

COVID-19 Community Innovation Stories, Week of June 15, 2020

In the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the country is seeing innovations in communities that highlight the best of human ingenuity. We highlight these stories to show how many are helping those around them, and prompt everyone to think about how they can help others.¹

Educating Children About COVID-19

“COVID-19! How Can I Protect Myself and Others?”

The Smithsonian is collaborating with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) to develop an educational tool for young people that blends inquiry-based science, social and emotional learning, and civic engagement. The guide, called "[COVID-19! How can I protect myself and others?](#)", allows youth to participate in seven activities which explore the global impact of COVID-19, demonstrates safe practices, teaches methods to research more information about COVID-19, and aids in understanding scientific evidence.²

"Our Smallest Warriors, Our Strongest Medicine: Overcoming COVID-19"

In partnership with the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health and the University of Arizona Native Nations Institute, Harvard University has launched a COVID-19 Resources Toolbox for tribal nations. One featured resource is a children's book called "[Our smallest warriors, our strongest medicine: Overcoming COVID-19.](#)" The book aims to educate children in tribal nations about COVID-19 and coping strategies.³

¹ This document contains references and links to non-federal resources and organizations. This information is meant solely for informational purposes and is not intended to be an endorsement of any non-federal entity by FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, or the U.S. government.

² 2020 WHO, Smithsonian Science Education Center with Support of the World Health Organization Launches New COVID-19 Guide for Youth, <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/21-05-2020-smithsonian-science-education-center-with-support-of-the-world-health-organization-launches-new-covid-19-guide-for-youth>; 2020 World Economic Forum, How the world's largest museum is encouraging kids to come up with their own COVID-19 action plan. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/covid-19-museum-kids-action-plan/>

³ 2020 Center for American Indian Health and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Our Smallest Warriors, Our Strongest Medicine: Overcoming COVID-19, <https://caih.jhu.edu/programs/strongmedicine/>



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“We’re Going to Be O.K.”

Two physicians wrote a children's book to inform and empower children who are living through the COVID-19 pandemic. The book authors were purposeful in representing communities of color in the illustrations. "[We're Going to be O.K.](#)" follows the story of a young African American protagonist as he learns about the change COVID-19 will bring to his life and how to cope with grief and stress. The target age of the book is five to nine years old. The book is available for free [download](#).⁴

"From My Window: Children at Home During COVID-19"

The United Nations (UN) released a book called "[From My Window: Children at Home During COVID-19](#)" which incorporates the direct perspectives of children from around the world. The book shares children's experiences on how their communities are taking care of each other and keeping vulnerable family members safe. The book aims to help children overcome the uncertainties of the pandemic by being creative, staying positive, spreading kindness, and taking precautions to stay healthy.⁵

Grover from Sesame Street on Coping During COVID-19

Grover from Sesame Street joined TV news hosts in talking directly to children about the importance of wearing masks, how to stay connected with friends, and how to cope with negative emotions related to the pandemic. An audio version with a transcript of the conversation can be found [here](#).⁶

Education at Home

Child Readiness Kit

Children are spending more time on the internet as a result of online learning during the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. In efforts to protect children from cyber risks, such as cyberbullying, a digital education institute has released the [Child Readiness Kit](#). This resource features eight modules that teach children about topics like privacy management, cyberbullying management, cyber security management, and digital empathy. The target age range is eight to twelve years old.⁷

Science Experiments

In Australia, three universities have provided Freely-Accessible Remote Laboratories (FARLabs) for secondary school students to conduct science experiments from home. With FARLabs, students can activate robots from their web

⁴ 2020 UVA Today, UVA Doctors Honored For COVID-19 Children’s Book, <https://news.virginia.edu/content/uva-doctors-honored-covid-19-childrens-book>

⁵ 2020 UN, Kids and families broaden global perspectives during COVID-19, <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/kids-and-families-broaden-global-perspectives-during-covid-19>

⁶ 2020, National Public Radio, Sesame Street’s Grover on Coping During Coronavirus: Just For Kids, <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/08/852941811/sesame-streets-grover-on-coping-during-coronavirus-just-for-kids>

⁷ 2020 World Economic Forum, An expert explains: the digital risks facing our children during COVID-19, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/children-digital-risks-cybersecurity-screentime-covid19/>

browser to control laboratory equipment and collect data. Experiments align with middle and high school curriculums, and there are no costs or need for setup for students and schools.⁸

