

Dear Mercy Alumnae,

We are truly in unprecedented and unknown times. As we are forced to wait and watch as things unfold around the world, we are no doubt inundated by many feelings as our daily lives shift drastically as a result of COVID-19. We want to take the time to share with you what we are doing as a school community and what our plans are for our students to further support them. We also want to provide you, our Mercy Alumnae, with a number of resources and opportunities for connection. Please know that we hold you close in our hearts.

A silver lining from COVID-19 is that we are forced to slow down, reconnect, and re-prioritize our lives. Though frustrating, this is a true blessing in today's world. We hope you consider taking this time to reconnect with Mercy and to share the gift of your presence with our students. You could not begin to imagine what that gift of human connectedness means to our Mercy girls at a time like this.

What is Mercy Doing? Mercy is maintaining frequent communication with our parent community, and offering a number of resources through academics, counseling, and campus ministry. Please [click here](#) to view communications about our COVID-19 preparedness and response. This week Mercy has transitioned to Distance Learning - a program in which we hold interactive classes online. The good news is that Mercy is ahead of the curve! Not only did we pilot Distance Learning in the fall, but we have had platforms in use for years that support remote instruction and engagement. We are extremely thankful that Mercy is set up for success as we transition to Distance Learning. You can [click here](#) to learn about the procedures and expectations we have set around Distance Learning Days. Additionally we invite you to explore our [Mercy Distance Learning Digital Toolbox](#). This slidedeck outlines the resources we are using in the classrooms to support our students.

At this time Mercy High School will continue with Distance Learning until at least April 7th which is the current end date to our county's Shelter in Place mandate. At this time all after-school activities and extracurriculars, including athletics, are postponed until further notice.

As a faculty and staff we are especially empathetic to our students who are missing the traditional high school experiences as a result of COVID-19. Though we know this is small in the big picture of what is going on in the world, it feels so personal to their high school memories. When we think of our Mercy high school days we of course think of classes, but we also think of athletics, dances, performances, clubs, social outings, and so much more. At this time all of these experiences and anticipated memories have come to a sudden halt for our students. The world has flipped upside down overnight, and this can be very scary, frustrating, and angering to our students. Their high school experiences are being shattered, and it is completely out of their control. I ask that as a community we do not lose sight of the mental health needs of our students and what many of them are likely internalizing at this moment. In all the public conversations of school closure, one area that has been left out is the mental health of our students. As a Mercy community we are very aware of this and planning around the clock to create not just an academic Distance Learning program, but a program that integrates opportunities for campus ministry, service learning, extracurriculars, wellness, and counseling. As we all know too well, a Mercy Education is not a Mercy Education without these opportunities. Resources for mental/emotional

wellbeing are also available to you, and we invite you to explore continuously-updated support documents from our [Campus Ministry](#) and [Counseling](#) teams.

Let us support you! Our Mercy girls love to share their talents and time through service opportunities. If we can help you in any way, please let us know. If you need help grocery shopping or are in need of social interaction through a phone call or FaceTime, our students would love to support you and get to know the Mercy girls that came before them. Please just call or email us, or [click here to fill out a form](#) to let us know your need, and we will be in touch.

Support Our Mercy Girls! During this time we continue to brainstorm how we can support our students academically, emotionally, and spiritually, and we invite you to share your gifts with our girls. Though we are sheltering in place, there is so much we can still do thanks to technology.

We encourage you to consider reconnecting with Mercy in one of the following ways:

- Share your academic knowledge by tutoring a student through the use of an online platform such as Zoom or Google Chat
- Share your expertise by hosting a “How to” Zoom Conference that our students can attend i.e. How to Cook or Bake, How to Write a Resume
- Share your expertise by hosting a “Life 101” Zoom Conference that our students can attend i.e. Financial Planning, Car Care, Home Purchasing, etc.
- Share your expertise by hosting a “Career Hour” Zoom Conference that our students can attend. Share what your career looks like in today’s world, what you love about your career, and what our students can do to set themselves up for success now

If you are interested in getting involved in any of the above ways, please [click here](#). We will take a week to gather information and work with you to schedule these potential opportunities for our students.

I ask you to join me in praying for the many needs of our world at this time. Let us continue to pray for all those families and individuals affected by COVID-19. Let us also add to our prayers the many school communities around the world who do not have a learning management system like Schoology and who have never taught with digital tools. Finally, I ask that you keep our faculty, staff, and students in your prayers as they embark on a new journey of education.

At the heart of all the unknowns I hope we choose to lean on our faith, the wonderful gift that Mercy is, and the gift of community that Mercy brings to us. In the midst of all the chaos we take great pride in the fact that we are the grounding force for many of our students. We will of course share our wisdom with our Mercy girls, but more importantly we will not forget to share our smiles, our faith, and our humanity- these will be the greatest takeaways in the coming weeks for our Mercy girls, and we invite you to be a part of this. Let’s keep in touch, pray, and support one another!

Thanks,



Natalie Cirigliano Brosnan '02