



Mears Middle School

Panther Pride News

Respect, Responsibility, Creativity, and Academic Excellence

Friday, April 24, 2020

Mears Celebrates National Poetry Month



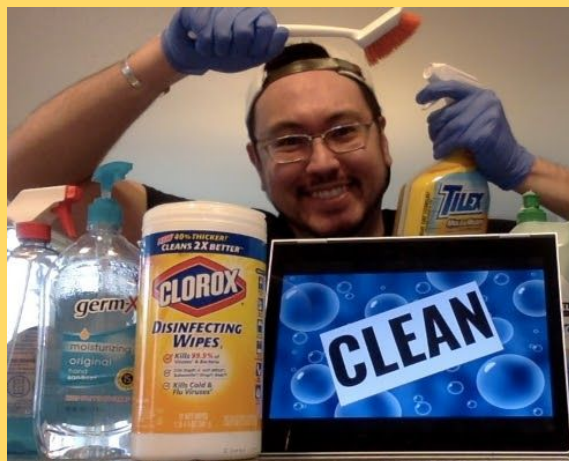
In honor of National Poetry Month, Mears Middle School's entire staff decided to create a photo collage of Mary Oliver's renowned poem, *Wild Geese*. This ambitious project was led by Mears teachers, Ms. Joanna Hubbard, Ms. Heather Fleming, Ms. Tina Arend, and Ms. Tara Bivens. As a sign of unity and strength during these uncertain times, every member of Mears staff participated by spelling out one of the 80 unique words that make up this poem. This poem-in-photos is a tribute to the power of poetry and our collective appreciation of artistic expression through language and voice. More importantly, this project has been a fun and creative way for all the teachers and staff at Mears to convey all the care, concern, joy, and gratitude we feel for all of our students and their families. We miss you all and we are so fortunate that each and every one of you is part of the Mears Middle School Family. --Eric

Check out the entire poem: [Mears Staff Recites Wild Geese in Photos](#)

The Poem and a Few Photo Highlights

"WILD GEESE" by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.



Important Updates:

Finish Strong!

Education is vitally important to every one of our students. Academic engagement at school or at home strengthens us as individuals and as a community. School enriches our lives and makes us more thoughtful, creative, and empowered.

With just six weeks of the school year remaining, we need to do everything we can to promote Mears online learning program. Here are a few helpful talking points to use to promote effort and engagement at home.

- **For the next six weeks, we are all working to prepare students for the next grade level, which will be more challenging than the last.**
- **It is critical that we take full advantage of the limited time we have left this school year.**
- **Teachers will continue to offer encouragement and valuable feedback to support critical learning and growth.**
- **Be patient. Be kind. Do your best every day!**

Connectivity

Get Connected, Stay Connected. Mears' goal is to have 100% of our students connected to their teachers and school through online learning.

At this point, if your student has yet to connect with their teachers online during Office Hours for any reason at all, please be sure to reach out to Mears Counseling Office or Administration for assistance. Contact Ms. Beth Vongemmingen, Head Counselor, at 907-742-6424 or call Mears Main Office and leave a message for Mr. Eric Backman, Principal, or Mr. Mike Scott, Assistant Principal, at 907-742-6400.

Access to Student Personal Items:

Mears is now moving forward with plans to give families the option of picking up their student's personal items from school. The tentative schedule is as follows:

April 27-May 1 -- Preparation: All student lockers will be cleaned out by staff. Student items will be placed safely in individual bags and prepared for pick up.

May 4-8 -- Distribution: Families will be given the option to come pick up student belongings. The schedule will be organized by grade level and alphabetical order. Pick-up will be curbside and all social distancing rules will be closely followed.

May 11-15 -- Distribution: continued if necessary.

Online Elective Course Sign-ups

On Monday, April 27, Mears will send out a google form survey for current 7th graders to sign up for their 8th grade electives. Students will select their top choices for electives for the coming school year. Parents/guardians will be required to review their student's selections and sign off on the form.

Similarly, a letter to families of current 6th graders will be sent to communicate information about a few updates made to the elective courses offered to incoming 7th graders.

Families are strongly encouraged to review and respond to this correspondence as soon as possible.

