



Nothing unites us like a shared foe

A4

Will you get a ticket if you go out? A2

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WEEKEND POSTBULLETIN

Minnesota Newspaper Association's 2019 Daily Newspaper of the Year

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FACES OF ISOLATION

Gov. Walz's stay-at-home order is new to most of us. For some, social separation is already a way of life.



Lisa Gifford and her son **Hunter**, 10, understand the feelings of isolation. They've felt them for years. "It's just another day in the life of a cancer family," said Lisa. "Nothing ends when the chemo is over." Hunter underwent treatment for metastatic Ewing's sarcoma when he was just 7. The bone cancer started in his pelvis and spread to his abdomen and lungs. The family has been self-isolating, not only to protect Hunter, but Lisa too. "I have lupus with immune suppression as well as asthma. I'm feeling pretty terrified. I'm worried that if I get sick, I won't be able to take care of the kids." Although the Giffords maintain strict social distancing while playing in their yard, it's hard for Hunter to see other kids still playing together. "I kind of feel lonely and left out," the boy said. "My lungs aren't as strong as theirs because I have tumors in them, and I'm kind of jealous." Still, he's worried about those kids "because they could spread the virus to me and my mom."



Lois Pearson isn't your typical 85-year-old. "I have a lot of things going on normally," Pearson said. She will forgo outings at 125 Live and within the Rochester bluegrass community to fight an enemy that can't be seen. A former nurse, Pearson understands how crucial these measures are, and she is staying at home until it is safe to return to life as we knew it. "I have a wonderful cat who is my companion, and I put picture puzzles together. I knit, I crochet, I sew, I listen to music, I read." "I'm very lucky — I have two great sons, and my neighbors take such good care of me, and I have a good number of friends," all of which she's been keeping in contact with via phone.



Kasey Rubin closed her in-home daycare and is self-isolating to protect her family, especially daughter **Cora Jean**, 3, who has primary lymphedema with associated lymphatic malformations. The affliction compromises her body's immune system and puts her at a higher-risk of serious complications if she were to contract COVID-19. Rubin knows isolation is a necessary evil for the safety of those like her daughter and trusts that everyone else is following the rules. "Because if they're not, and they're not being safe, it's another potential exposure."



Social distancing isn't new to **Melissa Stellenberg** and her son **Hudson Bray**, 20 months. Hudson was diagnosed with BCOR primitive sarcoma back in May, "so we've been doing this for the last year," Stellenberg said. Ten months of chemotherapy and 25 radiation treatments destroyed a tumor on Hudson's right clavicle, but also his 20-month-old immune system. "It's definitely a lot scarier for even me to be around my son, because of the way this virus is," Stellenberg said. "We have to stay away (from extended family). It's very, very sad but it's something we have to do to protect everybody."

See these portraits and other photographs at www.postbulletin.com
Text and photographs by [Traci Westcott, twestcott@postbulletin.com](mailto:TraciWestcott@postbulletin.com)

Teachers will be far, but not distant

Even in online learning, a human connection is possible

BY **JORDAN SHEARER**
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PLAINVIEW — Armed with walkie-talkies, alphabetized packets, and boxes of iPads and chargers, the staff at one of Plainview-Elgin-Millville's elementary schools recently spent a day making sure every student had the resources they need to be able to learn from home. That's because — come Monday — learning from home is exactly what students are going to have to do for an extended period of time. All around the area, teachers are

getting ready to start teaching in one location while their students learn in another. Referred to as "distance learning," the new model is meant to help curb the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rochester Public Schools will have spring break until April 6. However, many other districts, such as Plainview-Elgin-Millville, begin distance learning on Monday. Regardless of when they begin, though, teachers are using whatever tools they have to make the experience as beneficial as possible for their students.

"The reason that we came into teaching was for the kids," said **Lindsay Dick**, a kindergarten teacher in Stewartville. "The biggest point to all of this is to let them know that even through these hard times, we will work our best, we'll work our hardest, (and) we will be there. And if that means we have to do more, then we will do more, but we want them to know that we care."

TWO-SIDED APPROACH

Heidi Hansen is a second-grade

See **TEACHERS**, Page A3

A note from the editor

The coronavirus pandemic has affected every kind of business in southeastern Minnesota, and the Post Bulletin is not immune. Today's paper, and our print editions over the coming weeks, may be smaller than you're used to. We have lost considerable advertising revenue in a very short time and we are managing expenses in an effort to maintain our business.

At the same time, we still have our full team of journalists working very hard to produce outstanding work, all of which you can find at our website, PostBulletin.com. There, we have many exclusive features related to the pandemic, all of them free to subscribers and non-subscribers alike. We recognize the public necessity of good, reliable information at this critical time.

If you are a subscriber, thank you. If you are not, please consider becoming one. Visit our site website or call us at 507-285-7676.

Jeff Pieters, editor

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OBITUARIES PAGE B3-B5

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