



# Tanque Verde District News & Views

## *Special Edition III - Agua Caliente Elementary School Reflections on Teaching Through Coronavirus*

May 12, 2020

*Editor's note - In this third special edition of the Tanque Verde News & Views, we describe the process of closing out this school year and preparing for next year, and we share reflections from Agua Caliente Elementary School teachers, our Elementary Leadership Team, and Superintendent Hagerman. In future editions, we plan to continue to celebrate and tell the stories of other school staff members, reflections from the Superintendent, and acknowledgements of our school community.*

*~ Claire Place, Director of Communications*

### *Celebrations*

We would like to celebrate our amazing TVUSD Principal Leadership Teams, for all that they do to keep our schools running smoothly, to keep students and staff safe, productive and happy, and for their collaboration with each other and with our District Administration to the benefit of our

### *School Year Wrap-Up*

As we prepare to wrap up the school year, special arrangements have been made to ensure student's belongings are picked up, textbooks and library books are returned, uniforms are returned, and lockers are cleaned out, for our secondary students. Special times are being assigned for students to visit their school campuses for this purpose. Please pay careful attention to your school news and announcements.

During the last week of school, teachers will continue to connect with students to say goodbye, celebrate the school year, and provide closure for the class.

### *Goal Setting*

Make the best of this time at home! Goal setting is a very powerful tool! Be specific, and make your goal something at which you can succeed!

### *Goal Setting*

whole TVUSD school community. During this especially challenging year, they have brought an abundance of leadership, creativity, care and concern. Thank you TVUSD Principals and Assistant Principals!

We are not together in our classrooms and school buildings for our 'regular' end-of-the-year celebrations ~ but we still want to celebrate our students, their teachers, and the end of a successful, albeit very different, school year for all of us. Our students have achieved the milestone of completing another year of school, and many are celebrating promotion to a new school, or graduation from high school! We congratulate each of you!

Our schools will hold virtual ceremonies for our 6th grade, 8th grade and 12th grade students which will be available for viewing by students and their families. Please watch your school newsletters for more detailed information.

Ms. Dawn Starkey, School Counselor  
MAT, M.Ed., NCC, & LAC



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## ***The Bright Ideas Behind T.V. Learns***

*Editor's Note: When the Coronavirus and subsequent school closures first entered our lives, our Elementary Leadership Teams worked collaboratively to quickly develop a way in which they could maintain meaningful connections with their students and families. Following is an interview with Emma Batty, Sandy Herfkens, Julie Laird and Chris Rietz about the ideas behind the TVUSD Learning Channel, T.V. Learns, which was born out of an urgent need to provide connections, and has evolved into a wonderful platform for creative lessons, meaningful explorations, science, art and outdoor activities, and important and timely messages about mental health and wellness.*

### ***Q. How did the idea start?***

*A. We were looking for a way to stay connected with our families and for them to feel connected with us. One of our favorite things to do is to read aloud in classrooms so we thought it would be fun to do some read alouds. We brought the idea to Dr. Hagerman and he loved it. We set up the account that day, and filmed our first video right away! We had been communicating across both elementary campuses to plan for student learning opportunities that would be consistent across both schools so it seemed natural to have both schools participate in this project.*

### ***Q. How do you create the videos?***

*A. Most videos are created by individuals and then uploaded into a shared folder on our Google Drive, where we review them and upload to our TV Learns Channel. Some days we get multiple contributions, and other times, we get very few contributions. We try to spread out when they are uploaded to keep it motivating but not too overwhelming for families. Initially, we met at school to record multiple videos in one day, but then when the information about the importance of social distancing came out, we stopped meeting in person, and moved our meetings to Zoom. For Wacky Wednesday, we meet on Zoom weekly, usually Tuesday afternoon. During our meeting we come up with our ideas and then record ourselves. This can be 1 take or 15 takes!! Some weeks we are better than others.*

### ***Q. How much fun do you have creating Wacky Wednesdays?!***

*A. We have lots of fun! There is a ton of laughter every week! Just like everyone else, we have interruptions and silly things happen during almost every one of our videos. We are certain that a bloop reel would be very entertaining!*

### ***Q. How did you decide to have others contribute - Did they come to you with their ideas?***

*A. Early on we knew we wanted other staff members to contribute and we sent them an email defining our vision with some guidelines such as to only include staff members. Pets are okay, but we didn't want family members or students in the videos. All staff were given access to a*

Google Drive Folder where they could upload their videos.

