released is "Super Mario the Origami King." This game recently came out in July and it is the sixth game of the Paper Mario games. The story is about Paper Mario and is set in the Mushroom Kingdom. Our hero Mario, tries to rescue Princess Peach from Bowser, who imprisoned the seven "Star Spirits," lifts her castle to the sky. Will Mario save her or wind up trapped? You can use the

Switch's joy-cons to make amazing attacks that you usually can't do. This game is available only for Nintendo Switch.

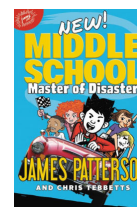


Another new game that came out not so long ago is "Ninjara," a free game, but only for the Nintendo Switch. I chose this game because it has 3 million uploads since it came out. You're a ninja, and you use weapons to attack people. You could customize your character's outfits, battle weapons and try out the story modes online.

Activities

One activity you can play is a Treasure Hunt.

Someone hides some items and another person looks for them. It may be easy, but the more items, the longer it takes. Sometimes it may be boring in quarantine, so try baking. There are many things to bake, maybe even your favorite dessert. Here is a link for recipes you can try: www.myrecipes.com/baking-recipes.

**Books**

"MIDDLE SCHOOL Master of Disaster," by James Patterson is about 2 teenagers named Jimmy and Ralfe who want to tell stories with many other characters at the mall, but accidentally requested a short amount of time. Will they get the time they deserve or send everyone home?!

