

FRANCIS W. PARKER CHARTER ESSENTIAL SCHOOL
& THEODORE R. SIZER TEACHERS CENTER

49 Antietam Street, Devens, MA 01434
Telephone (978) 772-3293 Fax (978) 772-3295
www.theparkerschool.org

Some Thoughts on Gratitude

I read something the other day and the piece described the author's "what if's" of the coronavirus pandemic. The author asked a series of questions: what if people are more creative? what if pollution decreases? what if families bond together? what if we discover who we are? what if good things happen from this?...and so on and so forth.

I'll be honest: a cynical thought crossed my mind. It was something along the lines of "this sounds like another cheesy, platitude-filled piece of writing." I made my morning coffee, something that always helps with perspective, and went back to my roots in the field of clinical psychology: research, facts, and study of the human mind and human behavior.

As most people know, feeling appreciation and gratitude for and about something outside oneself has its benefits. [This article from 2014](#) has some great ideas about gratitude and the roots of happiness. [This article](#) discusses keeping a gratitude journal and the idea that the action of *writing down* what you are grateful for has profound health benefits. And, for those who enjoy scholarly articles and further research, there are links in the second article that you can follow to learn more.

Gratitude, hope, resilience, love – all of these are entwined. I was thinking of the poem "One Today" by Inaugural Poet Richard Blanco, and this excerpt seems apropos:

*"One sky, toward which we sometimes lift our eyes
tired from work: some days guessing at the weather
of our lives, some days giving thanks for a love
that loves you back, sometimes praising a mother
who knew how to give, or forgiving a father
who couldn't give what you wanted.*

*We head home: through the gloss of rain or weight
of snow, or the plum blush of dusk, but always—home,
always under one sky, our sky. And always one moon
like a silent drum tapping on every rooftop
and every window, of one country—all of us—
facing the stars
hope—a new constellation
waiting for us to map it,
waiting for us to name it—together*

(Written for the 57th Presidential Inauguration, January 21, 2013)

In a spirit of gratitude and to achieve greater mental wellness (we're all works in progress, right?) I thought I would share with you some of the things for which I'm grateful. I would love to hear from you about the things for which you're grateful, despite the horrifying virus that is harming so many people. If I hear from a few of you and you allow me, I'll publish your gratitude lists in future notes.

I'm grateful for:

- People who are healthcare workers or other front-line workers
- Colleagues who are so deeply committed to their students
- Family dinners & family game nights
- An online faculty meeting this week
- Those who follow social-distancing guidelines
- The resilience of our students during home learning
- People who are making masks
- Laughing with students during lunch groups
- A dear one's recovery from COVID-19
- Parents/guardians who are multitasking superheroes
- Walks with my sweet dog
- Our Class of 2020, a spectacular group of young people

So, friends, take a few minutes to write down your list. I think you might be glad you did.

Sheila Kelly

skelly@theparkerschool.org