**Q. How did you get permission to do the read aloud books?**

**A.** Initially, we were emailing publishers asking for permission to read aloud their books. Scholastic was one of the first to allow their books to be read aloud, and shortly thereafter, several other publishers announced that books could be read aloud to support students during the COVID-19 closures as long as we take them down on June 30. We will be sad to have to take the read-alouds down, but will comply with this request.

**Q. Where do you envision this going in the future?**

**A.** Our hope is that we are bringing joy to the children and families we miss so much. We would like this process to continue as long we can't be together at school. When we are able to be back at school, the channel might look different, but we would love to keep it going!

### **Wacky Wednesday with our ACES & TVES Principals!**

Principal, Mrs. Rietz & Asst. Principal, Mrs. Herfkens ~ Agua Caliente Elementary School  
Principal, Mrs. Batty & Asst. Principal, Dr. Laird ~ Tanque Verde Elementary School



### **Teaching Transformation During the Age of COVID-19**

Amy J. Ashcraft, MS, CCC-SLP  
Speech-Language Pathologist

*Friday March 13, 2020 is a day that I will not forget any time soon. It started out like any other Friday: the alarm clock blaring, the hustle and bustle of rousing three kids, getting them dressed and fed, and out the door with barely enough time to make it to school. As a part time speech pathologist, I work four days per week and on Fridays I get to take my “teacher hat” off and put my “mom hat” on. That morning I walked my two boys into ACES, hugged them and waved goodbye as they hurried into class. My four year old daughter and I walked back to the car to start our “Mommy Day” as she affectionately refers to Fridays. This Friday, however, was not like any before. First came the email from the University of Arizona stating that the externship that my graduate student had been completing with me would be placed on hiatus. Next came the text from my husband, who had traveled to Las Vegas for the canceled Pac-12 tournament: a text that voiced a city shutting down around him. By that afternoon, our school district had proposed to amend our calendar to move our spring break up. The reality of COVID-19 began to sink in and would very quickly hit me like a ton of bricks!*

*Social distancing, quarantine, videoconferencing, teletherapy, and remote learning were words that were rapidly added to my vocabulary. Not since I was in graduate school a mere 17 years ago did I spend as much time learning and researching and compiling resources as I did within those first few weeks of our “new norm”. How was I going to reach out to all of my students?*

*What could I do for them as we are confined to our homes? How could I provide support with a computer screen in between us? And how in the world would I be able to do all of this with my own three children vying for my attention, my workspace, my computer, and the internet?!?! I could sugarcoat it and say that it has all been “easy” and “seamless”. But that would be far from the truth. It has been HARD! It has been hard to let go of my traditional view of what speech therapy looks like. It has been hard to learn how to sit at a computer for hours on end. It has been hard to lose the face to face interactions, the hugs, the smiles, and laughter. It has been hard coordinating video conferences and meetings for five people in our household (yes, even my four year old has mastered the art of a video call!). It has been hard to be mom/teacher/referee/short order cook and speech pathologist all at the same time, in the same place, day after day.*

*These things that were initially hard have pushed me to expand my knowledge and to help me become a better version of me. I have learned that the traditional delivery of speech therapy may not be the only way or even the best way. I have learned that I can still connect to my students and smile and laugh despite being miles apart. I have learned that I can have a meaningful impact in the lives of my students and their families even through a computer screen. I have learned an abundance of technology that will help my teaching for years to come. I have learned to give myself grace when one of the many hats I am wearing falls off and comes crashing down. And I have also learned that our internet just DOES NOT support five family members on separate video conferences at the same time!*

