

Titan Tribune

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Mr. Miller: 'It's always scary to almost die'

By D. M. and T. H.

Facility Administrator Mr. Ainsworth Miller said he received a "wake-up call" when he was infected by the Covid-19 virus recently.

"It's always scary to almost die," he said in an interview. "I didn't take it seriously at first."

Mr. Miller said he was quarantined at home for almost a month before he returned to MYA recently.

"It's hard to isolate yourself from your own family, to be home but not being able to see them," he said. "But it's for the best."

Neither his wife nor his son got infected.

After Mr. Miller got the virus, he said he was nervous. Seeing lots of Covid-19 news stories made him even more anxious.

"You cannot control the virus," he said. "A couple of times the symptoms came at the same time. I had no taste or smell."

Mr. Miller said it was hard not being able to go to work, although he did do some work from home.

Now that he's back to work, he said he will do his best to keep the virus out of here. He will remind the staff to wear masks, keep their distance, wash their hands and follow the other CDC guidelines.

Covid-19 cases in Florida juvenile facilities

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has compiled cases of Covid-19 figures through June 26, 2020 in juvenile commitment facilities.

South Florida Commitment Facilities	Youth Cases	Staff Cases
Broward Youth Treatment Center	1	2
Miami Youth Academy	4	6
Miami Girls Academy	0	1
Palm Beach Youth Academy	21	11
Palm Beach Youth Academy Substance Abuse	10	0
Statewide Commitment Program Totals	70	52

Source: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Communications Office

WELCOME

This is the eighth issue of the Titan Tribune, a newspaper about Miami Youth Academy that is reported and written by the journalism students here.

This issue was truly a team effort because of the coronavirus. With online learning replacing in-person instruction, all of the teachers contributed ideas and student writing to the newspaper. Many thanks to Mr. Jesus Gonzalez, Ms. Edith Meneses, Ms. Deborah Sanchez and Mr. Jeffrey Rudd.

The newspaper is a collaboration of MYA, Exchange for Change and Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Educational Opportunity and Access. Exchange for Change is a Miami nonprofit that teaches writing classes in youth commitment and adult correctional facilities.

This paper is edited by retired newspaper reporter Mr. Henry Unger, who is an Exchange for Change volunteer. Miami-Dade teacher Mr. Daniel Wynne did the layout and design.

MYA masks made by student's aunt

By J. S.

A few months ago, Miami Youth Academy went on lockdown because of Covid-19. All visitations and outings were cut off. Also, it became mandatory for students and staff to wear masks.

So my aunt, who I call Mrs. Debbie, stepped up to make masks for us.

"I saw someone making them on Facebook and I thought it was easy," she explained. "So I got right to work."

Mrs. Debbie made 20 reusable masks for the students here and 100 non-reusable masks for the staff.

The masks have three layers, she explained. The two outer layers are cotton and the one inner layer is a filter. She made them with her 25-year-old sewing machine.

"It took me about 20 minutes to make each mask, with a little bit of help from my husband," she said. "I enjoy sewing, so making the masks were fun."

Mrs. Debbie said the most important thing she got out of making the masks was satisfaction.

Asked if she thought about selling any commercially, she replied, "No, I'm doing it for the community, not the money."

Bummer Summer

By A. R.

All my life it has been fun in the sun
I wonder what it will be like with the coronavirus
I wonder if it will be fun since we got a curfew
I don't know if it will be fun

I pray to God
Let it be fun so I can have a good summer
Let the coronavirus leave
And bring back a good life
Bummer, bummer, summer this summer
Been so boring I wonder
What will it be like with corona outside

Being in this program with corona is very upsetting
So let the bummer bummer summer be boring
But it's not going to stop me
Not from having a good summer

Food certificate program can help students land a job

By J. S.

MYA students can obtain the SafeStaff certification for food handling. It can be very helpful for those who will be looking for a job when they get released.

Students gain knowledge of how to work in a large kitchen environment.

Student A. S. was given the chance to put his skills to work as part of the program.

"I had to measure the amount of ingredients to the recipe so it would taste good," A. said. "I also had to use the right temperatures."

A. said he had to wear a hair net and makes sure his work area and hands were clean at all times.

In addition to learning new recipes, A. said he enjoyed the teamwork employed in a large kitchen.

"It makes the work fun and go faster," he said. "It's just better."

