

# PARKWAY TODAY

News and Information for Residents of Parkway Schools

SPRING 2021



Now, We Shape the Future.

# Now, We Shape the Future.

The challenges of the past year have affected all of us. Our doors may have closed on campus for a time, but the education never stopped. Challenges were met with difficult decisions and these decisions made our priorities clearer than ever. It's important to continue to protect the health and safety of our students and staff, carry out our mission and do right by our children, teachers and community.

We were all tested. Our students and teachers persevered, adapted and created new ways to learn new things. These challenges have built a foundation for new opportunities to learn and care for one another and will help us shape the future of education.

The last year proved:

- Our teachers and students are resilient and capable of teaching and learning in new ways.
- Our teachers and staff are able to create intentional ways to connect with students.
- Our parents are strong partners as we educate and support students.



Lindsey Wagner, kindergarten teacher, helps her student craft a valentine in February.



Central High senior celebrates during her school's senior send-off parade.



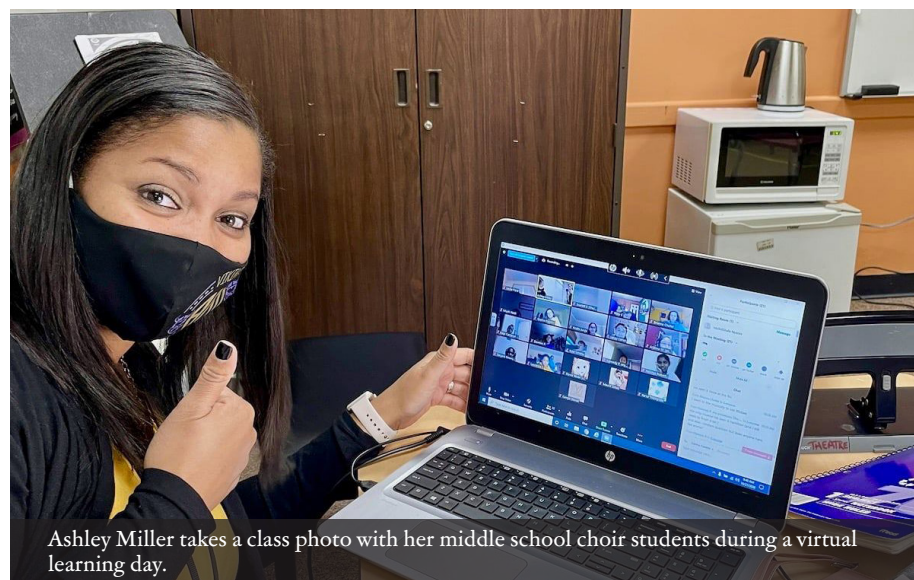
Fifth grade student smiles big for the first day of virtual learning of the 2020-21 school year.



Jess Buettner, Central area social worker, packages hygiene items for pick up at the food pantry.



River Bend Elementary Assistant Principal Brandon Schulte and staff pack supplies for their students in preparation for the 2020-21 school year.



Ashley Miller takes a class photo with her middle school choir students during a virtual learning day.

# A Year Like No Other

**C**hanging the way 18,000 students learn doesn't happen overnight. When schools closed across the region last spring, we knew our students needed an immediate shift to continue learning and connecting.

"Our first priority was to provide teachers with the tools, resources and training they needed right away to support our students. From there, our teachers did all the work and deserve all the credit," said Kevin Beckner, assistant superintendent of teaching, learning and accountability.

Still, learning online during the emergency closure was a challenge for everyone.

## How Did Students Fare?

There is no substitute for an in-person educational experience for most students. However, on average, student grades, attendance and engagement this year are comparable to previous years.

"The data tells us most students and our staff did the best they could and ultimately adapted to learning in new models and platforms," Beckner added.

This spring, as we returned to more in-person learning, about 30% of our students chose to continue learning online in Parkway's full-time Virtual Campus.