*While these remain uncertain times, we can be certain that the things we do today to connect and learn new ways of doing things will have a positive impact on the future of our community and the lives of our children. The jolt that we have all received as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has created ripples of change and transformation that have the potential to become waves of innovation and progress. During the previous many weeks, we have held our breath waiting to see what the next day, hour, even minute brings but I am hopeful that we can begin to exhale little by little and move forward with our values and priorities in clear sight. - Amy Ashcraft*

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### ***Missing My Students***

Svea Anderson, M.Ed., M.Ed.  
6th Grade Teacher,

*In 2006, I interviewed for a position at ACES from my apartment outside of Boston over the phone- a phone that was attached to the wall! Reflecting back on that phone call, being hired without ever seeing the campus or meeting my colleagues, no Zoom or Google Meet, I wonder what “remote” learning would have looked like in the “old” days.*



*As much as I miss the students, I have to realize how lucky we are to have the technology and the means to still stay in touch. I can send out a link and have my students join me in for a few chapters of a book we are reading, or share good things, or even invite a local photographer to offer an enrichment class on how to capture this incredible time in history using their cell phone cameras. These are gifts in a time of isolation when we are confined to our own homes, our own families, our own thoughts. And I am grateful.*

*I asked the students to think back to their January 2020 self and imagine what they would say to prepare for March. A lot of students answered to buy toilet paper, to stock up on food, to go to the library and get enough books. I had a few who said they would have planned more hangouts (because “playdates” to 6th graders are uncool.)*

*My January 2020 self would have said a proper goodbye. Transitioning to teaching 6th grade a few years ago from 4th, I realized that when you promote a student to 7th, you don’t get to see their smiling faces the next year in the hallway. They are gone to Emily Gray. This year hits even harder as I won’t be returning in the fall to teach at my beloved school. I won’t get to see them at school events or if they come to visit (which surprisingly, a lot do.) My January self would have given every single one of my 29 homeroom students, a hug goodbye, told them how proud I am of them, and wished for them to stay safe and healthy.*

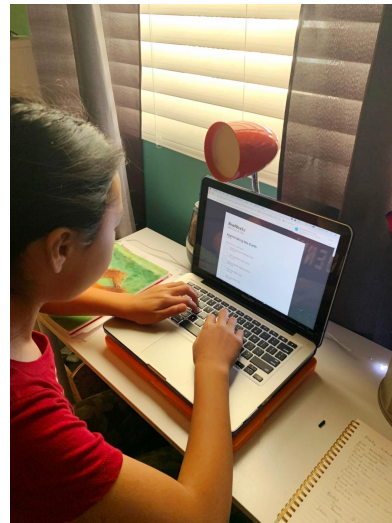
*I am so grateful for the fourteen years that I was a part of the Tanque Verde Unified School*

District family, and to the love and support of all I was fortunate to have known along my journey. Thank you. - Svea Anderson

*Editor's Note: Thank you, Ms. Anderson, for your many years of dedication and commitment to our ACES students and community. You will be missed! We wish you all the best in your future adventures!*



*Ms. Anderson and her 6th grade class (from photo archives)*



*Ms. Thomas's 6th-grade daughter, Leike, working on her distance learning from home.*



*(Clockwise) The ACES 6th Grade Team: Susannah Johnson, Solvej Kristensen - REACH, Stacey Thomas, and Svea Anderson, sent a virtual message to their students and families at the end of the first week of remote learning.*

## ***Our Relationship With Each Student Is The Most Important Thing We Have To Offer***

Stacey Thomas, BS in Business, Teacher Education Certification  
6th Grade Teacher

*I've always thought those who are fortunate to work from home had it made. Well, after being away from my students for four weeks, I don't have that same feeling anymore. At first, we started on spring break, no big deal. We were planning to have a break anyway; it just happened to be a week earlier. The following week we were in video meetings with our amazing teams preparing lesson plans and becoming friends with Zoom. We were busy and a little bit nervous about what to expect the following week.*