Teacher Ms. Deborah Sanchez said it is much easier for students to get a job if they are certified in food handling.



Student A. S. in the kitchen

In order to become certified, Ms. Sanchez said, students are required to pass a test covering important food-safety principles. They include ensuring proper personal hygiene, preventing cross-contamination, controlling time and temperature when handling food, proper cleaning and sanitizing, and the causes and effects of major foodborne illnesses.

Recipe for Sugar Cookies

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
1 ½ cups granulated sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder



These red, white and blue cookies were made by MYA students for last year's July 4 celebration.

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in egg and vanilla.

In a small bowl, stir together flour, baking soda, and baking powder.

Gradually blend the dry ingredients into the wet. Divide the dough into three separate bowls. Add 8-10 drops of red food coloring to one bowl and 8-10 drops of blue to another. Mix the coloring into the dough. Leave the third bowl of dough plain. Roll a dime size of each dough into a ball and then roll each ball together. Place on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper, flatten slightly and be sure to leave space in between.

Bake 8-10 minutes in the preheated oven, or until golden. Let stand on cookie sheet to cool.

What we learned

The following stories discuss the most important things these students learned during the school year.

By S. H.

This school year taught me a lot of stuff I did not know before I got here.

I learned to never be scared to ask for help. Before, I was scared to ask, because I worried about what my peers would say. But now I do not have a problem with that.

My advice for people who are scared to ask for help is to not let anyone judge you based on your knowledge. Face your fears. Don't let anyone tell you what you can and can't do.

In terms of subjects, I learned how to solve new math problems, such as finding the slope and dividing fractions.

I also learned how to use new transition words in my essays and how to write sentences properly.

Finally, I learned how to handle and prepare food. I earned my SafeStaff certificate.

Everybody is not your friend. Some people just want something out of you.

By A. S.

The number one thing I learned this school year is that if you see someone having a hard time reading, don't laugh at them. Instead, help them.

The second most important thing I learned was it's never too late to fix your grades and your work.

Something that was hard for me at the beginning of the year, but got easier, was physical science. I don't really understand how, but I passed it. Now, I am taking biology, which isn't so hard for me.

I learned to never be scared to ask for help. Before, I was scared to ask, because I worried about what my peers would say.

By T. H.

I learned how to stay on track. This one stuck with me because in order for me to go home, I have to do it.

Another thing I learned was that everybody is not your friend. Some people just want something out of you.

I also learned that your work is your work. Don't give it to anybody else. If you do, you get an F, and I can't afford any bad grades.

Finally, at the beginning of the year, it was hard for me to talk with my peers. I didn't know anybody.

After being here for a month, I gradually talked to people and started to get to know them. This was hard for me because I am not a friendly person and don't like meeting new people. That's the thing I learned the most – trying to do new things.

If you see someone having a hard time reading, don't laugh at them. Instead, help them.

What we learned

I used to think taking the GED tests was too hard, but now I think I can do it.

By Y. P.

(Translated from Spanish)

I have learned to be more respectful.

I also have learned more English, so I can communicate better. Before, I did not know any.

With the assignments that the teachers give me, I understand much more now. I do all my homework. That is different from when I attended school on the outside, where I didn't like doing my homework. In that school, many subjects were difficult for me to understand, such as math.

Now at MYA, everything is easier for me, including math and history. The teachers have helped me.

The most important thing I learned was how to control my emotions.

By K. R.

There are plenty of important things I learned this school year. One thing is that I'm capable of getting straight As and that ADHD can't stop me.

Another thing was that I used to think taking the GED tests was too hard, but now I think I can do it.

I also learned how to get motivated and stay focused. At the beginning of the year, it was hard for me to stay awake and complete my assignments. But now it's easier because I've learned the importance of school and to listen to what is being taught.

Now at MYA, everything is easier for me, including math and history. The teachers have helped me.

By J. S.

The most important thing I learned was how to control my emotions.

At the beginning, I was arguing with Ms. Edith Meneses. As the year went on, I talked with my therapist about that. She taught me about self-control.

So now, Ms. Edith and I are good. She has motivated me to do my work, which had been hard for me to do before.

How to be a good father

With the recent Father's Day holiday, two students reflected on how they think a dad should act.

By A. S.

If I were a father, I would make sure to always be there for my son.

For example, I would make sure to never leave my son, girlfriend or wife behind. I wouldn't leave them stranded with nowhere to live. I wouldn't want to see them struggling.