Mifi Hotspots Distribution

Anchorage School District will have mifi hotspots for families who need support connecting to the internet. If your family is in need of internet connectivity to ensure your students can access the online learning program, please contact Mears administrators, Mike Scott at scott_michael@asdk12.org or Eric Backman at backman_eric@asdk12.org. Feel free to call the main office at 907-742-6400.

Additionally, if you need technological assistance, or support of any kind, please call the ASD's help line: 907-742-HELP

Mears Counseling Services



**Mears Community
Outreach - Counseling
Department**

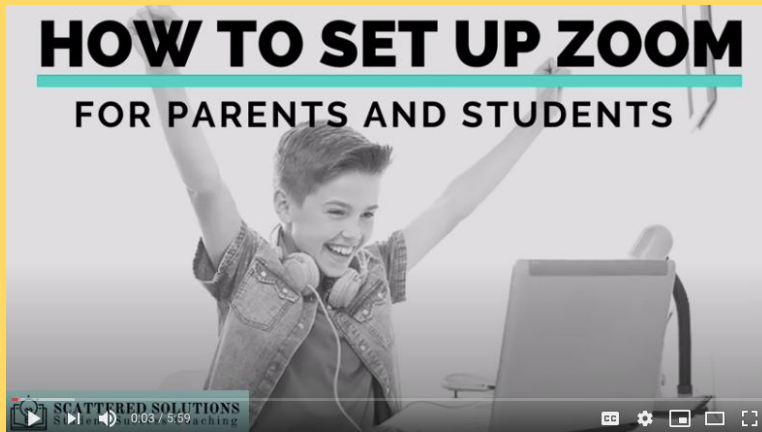
Please visit [Mears Counseling Services](#) to connect with Mears counselors for any support your student or family may need. We are here to help.

Mears counselors host Office Hours on Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00-11:00am.

Student Activities -- 10:00-10:30am
Next Week's Theme is "Share Something Special." Students are invited to send in photos or short videos that showcase the special things in their lives.

Tech Support -- 10:30-11:00am

Parent Tech Tip



[How to Set Up Zoom--Parent and Student Guide](#)

ASD Family Nutrition

ASD Student Nutrition will continue food distribution of pre-packaged breakfast and lunch meals for any child 18 or younger at established food service sites. Mobile food service routes will remain scheduled to accommodate students and families unable to access the school distribution sites. Information on feeding sites and mobile bus route meal drop off can be accessed at this link: <https://www.asdk12.org/Page/15121>.

ASD Educational Resources and Support

A screenshot of the Anchorage School District website. The header includes the district logo and navigation links for Remote Education, Hot Topics, District Report Cards, Our Schools, and Employee Options. The main content area is titled "Supported Tools" and features logos for Apex Learning and Canvas. Below this, there are sections for "Goals", "Parent Role", and "Student Role", each with a list of bullet points. The "Goals" section lists: "Provide opportunities to deepen learning", "Gain experience with online educational tools", "Receive peer and teacher support to engage with content", and "Increase SEL skills". The "Parent Role" section lists: "Parents as partners". The "Student Role" section lists: "Student as self-advocate to learn for learning's sake; to prioritize content for self betterment".

ASD Middle School Online Learning Resource Page:

<https://www.asdk12.org/Page/15214>

The Family Resources link (<https://www.asdk12.org/Page/15108>) on the ASD COVID-19 website includes important information for families during the period of school closures.

For support of any kind, please call 907-742-HELP

⇐ Backman Recommends ⇒



Mary Oliver reading Wild Geese

Take a minute to listen and watch Mary Oliver, National Poet Laureate, read *Wild Geese*. [Mary Oliver Reads Wild Geese](#)

national poetry month

30 Ways to Celebrate National Poetry Month

Check out [30 Ways to Celebrate National Poetry Month](#)

The website includes a variety of fun and engaging poetry-based activities for young people and their families.



Mears Middle School Anchorage, AK

PTSA

Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week, May 4-8

Mears Students and Families,

To honor the incredible teachers and staff at Mears during the upcoming Teacher Appreciation Week, be sure to send in your messages of thanks and gratitude. Fun selfies, short videos, and email messages are all encouraged. You can email them directly to Eric Backman at backman_eric@asdk12.org or to Ms. April Eide at mearsms.pts@gmail.com.

Mears PTSA Hosts Zoom Meeting with the Principal,

Thursday, April 30, 3:00pm. After a successful meeting with parents and families this last week, we have decided to continue to schedule weekly check in meetings with Mears Principal and PTSA President.