## Where Are We Headed?

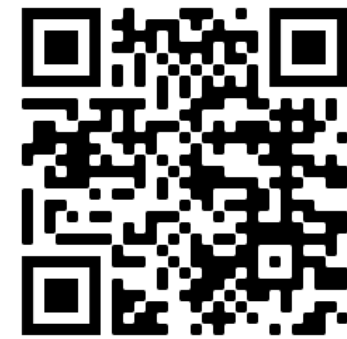
"It is important to provide extra support to our students who have struggled during this time. We are doubling down this summer to help these students," said Beckner. This year, summer school is designed to focus on students who need extra support. Teachers will personalize instruction based on individual student needs and focus on priority reading and math learning targets that are necessary for starting the next grade level.

Virtual Campus is here to stay. Some of our students are thriving in a virtual learning environment and feel this choice is the best fit for their learning long term. Based on feedback from parents and students, Virtual Campus will continue to be an option for families for the 2021-22 school year.

Virtual courses and learning were already part of our long-term strategic plan to offer personalized choices in Parkway to meet the diverse needs of all students and families. The pandemic accelerated our plans and allowed us to offer full-time virtual learning for next year.

## Returning to a Familiar School Experience

Parkway plans to return to five day, in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year.



Scan to see our data or visit:  
[www.parkwayschools.net/data](http://www.parkwayschools.net/data)

## Protecting Mental Health

Grades and test scores often don't tell the entire story of how our students are doing.

Over the past year, it was important to ensure our students continued to receive the proper social-emotional support. Whether students were learning in-person or online, Parkway counselors, social workers and care coordinators provided one-on-one sessions, small-group sessions, classroom lessons and mental health supports and resources. In some cases, this meant visiting students at home.

"We know the mental health of our children was impacted in the last year. There is still work to be done. We see more opportunities to proactively serve our students' mental health needs," said Erin Schulte, Parkway coordinator of counseling and character education.

This spring, Parkway is starting a new student wellness screening program in partnership with an outside agency. The program allows students in fifth, seventh and 10th grade to receive a mental health wellness screening. If a concern arises, the student and family will be connected to a therapist who will walk them through the process of seeking additional help. The program is being piloted at four schools this spring with the intent to provide screening for every school in the fall.

March 15, 2020

Due to a stay-at-home order, all schools in St. Louis County close their doors.



March 23, 2020

Parkway Food Services begins providing free grab-and-go meals for students, serving more than 76,000 meals by February 2021.



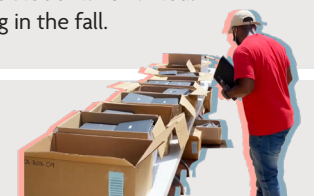
March 25, 2020

To continue educating students, online learning begins.



August 15-21, 2020

Parkway Technology Services distributes over 9,300 Chromebooks to prepare students for virtual learning in the fall.



# Reflections From Students

## “ Family. ”

I just thank my family for keeping motivation high in our household. Doing the little things like making lunch together or planning an activity.

- Olivia E.

I have found healthy ways to cope with stress, like journaling.

- Pritika G.

When one thinks of 2020, it's easy to identify what was missed. Our students missed out on in-person friendships, performances, athletics, prom and even graduation. What we have heard from them is these sacrifices, as difficult as they were, also taught them important life lessons. Lessons they may not have experienced until much later in life. The following quotes are from our students ages 8-17 when they were asked how they felt and what they learned this school year. We are proud to see their grit, attitude and empathy shine.

“ When we're in class online, I enjoy when we get time to talk to each other and our teacher about random topics. It has been a good coping mechanism for my anxiety. ”  
- Aiden D.

“ Something to remember is that this is temporary, and things will always get better. ”

- Micah F.

“ I think the biggest thing that 2020 taught me is patience. It has been about rolling with the punches. Being comfortable in different situations. ”

- Mia H.

“ I have learned more about myself from March through June than I have through 16 years of life. ”

- Nora V.

“ For me, I appreciate the people I don't get to see as often. The people I only get to see at school... I have learned to appreciate the little things, like pep rallies, academic lab, teachers, everyone. ”

- Molly R.

“ I have found myself appreciating day-to-day activities, I don't think I have turned down a grocery store trip in a long time. ”  
- Carson L.

“ Even in these tough times, it's been important to find ways to stay positive. That has really helped me a lot. ”  
- Kyra W.