If I were to ever leave them, I would at least make sure to give my girlfriend time to find somewhere to stay. Let me amplify that -- I wouldn't want to be a coward like my father did me and my mom.

I would try my hardest to be the father that I never had and take that negative situation in my life and turn it into a positive situation. I would use it as a motivational factor to be a super father.

I would also make sure to have a positive attitude with my son's mother. I would always make sure to spend time with my son.

How to be a good father By S. H.

A good father should definitely be there for his child. He should never abandon his child.

If he had sex, he should accept the consequences and responsibilities. He should always make sure his child is safe.

A good father should be the parent a child can go to when he has a problem.

If you are a father, you should make sure you're wealthy enough to take care of your child. You

should be able get stuff for school, clothes, food, etc.

A father should be a good role model to his kids.

The hardest part of being a father is giving your kids the attention they need.

My favorite memory is going to the pool with my dad and the rest of my family and also going to waterparks with him. I have a lot of good memories with my dad.

Dinner with a special person

If you had the chance to take out one person – living or dead – who would it be and why?

By C. C.

I would take out Ms. Yahosca Hurtado, my therapist, to the most expensive restaurant in the world, because she is wonderful, funny and intelligent.

When I am down, I can always count on her to cheer me up. I would go all-out to show her that I really appreciate her and everything she has done for me.

Sometimes, when I was not doing schoolwork, she would encourage me by telling me to stay focused and think about the future. She often has gotten me back on track.

At the restaurant, I would be a gentleman by holding the door for her, pulling out the chair for

her to sit on and making sure she has enough to eat.

We would have a great conversation about my future, college and how I would do without her being around to help me control myself and encourage me to make better decisions.

I would take this amazing woman to dinner to give back to her for all the times she has helped me.



Ms. Hurtado

By A. S.

Once upon a time, there was a guy named A. S. It was June 17, 2020 and his birthday was the next day. His girlfriend was about to surprise him with a gift and give him the best birthday ever.

The next day, June 18, she and A. started his birthday by going out to breakfast. Anthony had steak, eggs, toast and a side of grits, and his girlfriend ordered the same thing.

After they finished, they went shopping. She gave him \$500 to buy whatever he wanted in the mall.

Coincidentally, a man was selling \$20 raffle tickets at a booth, so A. bought one. Five minutes later, the man called the winning number and it was A.'s.

The prize was lunch with a famous celebrity. The man pulled back a curtain and there was a familiar-looking lady. It was actress Taraji P. Henson. The man said she would take A. and his girlfriend to any restaurant he wanted.

A. picked Red Lobster. Ms. Henson, A. and his girlfriend went there and had a great time. It was the best birthday A. ever had.



Actress Taraji P. Henson

Dinner with a special person

By S. H.

I would choose Oprah Winfrey to go out to dinner with. She inspires me and helps out people in need.

I would ask her lots of questions, like who inspired her and what motivated her to do what she does.



Oprah donates millions of dollars to charity and I donate some money to people in need when I have it.

Like Oprah, I try to put myself in other people's shoes. That is called empathy. I'm a

caring person.

I want to share my story with Oprah and get help from her to manage my depression. I want to find out how to beat it and let my happiness take over.

***"Worrying is wasted time.
Use the same energy for
doing something about
whatever worries you."***

- Oprah Winfrey

Oprah Winfrey

By S. H.

Philanthropist and talk-show host

Caring, helpful, sympathetic, kind

Loves helping people, giving advice to kids

Believes in god, love and herself

Wanted to be successful, joyful and a person to talk to

Famous for her talk show and giving to charities

Gave advice and money

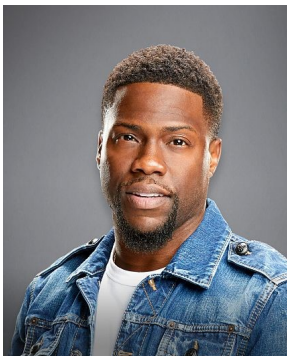
By A. S.

I would invite Kevin Hart. He is my favorite comedian.

Another reason is that he is very short, which motivates me because I am also short. Many people have told me that I can't do a lot of things because of my height. But Mr. Hart has shown me that I can make it somewhere in life.

I also chose him because he is not selfish. He cares about other people.

I look up to him. He is one of the actors I have been dreaming of meeting my whole life. It would be an honor to spend a day with him and eat dinner.



