

# SUNDAY PLAIN DEALER

THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

## The kids have been training for this



Illustration by Susan Santola, Advance Local

### Net-savvy teens, tweens conquer ‘social distancing’

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Click, click, click ...

The sound of high heels on hardwood drifted from the back of my house Saturday night, followed by an array of giggles — and voices that were not coming from inside my house.

“What’s going on?” I asked my 13-year-old. “Fashion show,” she answered. “On FaceTime.”

Social distancing won’t keep her friends apart, at least online. For a generation of teenagers and tweens used to socializing through their iPhones, iPads and apps like Houseparty and Snapchat, staying connected through social distancing may prove easier than for the rest of us.

“Teens only socialize through their phones anyway, so I think it’s business as usual for them,” jokes Berea mother of three Angela Zunt Brooks.

“This situation may make parents feel differently about social media than we did in the past, when we cast a jaundiced eye on it,” says clinical psychologist Lisa Damour, author of “Under Pressure: Confronting the Epidemic of Stress and Anxiety in Girls.”

“Teenagers are very accustomed to using digital space to stay connected with one another already. That channel is wide open for them.”

It’s an important point for an age range for

whom social connections are of the utmost importance.

“Feeling socially connected and supported and able to express yourself is so important” for teenagers, says psychotherapist Edward Hill. “Part of adolescence is defining your own identity, and for children that happens more in your peer group and those social conversations.”

“Staying connected online is not the same as staying connected in person, and I worry about that in the long term,” Hill adds. “But it is a way of staying connected.”

Kids’ eagerness to connect any way they can and preexisting affinity for online socializing is assisting with the transition to distance learning that is taking place across the community.

“Kids and teens can easily navigate the technology,” says educational technology consultant Katrina Moore, who is also the mother of a 12-year-old boy. “This is not a transition when it comes to content. It’s a social transition.”

So far, many area teens and tweens have been creatively navigating the transition with FaceTime sleepovers, Netflix Party group movie viewing, video chats and hours-long get-togethers on the Houseparty face-to-face video social network.

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- Tips for helping teen and tweens deal with social distancing**
1. With age-appropriate parental supervision, apps like Snapchat, Houseparty, Discord and Netflix Party can provide safe, at-home socializing.
  2. Structure is important to promote normalcy. Try to keep your teen on a schedule: waking up at a set time, schoolwork, outside time, fun time.
  3. Encourage offline time: walks, family board games, cooking together.
  4. Don’t minimize their fear or grief at possibly missing big events like prom or graduation.
  5. Check your school system and library websites for links to educational and online extracurricular websites.

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Angela Zunt Brooks, Berea mother of three

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**NCAA upsets that put the madness into March. C1**

THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

### First Cuyahoga death among 247 confirmed Ohio cases

Statewide death toll stands at 3 as virus spreads

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COLUMBUS — The number of confirmed coronavirus cases Saturday afternoon increased to 247, with three people dead, including one in Cuyahoga County, according to the Ohio Department of Health.

Fifty-eight people have been hospitalized.

As of Friday afternoon, 169 people were confirmed to have COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus. At that time, there was one death and 39 hospitalizations.

As of Saturday, the illness’ onset ranges from Feb. 7 to March 19. The ages range from 1 to 91 years, with the average age of 51 years.

Earlier Saturday, the second death from coronavirus was announced in Erie County. The third death was in Cuyahoga, according to the Ohio Department of Health.

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COVID-19 NURSING HOMES

### Virus prompts families to visit nursing homes from afar

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Connie Nusbaum visits her mother every day from afar: She stands outside her mom’s nursing home in Beachwood and talks to her on a cellphone.

“It is so difficult for me to be locked out when I was so hands-on,” Nusbaum said. “But this is the way that I can see my Mom every day. We’ve got windows, and we have cellphones.”

As the novel coronavirus continues to spread in Ohio, the state’s more than 950 nursing homes and 700 assisted-living centers have been told to close their doors to residents’ family and friends, as the facilities seek to prevent the virus from spreading to the state’s most vulnerable residents.

On Thursday, authorities reported that two people at Koester Pavilion, a care center in Troy in southwest Ohio, tested positive for the coronavirus. They are the first

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