

# Show a little heart

May we interest you in the Happy Heart Hunt?

By GRETCHEN AMMERMAN  
For the TODAY

It doesn't take much hunting to find stories that inspire hidden among the tales of suffering brought on by COVID-19.

From people working on the front lines ensuring continued access to groceries to medical workers daily exposing themselves to possible infection, heroes can be found almost anywhere you look.

One family has found a creative and extremely generous way to step in in this time where extraordinary measures are needed.

"We are not frontline workers so at first I was thinking, 'I am of no benefit.'" said Helene, [last name held by request] the family matriarch. "But there are so many other ways we can help them. We have friends that are in the medical community that are being potentially exposed on a daily basis, so we offered to take their kids in to live with us until this is all over to reduce the risk of them unknowingly bringing home the virus to their kids."

The boys, aged six and 10, have doubled the number of kids in the home, which already included a four- and an eight-year-old.

Because they have to keep coming up with ways to keep the kids entertained at their home, now dubbed "Camp Quarantine," the makeshift family takes full advantage of the wonderful resources being provided by the community at large. A particular favorite is the Lincoln City Cultural Center's Creative Quarantine program, which includes a weekly distribution of children's art packets filled with activities and supplies carefully curated by arts educator Krista Eddy.

"My kids love the art projects that they get from the Creative Quarantine and they love sharing them online," Helene said. "Krista's projects have brought many smiles to our kids and I know to many more kids in the area."

One of the Creative Quarantine projects that they have worked on is creating paper hearts to put in their windows as a way to bring some positivity into a sometimes dark and uncertain time.

"Unfortunately, because of where we live our happy hearts windows can't be seen



Sasha Kyte with her Happy Heart Hunt display

from the street," Helene said. "But they are definitely making us happy so that's good."

The hearts are part of a contest going on throughout May, the Happy Heart Hunt, a partnership between the cultural center, the Lincoln City Kiwanis Club and the Lincoln City Outlets. The winner will receive a \$100 gift card that can be used at any of the businesses in the outlets once they receive the all clear to begin opening for business.

"I've seen stories about what different towns are doing to encourage people to put fun things up in their windows," said Lincoln City Outlets Marketing Manager Sharyn Jasmer, who is also a member of Kiwanis. "I've seen pictures of teddy bear parades and snowflakes as well as hearts, but I thought the hearts were a good fit for Lincoln City so I was chatting with Allyson [Longueira] at a Kiwanis meeting and said I thought it might be a great idea for Kiwanis since our mission is to support kids. She got excited about it and got the ball rolling on making the partnership happen."

To participate, simply decorate one or more windows in your home, take a photo and post it to Facebook on the @lincolncityculture or @lincolncitykiwanis pages. The gift card winner will be selected on June 1. You can also participate by helping get a winner selected by commenting on window posts.

"We've been getting lots of questions about the contest including if you can participate from out of town," Jasmer said.

"Of course you can, but what we really want to see is our town filled with hearts."

Though the roughly 200 kits Eddy distributed were all claimed, ideas and inspiration for heart creation can be found on the Facebook pages or in a video Eddy created, found on the cultural center Facebook page under videos, showing how to make a "stained glass" window. A project sheet is also available at [lincolncity-culturalcenter.org/happy-heart-hunt-april-30/](http://lincolncity-culturalcenter.org/happy-heart-hunt-april-30/).

"The stained glass hearts were funded by Kiwanis," Eddy said "We added that design to give kids more to options for designs, but we still want people to add their own ideas. It's not an art contest; it's about getting involved and showing your neighbors that you are there. The Happy Heart Hunt and all of our art kits in the Creative Quarantine are allowing us to continue creating community art projects, which is remarkable in this time of social isolation."

No matter what form it takes, finding a way to open your heart is one of the best ways to weather tough times.

"There are so many things we can do to help others," Helene said. "If everyone does something, we're going to get through this."

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The next set of creative quarantine kits on the theme, "Magic Week," will be available on Thursday, March 26. Parents and caregivers can drive through the cultural center parking lot at 540 NE Hwy. 101, from 1 to 3 pm.

on the cover

KATIA KYTE