● August 24, 2020

Parkway launches Virtual Campus, a full-time, K-12 online learning platform to serve students from anywhere.



● August 26, 2020

Bus drivers and other employees unable to fulfill all their regular duties lend a hand in new ways.



● September 23, 2020

St. Louis County Health Department announces that moderate contact sports can begin competitions in St. Louis County.



● January 19, 2021

Parkway returns to four days a week of in-person learning. About 30% of students choose to continue learning online for the remainder of the school year.



# Investing in Our Students' Future

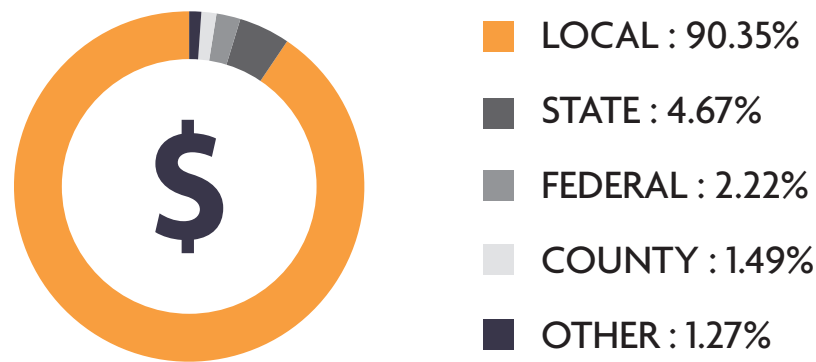
Parkway realigned resources to give our students the best educational experience possible. This meant investing in:

- Chromebooks for every student and learning software to support virtual learning.
- Extensive professional development for all teachers to provide high-quality curriculum and delivery in a virtual learning environment.
- Wi-fi hotspots for 1,200 families to ensure a reliable internet connection.

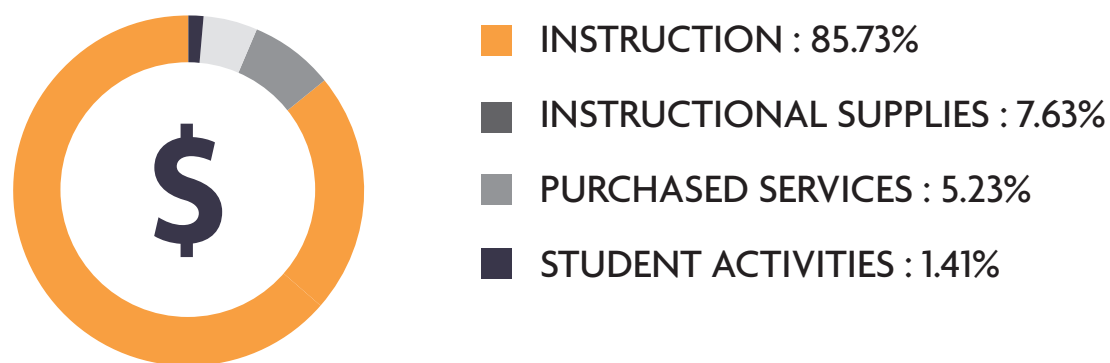
When the transition back to in-person learning began, Parkway invested in resources to keep students and staff safe at school. This included:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE), like masks, gloves and hand sanitizer;
- Cleaning and sanitizing products and backpack sprayers for more efficient cleaning of large spaces.
- Plexiglass barriers for classrooms, lunchrooms and offices; and safety and directional signage for buildings.
- Wellness services for employees with virtual doctor visits and employee assistance programs.
- Classroom furniture to provide more social distancing between students where needed.