*March 30th rolls around, and it's time for my first Zoom meeting with my 6th-graders, almost 7th-graders. I was excited to get Zoom to work, and I was ready and waiting for all twenty-eight amazing little faces to appear in their "Brady Bunch" window. The kids discussed what they had been doing during the past two weeks and voiced concerns on how they would complete their lessons and turn in their assignments. I felt we had a productive session together, but I also knew we would need to meet more than once a week.*

*Seeing my kids at those moments made me realize how much I love teaching and why I am a teacher. Academics are the number one priority, but as teachers, we offer so much more. I had one student state how much he thought he didn't like school but now realizes that "you don't know what you have until it's gone"—a very profound observation from such a young kid.*



*I meet with the kids several times each week. One day as a whole group and the other as small groups. I felt meeting in smaller groups would benefit the students more for help on their various assignments. Sometimes they have questions about the assigned work but mostly they just want to talk and share their feelings. Of course, I worry about them as I would my own and hope they are staying positive and continuing to develop.*

*I am a teacher but also the mother of a senior in high school and a 6th-grader. It's amazing how both of them have been so resilient. There are some days that I see the toll it's taking on them, but family time has definitely been a blessing, as one will soon be leaving for college.*

*What I have taken away from our time in distance learning is our relationship with each student is the most important thing we have to offer. Teaching is why we go to work, but the foundations we build with our students can be the most pivotal for their learning success. This experience has given me a new perspective and appreciation on how I will conduct the beginning of the year with my future students and grow the connections. - Stacey Thomas*

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### ***Maybe Things Aren't So Different After All***

Deb Goepfrich, B.A. Biology, M.Ed. Elementary Education  
1st Grade Teacher

*I knew it. I knew it was too easy.*

*I moved to Tucson last summer with over a decade of teaching experience under my belt. I was immediately impressed by ACES -- the welcoming staff, the supportive parents, the manageable class size. I settled in to what I thought was going to be a relatively stress-free year of teaching first grade. "I've got this! I'm finally on top of my game!" I thought.*

*I'm not sure why, after all these years, I naively thought that things could possibly continue so smoothly. Any human being that has ever spent time with a group of young students knows that the #1 rule of teaching is: Things rarely turn out exactly the way you thought they would.*

*Phrased another way: Bring your A Game but be ready with Plan B.*

*Or simply: Don't wear your hair down on the day your class is doing a project with Elmer's glue.*

*And just like that, I'm like a first-year teacher again -- everything is uncharted territory. I scramble to adjust.*

*I spend hours learning new things.*

*I try something, it fails. I try something else, and it fails too.*

*I wonder if what I am doing is enough. I wonder if what I am doing is too much.*

*I second-guess myself and start to lose the confidence I have been trying to build for years.*

*I watch my students flopping on their beds, chasing their cats, swatting away big sisters, and spinning in their chairs during a video meet and think, "This can't possibly be right."*

*And then I realize: Just like my first year of teaching, this is an opportunity.*

*An opportunity for me to see my students as capable in so many new ways.*

*An opportunity for my students to see their teachers and parents as lifelong learners.*

*An opportunity for us as a school community to come together and decide what really matters.*

*An opportunity for us as human beings to cooperate, innovate, and show compassion for one another.*

*I see a kid start picking his nose on camera. I breathe a little easier and try not to laugh out loud. "OK," I think. "Turns out things aren't so different after all." - Deb Goepfrich*

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### ***Nature Walk***

Mrs. Deb Goepfrich, T.V. Learns  
ACES 1st Grade Teacher



### ***5th Grade Bunch***

ACES & TVES 5th Grade Teaching Team,  
T.V. Learns



### ***Weekly Reflections from our Superintendent***

Scott Hagerman, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

- May 12, 2020, *As we enter the final weeks of our official school year, what do we need to focus on most to prepare ourselves for next school year? Following are thoughts to guide us through this phase of remote teaching and learning.*

- ***Core Beliefs***
- ***Focus on Relationships First***
- ***Take Care of Yourself***
- ***Do Less, Well***
- ***Give Yourself and Others Grace; This is Hard Work***

