

*"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to the all the people you can, as long ever as you can."*

I've often referred back to this quote during these tough times. Every day I count my blessings and I find myself doing a lot of self-reflecting. I want to continue to help as many people as I possibly can. Whether it's helping children form a line for breakfast and lunch at bus stops, shopping for essentials for those in need, picking up the phone and checking on those that are most vulnerable, or just engaging in small random acts of kindness. I will continue to do what I can.

Like most of my colleagues, I've become so reliant on technology, and virtual communication has become a new norm. My team and I stay in constant communication with the early childhood staff and the Western Valley Elementary Daycare staff. This is an amazing group of people to work with, so caring, empathetic, strong, and resilient. Their willingness to adapt to these new changes has made virtual learning and communication less cumbersome. The hardest part for most of our teachers is the inability to connect with their students, face to face. They miss them. Two weeks ago, Elizabeth Camu, our Head Start Director, proposed drive by home visits for our preschool students. She proposed for teachers to visit each home, remain in their cars, shout out positive messages, and leave an educational activity curbside. I hadn't thought of this idea, but I knew that if we set careful parameters for safety (social distancing), this plan would work. The home visits were a success! Teachers went over and beyond, decorating their cars with positive messages. The interactions with students were short but heartfelt. Children stood at their doors with their parents as they watched their teachers drive by. I believe this provided teachers with affirmation that social distancing doesn't mean isolation.

On personal note, my outlook continues to be positive and I'm hopeful. We will get through this. I promised myself that I would never take small things for granted, like stopping at a grocery store for basic necessities and supplies. At the height of the pandemic, I learned to cook. My parents are up in their age and I worry about them. With the food shortages, I was concerned they wouldn't be able to get the essentials, so I learned to cook, plan meals, and work with whatever ingredients I could find. Turns out I'm not so bad at cooking, I really enjoy it. ☺ I also helped others who were in need. I did nightly food drops (at the door) for family, friends, and co-workers who were in need of food or supplies. Sadly, I learned how to communicate with a family member through a glass window because she was confined to her home (quarantined). This hurt my heart, but I was hopeful things would get better for her and thankfully they have. I value my family, my friends, my co-workers and I believe this has made our bond stronger. So many times, they looked out for me and I will never forget their generosity.

We will get through this. Take care of yourselves. – Vincent Medina, Early Childhood Director