Science Kits

An educational nonprofit organization has distributed 1,500 free home science learning kits to students in Richmond, VA at public school meal distribution sites. The kits are designed for five to ten year oldsthrough fifth grade students and contain seven fun activities.⁹

Monitoring Health of Elders Through Technology

Families and healthcare providers of seniors who are living in isolation are relying on technology to monitor seniors' health. For example, a Bluetooth pulse oximeter and bathroom scale can send information about oxygen levels and fluid retention to a portal that can alert family members if certain health indicators are abnormal. Another example is a dispenser that unlocks a pill compartment at a designated time and alerts a caregiver if the medicine is not taken. In an effort to prevent falls, a nonprofit has installed voice technology in senior and affordable housing so that residents can turn on lights before entering a room or adjust the thermostat without getting up.¹⁰

CoronaDiaries

[CoronaDiaries](#), a sociological study in the United Kindom, collects stories about everyday experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants can submit informal written entries, video recordings, scholarly papers, blogs, social media posts, or artwork. Participants submit entries for the study at the end of each month. Since March, the study has recruited 164 participants from twelve countries. These participants include frontline health workers, students, and cleaning workers. The study will run through September.¹¹

Van Delivery

In New York, the Sistas Van, sponsored by a nonprofit, has shifted its normal operations from helping domestic violence survivors to providing education and fortifying care kits to delivering essential supplies. The supplies include food, diapers, feminine hygiene products, face coverings to communities in need. These efforts are focused on populations such as the LGBT+ community, undocumented families, low-income individuals, and minority communities.¹²

⁸ 2020 Latrobe, Free science, done remotely, <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/announcements/2020/free-science-done-remotely>

⁹ 2020 6 News Richmond, Free science kits help Richmond students learn at home, <https://www.wtvr.com/news/coronavirus/virginia-together/free-science-kits-help-richmond-students-learn-at-home>

¹⁰ 2020 The New York Times, Did Mom Take Her Medicine? Keeping Eyes on Elders in Quarantine?

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/business/elderly-health-quarantine.html?action=click&block=more_in_recirc&impression_id=197773928&index=0&pgtype=Article®ion=footer

¹¹ 2020 The Conversation, Lockdown diaries: the everyday voices of the coronavirus pandemic,

<https://theconversation.com/lockdown-diaries-the-everyday-voices-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-138631>

¹² 2020 Boston 25 News, Food, coffee, diapers: Amid pandemic, van delivers donations,

<https://www.boston25news.com/news/food-coffee-diapers/LTRJIVBFKGCMSRGIYXGIMIP7Y/>

Phone Booth Testing

An office phone booth startup company in Chicago has been manufacturing booths to protect healthcare workers who are working with COVID-19 patients, particularly at testing sites. The booth is made up of mostly plexiglass, and the front of each booth features reusable, double-layer latex gloves for testing that can be easily disinfected between each patient. Other office phone booth companies have made similar pivots.¹³

Sleeping Pods

In Canada, a curling club that has been providing space for two homeless shelters recently introduced sleeping pods. Sleeping pods are 10x10 areas sectioned off by a pop-up wall to ensure social distancing by providing a layer of safety for the clients. The sleeping pods will be introduced into other emergency shelters across British Columbia. This effort involved a collaboration between a charity organization and British Columbia Housing.¹⁴

FEMA's Best Practice Initiative

There are extraordinary efforts nationwide to support personnel and resource needs to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. FEMA is working to highlight these efforts and encourage everyone to think about what they can do to be a part of providing solutions to help. Visit <https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus/best-practices> for more information.

Topics for the "Best Practices" series are generated from crowd-sourced suggestions. Have an idea? Let us research it! Organizations and individuals can e-mail best practices or lessons learned to fema-cjpsupport@fema.dhs.gov.

For more information on how to help during COVID-19, visit [FEMA's website for information on donations and volunteering](#).

FEMA does not endorse any non-government entities, organizations, or services. Claims made by third parties have not been independently verified by FEMA.

¹³ 2020 Chicagolnno, How a phone booth startup built a protective booth to test for coronavirus, <https://www.americaninno.com/chicago/first-look/how-a-phone-booth-startup-built-a-protective-booth-to-test-for-coronavirus/> ; 2020 Cubicall, iCubicall isolation solutions. Built for frontline response, <https://www.cubicallbooth.com/isolation-solutions/>

¹⁴ 2020 Coast Mountain News, COVID-19: Vernon emergency shelter first in province to add sleeping pods, <https://www.coastmountainnews.com/news/covid-19-vernon-emergency-shelter-first-in-province-to-add-sleeping-pods/>