### ***Clarifications on Planning for Fall 2020***

*Our Administrative Leadership Team is planning measures now that we can put in place to have students back in classrooms in the fall. Continuing with remote learning in the fall is not the preferred way to go, unless we are forced to do so due to circumstances beyond our control.*

*If we are able to reopen schools, and if there are families who are not able, or who choose not to send their students, our plan is to have remote options for those students. Remote learning in the fall would be more specific, graded, and required. The emphasis of our plan is to set up procedures to get students into classrooms in the fall. Further, our intent is to provide more in-depth training in remote teaching. Several virtual training sessions have already been scheduled for summer professional development.*

*Our hope is to have our students and staff members back together in our classrooms in the fall. But we will make an informed decision regarding reopening as additional information becomes available to us. Please stay tuned!*

### ***Summer Learning for Teachers***

*We have made some adjustments to our teacher summer learning opportunities to reflect our staff's current professional development needs. The adjustments made address the potential of ongoing social distancing recommendations while focusing on knowledge and skills that will be helpful in the fall.*

### ***Three Big Goals for Teachers this Summer***

*We have three big goals for teachers this summer:*

1. To get as many teachers as possible passing the test to be, at least level 1, *Google Certified Educator*.
2. To continue the development of our schools and district as a Professional Learning Community.
3. To increase *teacher clarity* with a special focus on remote and/or online learning

environments.

Resources:

[https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/certification\\_level1](https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/certification_level1)

<https://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/teacher-clarity/>

*There are so many meaningful things happening throughout our school community. We would like to acknowledge a few of them here. There are many more individual actions, too many to list, which are providing us the strength and resilience to make the best of a very challenging situation ~*

- *Thanks to our Governing Board for providing thoughtful guidance during the school closure to ensure continuity and support to our students, families, teachers and staff members, and to our community. Your leadership is very much appreciated!*
- *Thanks to our administrators for being diligent and unfaltering while providing thoughtful leadership in the face of a school crisis of historic measure.*
- *Thanks to everyone who has shared their love of learning on TV Learns.*
- *Thanks to our teachers, students and families for being resilient during times of hardship and uncertainty.*
- *Thanks to our community for providing support and reassurance at our time of need.*
- *Thanks to our Special Ed and Intervention team for the work they are doing to help all students access our learning opportunities.*
- *Thanks to the custodial, maintenance and ground staff that come every day and are working to make our schools safer.*
- *Thanks to our School Nurses who are monitoring the Pima County Health Dept. information, and providing their expertise in decisions about reopening regarding school health and safety.*
- *Thanks to our Business Office Staff who are keeping our district's accounts and payroll running smoothly.*
- *Thanks to our Human Resources Staff who are keeping our employees well informed of assistance available to them, and keeping our retirees and new hires in their focus as we plan for the future.*
- *Thanks to our IT Staff who are at the ready to help at a moment's notice whenever technology issues develop.*
- *Thanks to our Food Services Staff, Support Staff, and Transportation Team, who stand at the ready, and who are pitching in behind the scenes.*
- *Thanks to the custodial, maintenance and ground staff that come every day and are working to make our schools safer.*

-Scott Hagerman, Superintendent

### *ACES Teachers Receive State-level Recognition*

## Teacher Appreciation Week

AGUA CALIENTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
TANQUE VERDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dan Beach  
FIRST GRADE



*First Grade Teacher, Mr. Dan Beach is recognized by ADE and AZ State School Superintendent, Ms. Kathy Hoffman, for his lifetime career in the classroom.*

### *PHOTO GALLERY*



*ACES Kindergarten Teacher, Nicole Mikkelson's Instagram post is featured on @ArizonaFamily. Getting creative to keep her kinders engaged and happy!*







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*Thank you for your interest in the Tanque Verde Unified School District. In future editions of the News & Views, we will share reflections on "Teaching Through Coronavirus" from teachers from each of our TVUSD schools. - Editor*

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