## 2020-2021 Revised Operating Budget Operating Revenues: \$246.81 Million



## Operating Expenditures: \$243.83 Million



**DEPLOYED 1,200+**  
WI-FI HOTSPOTS



**PREPARED 9,300+**  
DEVICES FOR STUDENTS



**LAUNCHED**  
FULL-TIME VIRTUAL  
LEARNING PLATFORM



**INSTALLED**  
DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE



**PROVIDED**  
SAFETY BARRIERS FOR  
STAFF & STUDENTS

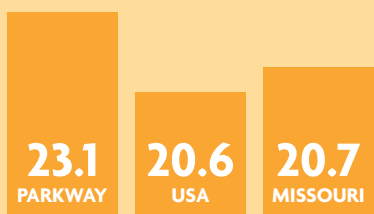


ALL HIGH SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED BY  
GREATSCHOOLS.ORG



★ 16 ★

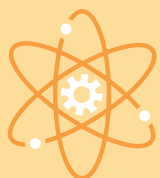
16 NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER  
NATIONAL DISTRICT OF CHARACTER



COMPETITIVE ACT ASSESSMENT SCORES  
2019-20



17 BLUE RIBBON AWARDS FROM  
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



PROJECT LEAD THE WAY  
**PLTW**  
DISTINGUISHED

ALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
PROVIDING BROAD ACCESS TO  
TRANSFORMATIVE STEM LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES



BEST HIGH SCHOOLS BY  
*U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT*



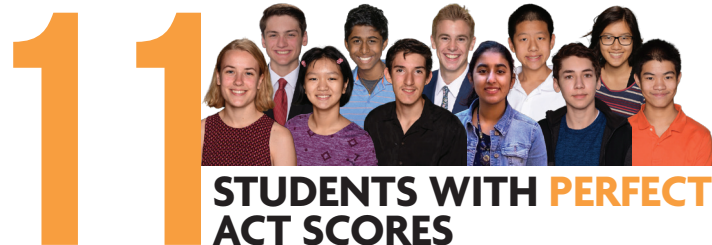
TEACHERS NAMED AMONG  
THE BEST IN THE STATE  
BY NICHE



PARKWAY'S BONDS WERE RATED "AAA" BY S&P  
GLOBAL RATINGS, THE HIGHEST RATING  
AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND  
ONE OF ONLY FOUR DISTRICTS IN THE STATE



# Parkway Schools at a Glance



- |                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Clementine Arneson     | Ariej Rafiq  |
| Matthew Christofferson | Alan Song    |
| Grace Dong             | Noah Withers |
| Sri Jaladi             | Kaitlyn Ying |
| Caleb Levy             | Nathan Zhou  |
| McKay Morgan           |              |



## TOP HIGH SCHOOLS FOR STEM EDUCATION

All four Parkway high schools have been named top high schools for STEM, according to *Newsweek*. *Newsweek* announced its ranking of the top 5,000 STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) high schools, honoring excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.



## BEST COMMUNITIES FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUSIC MERCHANTS

# Class Acts

JANUARY 2020 - PRESENT

## 1. OUR NURSES

We were fortunate to have a talented nursing staff leading us through a challenging year. Twenty-two Parkway nurses are nationally board-certified. Our nurses account for over 20% of nationally board-certified nurses in the state of Missouri. In January of 2020, Katherine Park was named Missouri's School Nurse of the Year. Formerly a school nurse at Pierremont Elementary, she now acts as interim director of Health Services for the district. Also, Carolyn Kluttz received the Missouri School Nurses' Association Rising Star Award recipient. Carolyn currently serves students at Northeast Middle.

MARCH 2020

## 2. LEARNING FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLOBE

Eleven time zones and 8,000 miles did not stop fifth-grader Nandu Rakesh-Nair from logging into class with a positive attitude. Due to pandemic travel restrictions, he and his family were unable to leave India in March where they had traveled for a family emergency. Nandu wanted to stay enrolled at Craig with his friends even if it meant logging into class in the middle of the night from India. Nandu's commitment to learning inspired his peers and teacher daily. He and his family plan to return home this spring.

