

My Journal: A day during COVID-19

April 21, 2020

On Tuesday, it was an exciting, happy, sad, and overall emotional day. This day was inspiring because it was the day that I was finally going to see "my kids" (students) again, since March 6, 2020, before spring break. My Drive-by home visits were from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. My students, their families, and I were very excited and happy to see each other. Overall, I think it was a pleasant experience that I will never forget. Some of my younger Head Start students were so happy to see me that they wanted to run and hug me; however, the parents explained to them that it was best to keep our distance to stay healthy and safe due to Coronavirus. Many of them did not understand the situation and were sad; however, they still took pictures from a distance and left me some of their drawings, thank you cards, and gift for me to take home while I dropped off a letter, poem, a small gift bags with activities for them to do at home.

It was a pleasant experience driving around "my kids'" neighborhoods with our posters stating, "We Miss you bee-cause we Love you very much!" I was able to see "my kids" face with a big smile, throwing kisses at me and saying, "I love you and miss you too, Mrs. Cathy." My kids made me very happy and proud of them as I was able to see their writing skills in their drawings and thank you cards they gave me. My students are some of the reasons I am a teacher. I love working with this age group (three to five years old), and I like to encourage all my students to become life-long learners. I love to see them learn and grow. The reason I call my students "My Kids" is that in our year together, they weren't just kids on my class list, they became a part of my heart. To me, my students are "my kids," and their parents appreciate that.



During my Drive-by home visits, I also experienced something beautiful. I was able to see a school bus delivering meals to the children. It made me very happy and proud of our FESD administrators, food service, transportation, and everyone that made this program happen. Providing food to our needing families during this school closure shows that we have a beautiful heart, and we take care of our community. I am grateful to work with the FESD staff/family. In the beginning, during, and after my home visits, I was also communicating with Mrs. Elizabeth Camu and Mrs. Natalie Barragan to let them know my Fowler team 113 was safe. However, at the end of my home visits, I received a phone call from my husband, and his voice sounded sad, worried, and I could tell he wanted to cry. He asked, "Are you home safe from your students Drive-by home visits because I need to talk to you? I said, "Are you okay? He replied, "Call me when you get home? I immediately noticed something was wrong. I called him as soon as I got back home. He told me he had bad news and that our daughter's godfather, who was one of our best friends and Compadre, had passed away a few hours ago. I tried to be strong for my daughter since it was her godfather and had to tell her the bad news.

The first thing I started doing after talking to my daughter was to pray and cry it out in my bedroom. Then I tried to distract myself by replying to my work emails, inputting TSG's data, communicating with my student's families and Fowler team regarding our Drive-by home visits. I also spoke to my director Elizabeth Camu and Mrs. Natalie Barragan about work, and I could not hold it in anymore. I told them my situation about my Compadres death. These two individuals have always been supported and know what to say to make me feel better. I appreciate them both as my directors and beautiful persons.



Later in the day, my family and I went to visit my compadres family. My Compadre was a great friend and a retired teacher from Puerto Vallarta who was visiting his son and his family. He stayed visiting a little longer because of COVID-19. We tried to be supportive, but when my Comadre, his wife, hugged me and cried on my shoulder, she broke my heart. The whole family cried and prayed. During our prayer, I was able to hear my cellphone vibrating, but I ignored it. One hour later, I checked my phone, and I had received a lot of positive text messages: pictures of my kids doing the activities from our educational packets and holding unique posters that the kids made themselves. At that moment, I looked at the photos, all the positive messages from families, and realized how blessed I am to have such excellent students and families. COVID-19 has affected some of us by preventing us from physical contact with our friends, relatives, students and their families, and Co-workers, especially in these hard situations. However, we will always be together through zoom, facetime, and especially in our hearts. We all need to keep ourselves and our families strong, busy, calm, healthy, and safe at home. I can't wait for everything to go back to "normal" so that I can go back to my routine. I appreciate all the professional training videos/webinars that offer certificates at the end of the session. I feel that it benefits me as a teacher and parent. What I miss the most from my profession is socializing and studying alongside my students in the classroom. As I said at the beginning of this journal, "This day was an exciting, happy, sad, and an overall emotional day." Everyone part of the "Fowler Family," please take care, and stay safe!

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