

March 20, 2020

Dear VVS Community,

Until we all move past this national crisis and can reopen our campus, I (with our exceptional team and staff) will be communicating frequently with you on a number of details and systems: how we will go about virtual learning and teaching, when we might be coming back to school, and how might we be able to still host the wonderful spring VVS traditions. So, please check your email or our website www.vvsaz.org for the latest information.

After some glorious rain (and a little snow), today the sun is shining, birds are chirping, and the campus is alive with bloom. But of course, as glorious as the day is, I miss the movement, energy, and laughter of staff and students. Moments ago my automatic calendar reminder alerted me that Community Meeting begins in ten minutes. But today, the Chapel is empty, there is no Senior Speech to hear, no Happy Box. But it got me thinking about VVS and all of you. You are all our family, whether you are down the street or 10,000 miles away. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our community – our staff, our families, our alumni, our friends – feels overwhelming. However, while it seems impossible to imagine, VVS has been through so many difficulties over 72 years, and yet, each year graduated tomorrow's leaders. We will do the same this year and for many years to come. Why? We are connected, we are VVS! Together, we will see it through until we can all be together again - in person.

Until then, the upcoming period of time will likely require flexibility and patience, particularly if we end up having to go into an extended period of time away from one another. We all are living with the same circumstances and I am certain like me, you are worried about your family and friends for the potential loss of so much. That is why knowing the extended VVS family is out there supporting us each day makes me feel steadfast and true to my obligation to ensure that we relaunch our academic program virtually on March 30th. More information on the details of our virtual learning program will come next week.

Even as I write this, a group of administrators is busily working on the best ways to organize school from a distance and provide our students with the best possible learning and community experience. Even as I write this, Verde Valley School parents are paying their tuition for Fall 2020. Even now, the Board is seeking ways to help support us over the next several weeks. Even now, the faculty are creating lesson plans and academic work that will keep all students on pace to complete the curriculum by semester's end. The School has received numerous offers to house students who might not be able to travel home. The housekeeping staff has been cleaning and recleaning surfaces to make sure the campus is as safe an environment as can be and ready to receive students on their return. The letters and phone calls of support from all VVS constituents has been tremendous.

While we may be apart for a while, and even as it is important to acknowledge the difficulties that will inevitably arise in the weeks to come, the VVS mission and our guiding principles inspire so many. Grit, resilience, and creative problem solving are key skills of a VVS staff member, student, and alumnus - we will get through this, and be better for it one day soon!

I so look forward to greeting you next time we meet.

Best,

Paul Amadio
Head of School