MARCH 2020 - PRESENT

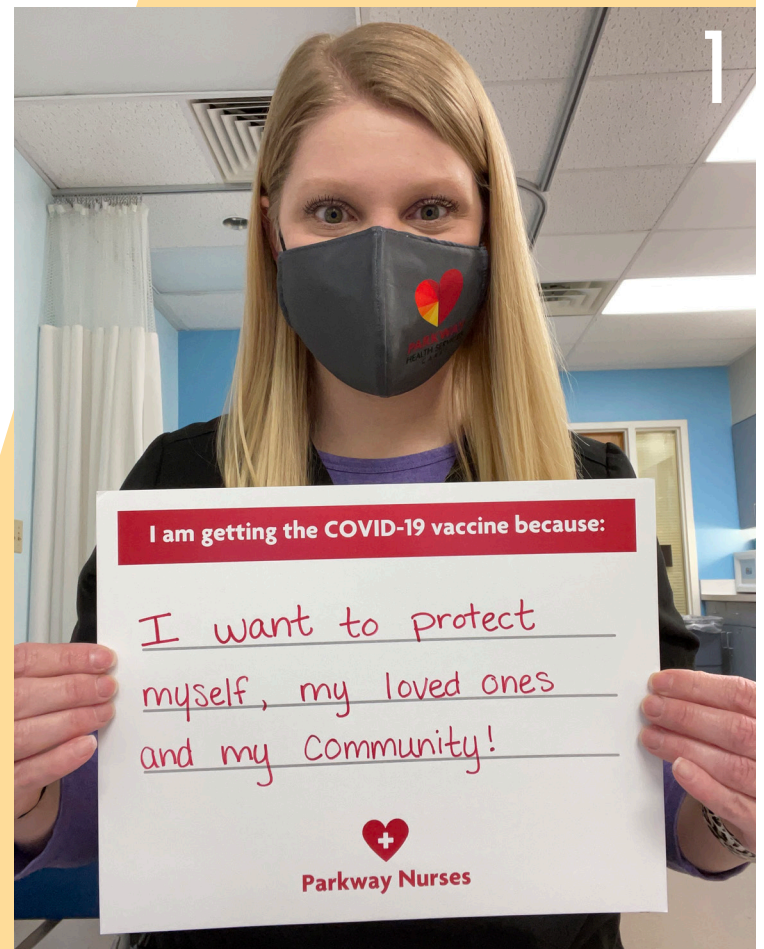
## 3. BUILDING A DIFFERENCE

Parkway students made a difference in our community during the pandemic. Lily, a kindergartner at Barretts Elementary, built 3D printed masks for healthcare workers last spring. Over the summer, Central High students Ethan and Jordyn Gegg (pictured right) printed 3D face shields and tension release bands for multiple long-term care facilities. Roselyn Chen joined peers from neighboring districts to create the nonprofit STL CRET (COVID-19 Response Teens). Her team donated over 3,100 cloth masks to hospitals and healthcare facilities across the country. Chen used Parkway's Instagram account to teach the community how to craft their own masks.

AUGUST 2020 & JANUARY 2021

## 4. MISSOURI'S OUTSTANDING MUSIC EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

North High's Brian Reeves received Missouri's Outstanding Music Educator of the Year award. In August 2020, Reeves also received the Luther T. Spayde Award of Excellence from the Missouri Choral Directors Association. During his tenure, Reeves has led his choirs to 24 consecutive exemplary ratings at the MSHSAA State Large Ensemble Festival. When asked what's the secret Reeves revealed, "Our belief system is 'Great Music, Better People.' We challenge ourselves with the music we create. An ensemble in any area of music works together to create beauty. To do that, people have to be accountable to one another. That comes with a certain expectation of character. If we did those things, we would be better and the music would be better too."





## 5. PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Elegan Kramer, former North High physics teacher, received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. The honor, which is the highest award given by the U.S. government to K-12 teachers of math and science, comes with \$10,000 from the National Science Foundation on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Kramer taught at North High for 13 years and is now a virtual developer for Parkway's new Virtual Campus.



FALL 2020 - SPRING 2021

## 6. STATE CHAMPIONS MAKE A SPLASH

### Boys Swimming

West High – Head Coach: Coleen Sumner      Assistant Coach: Mary Beth Wilson  
 Will Bonnett, Junior, 200 Yard IM – Time: 1:51.29 & 500 Yard Freestyle – Time: 4:36.81  
 Carter Murawski, Senior, 100 Yard Breaststroke – Time: 57.24

### Girls Swimming

South High – Head Coach: Blakeleigh Mathes      Assistant Coach: Jeremy Nichols  
 Kylee Sullivan, Sophomore, 200 Yard IM – Time: 2:04.20 & 100 Yard Butterfly – Time: 55.07  
 Logan Knolhoff, Mia Muckerman, Alayna Henage, and Kylee Sullivan  
 200 Yard Freestyle Relay – Time: 1:36.74