While eating, I think he would be very funny and that would really make me enjoy my food.

Kevin Hart

By A. S.

Comedian

Funny, respectful, caring, leader

Loves basketball, fitness and family

Believes in himself, others and being a positive role model

Wanted success, to make people laugh and to be taller

Known for his stand-up shows and movies

Gave smiles and positive examples

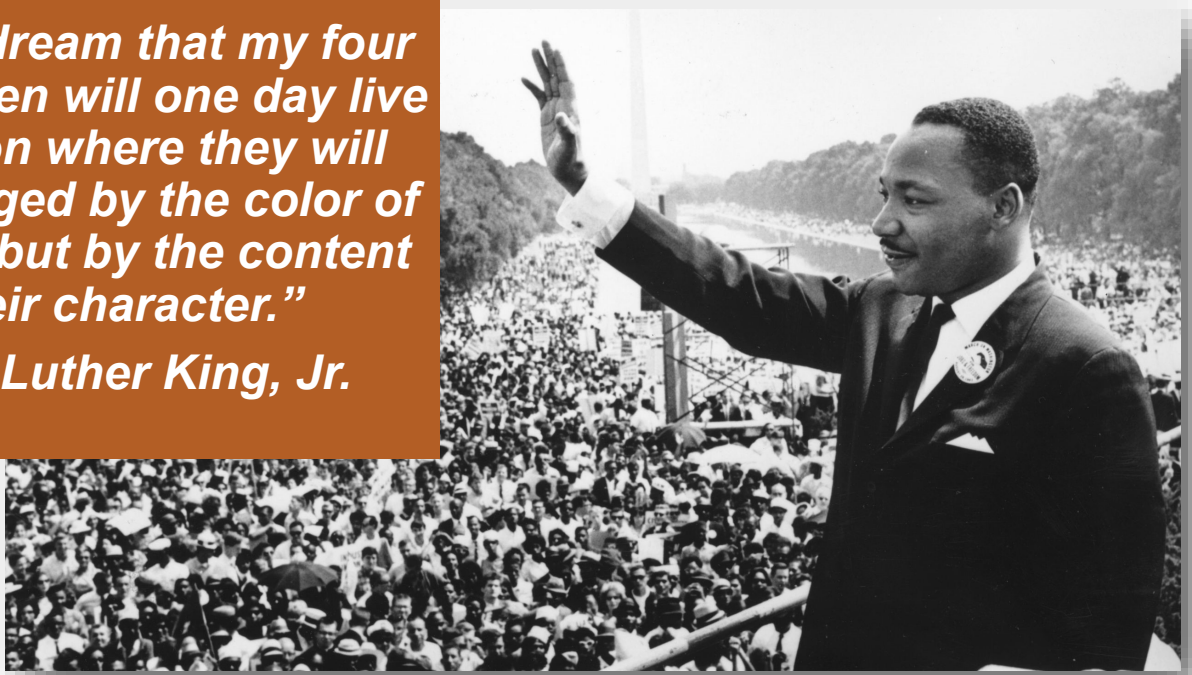
***"I stayed true to my dreams and,
eventually, they came true."***

-Kevin Hart

Dinner with a special person

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.



By C. B.

I would like to go to dinner with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. because at this time we are going through a pandemic, police brutality, people going against each other and citizens destroying property.

It's bad right now, Dr. King, and I know this is not your dream. It's not what you peacefully marched for and what you fought for with words, not violence.

I know you sometimes wanted to give up, but you never did. You wanted to make peace for our nation.

At dinner, we would order a lobster and it would be the juiciest one I ever tasted.

After dinner, with Dr. King sipping on whiskey with lemon, we would discuss all the things he went through and how some of what is going on now is similar. He would give me some good advice about how we can try to get more people to come together, which he did during his entire life.

Ana Valle Zanches

By Y. P.

Mom

Loving, caring, happy, positive

Loves cooking, music and life

Believes in hard work, saving and being respectful

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By C. B.

Doctor

Captain, leader, peaceful, caring

Loved people, his children and family

Believed everyone should be free, equal rights and unity

Wanted an end to segregation, freedom and equality for all

Known for having a dream and marching peacefully in protest

Gave his life and his love

"He who runs because he loves it, never gets tired."

-Ana Valle Zanches

Wanted success, love and happiness

Known for her cooking and hard work

Gave her love and advice