Eric Backman is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Check-in with the Principal

Time: Apr 30, 2020 03:00 PM Alaska

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://asdk12.zoom.us/j/91852806812?pwd=NnhtOG5YZXIHTzZYaDhicmcweHhCUT09>

Meeting ID: 918 5280 6812

Password: 258107

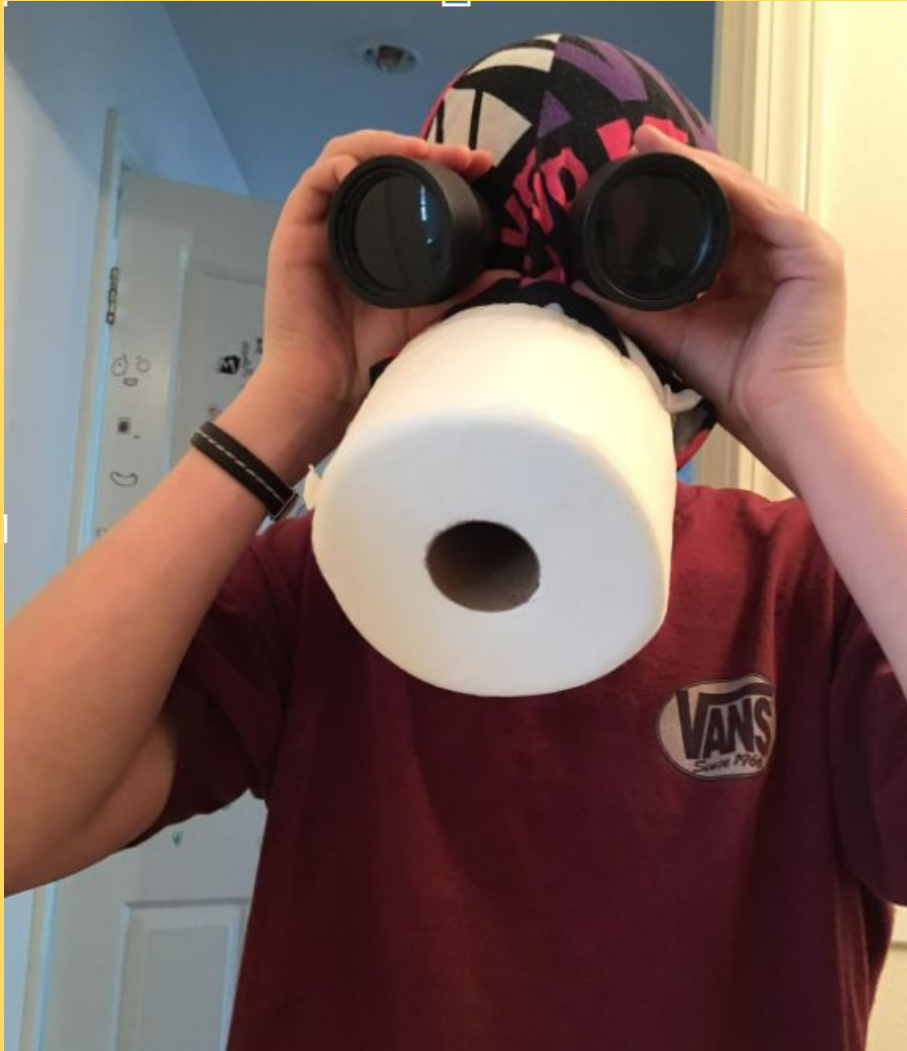
Memory Books online ordering www.ybpay.com \$35

Order today. Don't delay and be the parent that your student didn't get a memory book. NEW this year - you can personalize the memory book with your student's name. Its an additional \$5. Order online and receive a free wall calendar or easel from Shutterfly.

Personalization deadline is April 6. Pre Orders without personalization are due May 15th. We will only have 400 books for sale. This includes the presales. Currently, we have sold 170 books. Make checks payable to Mears PTSA or pay with a credit card online

www.ybpay.com

Where's Maverick?



Mears student Maverick Busby has some fun preparing for a Team Echo gathering this week.

Mears Middle School Mission

Through teamwork and cooperation, all students become partners in their own educational progress, fostering self-respect, responsibility and integrity.

[Mears Middle School Website](#)