West High – Head Coach: Coleen Sumner      Assistant Coach: Ellen Lundstrom  
 Norah Rutkowski, Freshman, 100 Yard Butterfly – Time: 58.09 (pictured left)

Photo by: Michael Gullede, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

MARCH 2021

## 7. FIRST FEMALE STATE CHAMPION

West High junior Paige Wehrmeister became Parkway's first girls wrestling state champion after winning the MSHSAA Girls Wrestling State Championships in her weight class. "It's a nice added bonus to be the first girls wrestling state champion, but I'm honestly happiest that my hard work paid off," said Wehrmeister. Paige finished the season 23-0. She plans to continue wrestling in college after her senior year. The West Girls Wrestling team is coached by Zeke Allison and assistant coaches Chip Allison, Hope Swaney, Murray Reich and Jeff Schlote.

Photo by: Durwood Tenney, *St. Louis Sports Photography*

MARCH 2021

## 8. NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY FACEOFF

Six West High students qualified to join 27 teams from across the country to compete in the Cyberpatriot, a national youth cyber defense competition. The competition positions students as newly hired IT professionals tasked with managing the network of a small company. Through a series of online competition rounds, teams are given a set of virtual operating systems and are asked to find and fix cyber security vulnerabilities while maintaining critical services. Dhruv Agarwal, Yusuf Hacking, Sri Jaladi, Skyler Ji, Shane Liu and Kesava Viswanadha make up the team MOpatriot.







### Meet the Teacher

Kaitlyn Mayse (PNH '12)  
Auditioning & Building a  
Positive Reputation

## High School Theatre Master Class

Parkway's theatre departments hosted master classes for high school students. Distinguished alumni led conversations via video chat to share valuable industry experience in their area of expertise.

"We wanted to give students time to explore each area and we don't usually have time during our regular productions. We have students working as talent agents, performers on Broadway, improv professionals, voice-over artists, production and stage managers, sound designers, and many others. We've encouraged our students to branch out and explore areas of theatre they don't normally get to enjoy," said North High Theatre Director Chad Little.

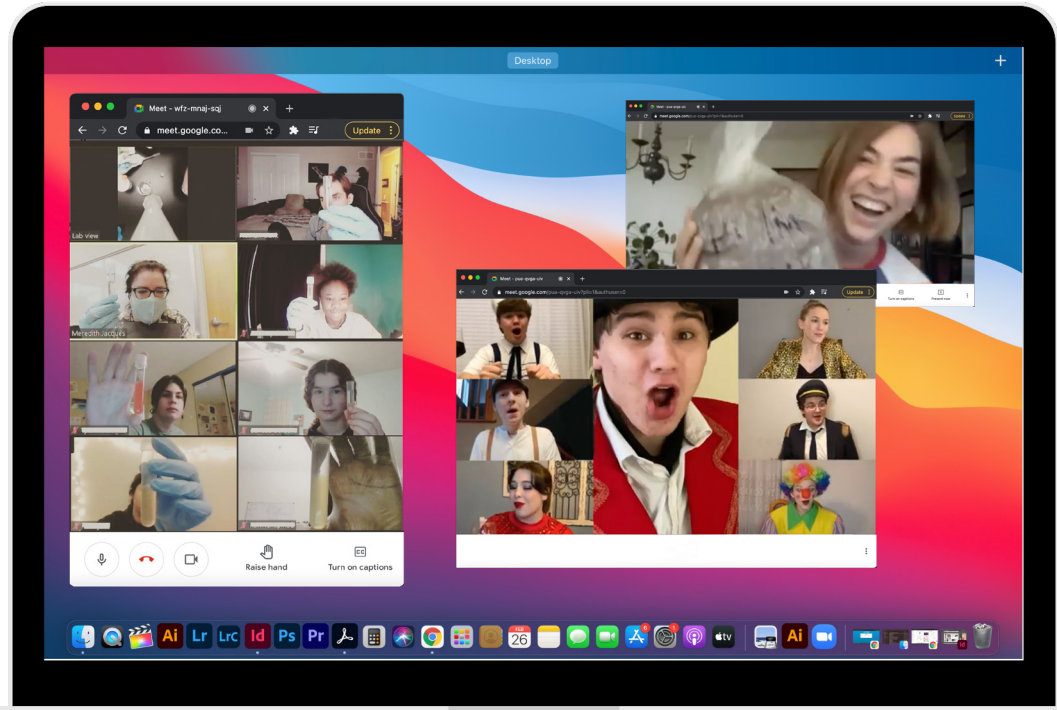
## Taking an On-stage Performance Online

