

TALK,

Continued from page B1

to feel comfortable. Many Celts are at home alone with a Chromebook and that eliminates many of the social opportunities that they not only had but really needed.

Curran: Hands down, isolation and lack of face-to-face contact outside of households, followed closely by family and academic stressors. In middle school, kids are super social, and missing that interaction has been a huge loss for them. Adjusting is very similar to the grief cycle. When negative things happen over a shorter duration, it is easier to be resilient and bounce back. Unfortunately, the (long) the duration can impact even the strongest kids and lead to apathy and lack of motivation, and over time can sometimes lead to depression.

Eveleth: For many students, school provides a safe place with hot food, caring adults, structure and routine when those things are not available at home. Not having this safe haven has been the hardest aspect many kids have had to endure over the last year. Loneliness and disconnection from peers has also been a major concern among parents, students and staff.

What have your conversations with kids been like over the last year?

Bobeda: Some students are naturally verbal so that communication style has worked great but most of my communication has been over email. Students reach out to us and we offer to call but (I) have had some really great conversations through written language. If a student is in crisis, we always call, and those have been not only enriching but I have felt that the weight of isolation lift as the conversation starts and it has been a breath of fresh air for both us and our students. McNary has an incredible team that has conducted hundreds of home visits and

it has made a tremendous impact on our community. That face-to-face interaction is invaluable and has changed the course of the year for many.

Curran: Conversations have been both positive and heartbreaking, but definitely not the same over the phone or on Zoom call as in person. Body language is 70% of communication and it is much harder to have a deep conversation and build trust when not face to face, especially with students new to the school, or a sixth grader that I have never met in person. Conversations vary, depending on the circumstance. Sometimes, it's dealing with frustrations and giving encouragement. Other times it's about loss or anger and trying to help a student process. We talk about not being in this alone, looking forward, and giving grace to others and ourselves. I also try to remind students that school is not just about classes and grades. We are also learning life skills like problem solving, organization, time management and, especially, resiliency. One of the biggest lessons a person can learn is: It's not what happens to you, but how you respond to it. All the power and control is in your response.

Eveleth: My conversations with kids over the last year have been amazing! I have been invited into their homes through Zoom and been able to meet their pets, see their favorite toys and get to know them on a deeper level. Unfortunately, our most vulnerable students are often the most difficult to reach via Zoom or phone calls. I fear that many of their concerns have gone unheard.

What are some of the best things kids can do for their mental health during this time?

Bobeda: I have visited all the Wellness

Unfortunately, our most vulnerable students are often the most difficult to reach via Zoom or phone calls. I fear that many of their concerns have gone unheard.

— **ASHLEY EVELETH**
Counselor, FOREST RIDGE ELEMENTARY

2 classes this year and talked with all the students about this exact topic. I encourage each student to figure out what fills their batteries up and then go do it. The important thing to remember is that each person is different and what fills your batteries one week may change so we discuss multiple ways of finding fulfillment during such a difficult time. I think it is important to remember that every person must discover their own place of peace and fulfillment.

Curran: Have a routine each day to establish a sense of consistency and balance. Getting up, showering, putting on school clothes, eating breakfast and having an established study area will help. Take breaks from time to time and try to get outside when you can. Stay in touch with friends and family. Have outlets for times of stress: people to talk to, exercise, journaling, art, pets, reading, or whatever helps you relax and feel better. Making plans and having things to look forward to is also important. Be okay asking for help. This has been hard for everyone and you are not alone and we will get through this together. Remember E+R=O. The Event plus your Response equals the Outcome. The power is all in your

response.

Eveleth: Some of the best things kids can do for their mental health are get good sleep, exercise and nutritious food. Unless our basic needs are met we will not be much use in the other areas of our lives. Journaling and getting outside more often are helpful for many. Beyond these basics, seeking professional help for ongoing or acute mental health challenges is incredibly important. School counselors can help connect families with mental health resources.

Do you think a return to in-person learning will improve the mental health of students?

Bobeda: Absolutely! I can't wait! I have not met many students that can't wait either. I think society operates together for a reason and I think returning to school will be incredible. I can't wait to see my students again and I believe they can't wait to be back as well.

Curran: For the majority of kids, absolutely. Seeing and having contact with people face-to-face and engaging in activities outside of their homes will make a big difference to not only students mental health, but also teachers and families. I also think it is important to point out that there are some students that have actually benefited from online learning and have made major improvements academically. Everyone will benefit with more opportunities for interaction, but some families may choose to continue with online learning. Either way as we continue to move forward, it will be extremely nice to get to a place where we have choices.

Eveleth: I believe it is incredibly difficult to balance the life and death consequences of COVID-19 and acute mental health crisis. When students are in the building educators have a much better chance of detecting and reporting major issues like suicidality and abuse. We can provide resources and supports more effectively when we have eyes on kids.

Prepare for unexpected power outages with a Generac home standby generator

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!
877-557-1912

FREE 7-Year Extended Warranty*
A \$695 Value!

Offer valid February 15 - June 6, 2021

Special Financing Available
Subject to Credit Approval

*To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions.



dish **BRING EVERYTHING YOU LOVE TOGETHER!**

Blazing Fast Internet!
ADD TO YOUR PACKAGE FOR ONLY **\$19.99**/mo. where available

2-YEAR TV PRICE GUARANTEE | **\$64.99** MO. for 12 Mos. | **190 CHANNELS** Including Local Channels!

CALL TODAY - For \$100 Gift Card Promo Code: DISH100

1-866-373-9175 Offer ends 7/14/21.

All offers require credit qualification, 24-month commitment with early termination fee and eAutoPay. Prices include Hopper Duo for qualifying customers. Hopper, Hopper w/Sling or Hopper 3 \$5/mo. more. Upfront fees may apply based on credit qualification.





Imagine The Difference You Can Make

DONATE YOUR CAR

1-844-533-9173

FREE TOWING TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Help Prevent Blindness
Get A Vision Screening Annually

Heritage for the Blind

Ask About A FREE 3 Day Vacation Voucher To Over 20 Destinations!!!




Over 60 or have a disability?

We can help.

ADRC
Aging and Disability Resource Connection
of OREGON

(1-855-673-2372)
1-855-ORE-ADRC
ADRCofOregon.org

