

Message from Board Trustee Tara Byrne 4-13-20

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

Many of us are encountering a new normal; our worlds have all been turned upside down. Isolation at home, working remotely, and encountering new relationships with our family, friends and neighbors. The empty grocery store shelves I saw this morning reminded me that this is just a temporary inconvenience for my family compared with what others have had to deal with because of COVID-19. There is not one facet of life that hasn't changed in Island Park over the past few weeks, and yet our neighbors have once again created ways to help each other, to have food, help with schooling, companionship, drive by birthday parades (my favorite) and most importantly the mindset that we are all here for each other. There is no question in my mind that Island Park will overcome this challenge and recover as one.

While being in isolation at home, like everyone, I have felt distressed, overwhelmed and hopeless. After a week of these feelings, I began convincing myself that this isn't permanent, and it will end like all things eventually do. I am trying to be optimistic and focus on the benefits of this crisis. I truly believe in times like this we find out what is important. It makes me realize how blessed my family and I truly are. Knowing that my family is following all the guidelines, doing our best to stay healthy, and being a part of flattening the curve helps me get through this as well. As a community and school district we must remember, that even though we are all in a time of great peril the blessings we have been given are countless.

I find myself, as I am sure most of you do, saying yes to a good amount of my kids' requests when usually my response would be no. Takeout orders, videogames, on line orders, choice of meals, are some of the things that are temporarily acceptable in the Byrne household. Realizing that my kids are concerned, and worried about their world as they knew it is something I came to terms with early on in this pandemic. Although many of us are tied up with the many challenges of being quarantined with their families, we must not forget about the needs of those around us specifically our friends, family and our community of Island Park. It is important at this time to reach out and help our neighbors but also instill in our children a love of their community and a enthusiasm to help others. And PLEASE think about the vulnerable and how your actions can affect them.

So many things have hit home with my family. John's school was cancelled until September, Kieran's Hockey tryouts postponed until further notice, and my Husband is now going to work at the hospital and seeing firsthand the struggle this virus has caused. But, like everyone else we move forward, keeping our chins up, and knowing that brighter days are ahead.

And then there are the things that I miss doing that I never thought I would. Picking up my son at the railroad station when he had late classes, getting up at the crack of dawn to be in a different state every weekend for hockey tournaments, and walking into the office in the morning and everyone asking what's for lunch. I even miss all the meetings with my Board of Education and Island Park School family. I am vowing after all of this is over, and we are back to typical life, never to complain about these things again!

Our School district will continue to navigate this new normal and will remain committed to our students' academic success and excellence. Our BOE, Administration and staff miss you all very much, and are always here to support you! Sometimes all it takes is a simple act of kindness to lift someone's spirits, be mindful of others, and be kind to one another.

I am praying that you stay healthy, and safe. Spring adds new life and beauty to all that is. Spring is always a new start. The best days are yet to come.

All the best,

Tara Byrne – Trustee
Board of Education