South High streamed its first all-virtual musical on demand. While searching for a winter production, South High Theatre Director Jennifer Forrest-James found a show students could participate in virtually. This format gave students the unique opportunity to edit video in post production. Vocalists shifted into directing roles while recording their parts. Additionally, vocalists experienced studio recording for their performance takes.

Connor Scott, choir director, spoke to the production's success. "Thanks to this show, the community that theater thrives on at this level was able to continue through the pandemic."

# New Intentional Experiences

The creativity and resourcefulness of our teachers continued to inspire students to be capable, curious, confident and caring learners. Even from afar, our educators were able to craft intentional opportunities that will leave a lasting impact on our kids.



## A TON of Fun: Curbside Creating

Stacey Larson, ceramics teacher at South High, taught her students to problem-solve when she ordered 1,800 pounds of clay for their assignments. Each student received 25 pounds of clay. Once they finished a project, students dropped off their creations at school and Larson would fire them in the kiln.

"My goal for the semester was

to help my students de-stress while learning real-life skills," Larson said.

## Bringing the Lab Home

Students in Spark! Bioscience ran lab experiments from home thanks to Director Meredith Jacques. Jacques sent her students home with all the necessary lab equipment and materials. She walked her students through projects via

video chat. Additionally, she routinely invited educators from around the world to join her class and share their experiences with her kids.

"We've had guests from all over the world join us through Zoom - a neuroscientist from Canada, an environmental engineer from the U.K., a musician from New York and an American teacher who teaches all over the world recently speak to us from Congo, Africa," Jacques said.

## "Are You Streaming the Game?"

Last fall, students in AV clubs across the district started streaming athletic contests to YouTube. Students were taught to operate, set up, disassemble and store industry-grade equipment by high school staff. Greg Schuermeyer, South High business teacher and AV club director added,

"I am always impressed with how fast the students catch on. To give you an idea of what kind of experience these students are receiving, the St. Louis

Cardinals may have more equipment, but the controls are exactly the same."

The South High club hopes to expand its mobile capability so it can cover campus-wide activities and away games. Until then, students are gaining practical industry experience along the way.

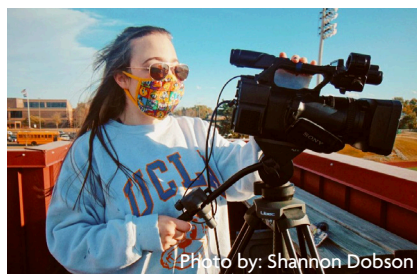


Photo by: Shannon Dobson



# More Than Just Internet Connection

Community, connection and relationships became increasingly important. While creating unique learning experiences for students, our staff worked just as hard to provide a safe community, encouragement and strong, personal connections for students when they needed it most.



Jenny Dencker and Brian Tucker, Barretts Elementary teachers, prepare school and deliver school supplies to families.



Julie Barnes, Spanish teacher at South High, surprises with a care package.



South High and Transportation staff members volunteer their time to load and deliver care packages to each South High student.

## 1,639 Care Packages Delivered

What began as a single conversation turned into a school-wide project to deliver a care package to every South High student at their home. It would come to be known as “The Great Care Package Project.”

Principal Patrice Aitch stated, “Our hope was that our students realized we missed them, love them and wanted to encourage them.”

Each care package contained some of the same items, but was also unique to each student.

Jennifer K., senior at South High, reflected on the day she received her care package. “My English teacher was the last person I expected to knock on my door on a Saturday. It was a thoughtful surprise. As hard as it’s been not seeing everyone at school, this was a great gift to receive.”

Every student was accounted for in Manchester and the city of St. Louis. Over 50 staff members, including with Parkway bus drivers, volunteered to deliver the care packages to every student home.

## Delivering Hope

Teachers and staff members organized safe, at-home visits with students. They volunteered time and resources to further support and connect.

Social workers arranged in-person appointments and dropped off supplies to support students’ mental health.

“It helped students know that we are still here for them and this situation is temporary. We smiled with our eyes, gave ‘virtual hugs’ and spoke encouraging words. After the visit, many students were more open to talking about personal situations and struggles. It was a way for us to show them that we still ‘see them’ even if they are far from us.”

- District Counselor

“I dropped off sensory supplies to help a child: a weighted blanket, a special chair, and a fidget. It was really helpful for the student.”

- Bellerive Elementary

Teachers dropped off learning supplies for families in need.

“I have been to probably over 10-12 homes delivering school supplies, curriculum, food, technology, cards and well wishes to classmates who were ill. One visit I wore the Highcroft Ridge mascot costume for a student who had just returned from the hospital.”

- Highcroft Ridge Elementary

“I delivered supplies, food and goodies. We would meet right outside their home or would talk through the door. It felt so good to see them and see their eyes and faces light up when they saw me!”

- Claymont Elementary

The students weren’t the only ones feeling the positive effects of the visits.

“Reconnecting with students and families in person gave me the feeling that we would be able to endure this situation and that our bond/connection was powerful enough to withstand the barriers we are facing. It gave me hope!”

- District Counselor

These visits provided connection when students needed it most.



Rosie visits a Highcroft Ridge student who was recently released from the hospital.



Kara Baum, Shenandoah Valley teacher, stops by to celebrate her student's birthday.



# Coming Together

The past year has been challenging, but if the actions of our students, staff and community are any indication, we are capable of managing and responding to any situation that comes our way.



Dear Parkway Teachers, Staff and Parents,

It wasn't the easiest year.

When the world stopped around us, you kept going.  
You tried new things. You made it happen. You never gave up.

Because of you, our kids never stopped learning.  
On Zoom and in classrooms, they learned new skills in new ways.

Because of you, our kids stayed connected.  
You gave them consistency in the midst of uncertainty.

Because of you, our children remained confident.  
They learned perseverance is worth it.

Because of you, their future is bright.  
Because of you, our future is bright.

Thank you.

 Parkway Schools



455 N. Woods Mill Rd.  
Chesterfield, MO 63017  
ParkwaySchools.net

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
St. Louis, MO  
Permit No. 2239

## FRIEND OF THE DISTRICT ECRWSS

**Please Note:** The Parkway School District Board of Education is committed to maintaining an educational environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in admission or access to, or treatment in, its programs, services, activities and facilities. In accordance with law, the district strictly prohibits discrimination and harassment against students on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law.

For inquiries about the nondiscrimination policy, call (314) 415-8100.

SPRING 2021

# CONTENTS

CONNECT WITH US  
Looking for more stories like these?  
Follow us @ParkwaySchools



### FEATURE STORY

#### Now, We Shape the Future

See what our students and staff proved last year and how it's shaping the future of education



Register now for 5-day,  
in-person Kindergarten  
for 2021-22



### INTENTIONAL EXPERIENCES

#### Bringing the Lab Home

See how students ran lab experiments from home



### MORE THAN JUST INTERNET CONNECTION

#### Delivering Hope

Community, connection and relationships when we needed it most



1,639 Care Packages

### WHAT'S INSIDE

#### 02 Where We are Headed?

See our plan to help our students mentally and academically

#### 03 Lessons Not in Textbooks

What did students say going into 2021?

#### 04 Parkway's Finances

We're invested in our students' future

### OUR PEOPLE

#### 06 Brian Reeves

Missouri's Outstanding Music Educator of the Year

#### 06 Nandu Rakesh-Nair

Learning From the Other Side of the Globe

#### 07 Elegan Kramer

Presidential Award for Excellence in Education

#### 07 Paige Wehrmeister

First Female State Champion



PARKWAYTODAY.NET

To check out these stories  
and more scan here