

# Hearts for hope



The local "Heart Hunters" challenge has our community feeling the love despite social distancing.

Photo by Leslie Jones



Hearts on the windows of doors at Sterling Blain's Farm and Fleet.

By Linzie Severson

Hearts adorn the windows of many local businesses and homes across the county after the coronavirus pandemic began.

These colorful hearts on windows represent hope as everyone works together to get through the pandemic. People have gotten creative at home and work with this heart trend. Many have made pictures from the hearts to create

fun and heart-warming images.

This trend actually began in Galesburg, Illinois and quickly spread as it took up popularity on a Facebook group. The page was created March 21, 2020 and has over eight hundred thousand members. This page is open for anyone who wants to share hearts they have seen or created themselves.

Many have also turned this simple craft

into a scavenger hunt in their communities. As parents take their kids on walks, they are encouraged to spot hearts on windows while they are outside.

The hearts are a fun way to share love while in social distancing, and are a fun project to do with children home from school.

To see photos of the trend and to learn more about it, go to the Heart Hunters page on Facebook.

## Sauk Valley Community College to hold new Virtual Coffeehouse event

by Carolyn Graham,  
SVCC News Reporter

A live online event being held May 1st, 2020 is giving SVCC students the chance to perform after the cancellation of multiple events due to COVID-19.

This event is open to the public and is acting as a replacement for both the Annual Student Art Exhibit and the Fine Art Performance Hour.

If you want to watch the performance, it is being held via Zoom with the meeting ID: 998 975 842, dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US ( Chicago ).

Anyone can perform, if you wish to take part contact Professor Tom Irish at [thomas.r.irish@svcc.edu](mailto:thomas.r.irish@svcc.edu).

Performances range from fiction and poetry reading, singing or

playing instruments, or putting on theatrical shows.

Professor Tom Irish, one of the event coordinators, says "I think it's really important to give students the opportunity to perform for an audience as much as possible, and it's a valuable part of learning what it takes to be a writer of fiction and poetry. I'm really glad we're going to get the Online Coffeehouse going so that we can do that for these students even during a pandemic."

Professor Glenn Bodish, another event coordinator, says "I believe that is important to keep focused on normalizing our educational schedule and experience in these unprecedented times. The events are also a reflection of our commitment to the students

and demonstrates our creative problem-solving skills."

Eden Buyno, a student at SVCC and performer at the event, says "I'm excited. I actually haven't learned much about it, but I think it'll be a fun event to be a part of, even if it may become a bit clumsy at first," she continues, "I've been going to open Mic events for a while now. I used to be really shy, but this event helped a lot. Being able to connect with people is so important, especially in a creative way."

Feedback on this event is welcome, please contact Professor Irish at [thomas.r.irish@svcc.edu](mailto:thomas.r.irish@svcc.edu) or Professor Bodish at [glenn.s.bodish@svcc.edu](mailto:glenn.s.bodish@svcc.edu) with any comments.



# A CNA'S Perspective During the Covid-19 Virus

by Eden Buyno

On April 16th, 2020 Heather Long, an economics correspondent for the Washington Post, writes "More than 22 million Americans have filed for unemployment aid since President Trump declared a national emergency, a staggering loss of jobs that has wiped out a decade of employment gains and pushed families to line up at food banks as they await government help."

The United States has not seen this level of job loss since the Great Depression, and the government is struggling to respond fast enough to the deadly coronavirus health crisis and the widespread economic pain it has triggered."

One day after the announcement of a national emergency the governor of Illinois, J.B. Pritzker, declared that all the people of Illinois will be ordered to stay home and all non-

essential businesses will close. These essential businesses would include places like supermarkets, pharmacies, hospitals, and nursing homes. The toll the pandemic has taken on people who have lost their jobs is incredible but just as much the toll it has taken on essential workers is possibly comparably just as bad.

Essential worker Manuel Escobar, a CNA at the Citadel of Sterling nursing home, shares his experience during the pandemic on a day to day basis.

"My days have changed lots since this home pandemic thing started. Now I set My alarm for 7:30 am so that I can take my BP meds for the day with my cup of coffee right after I take a couple of hours nap before I get ready for work, do some house chores, I get to work 30 minutes early so that I can get a report from the girls as they come out for a break before my shift starts."

When asked what extra precautions he and his employers have taken he stated "I have to get my temp taken before I can clock in for the day. Wearing the mask all day is the hardest part, especially now that it's getting warmer out and for those that have breathing problems already."

When asked how the resident's lives are changed by the virus he says "Residents are confined to their rooms and are on edge and often ask how much longer this will last but I don't have the answers for them. The activities department is doing the best they can to keep people busy in their rooms but because we are overworked due to the lack of people getting into the healthcare field it is very rare to just have more than five minutes to rest between answering lights and getting your charting done."

He then goes on to talk about tensions

around the home. "The stress levels with the staff can get super high. People get short with each other. Despite that our employers do care and so does the staff."

I ask him if he is still happy to have his job and he responds "I mean we show up for work every day and, I'm not gonna lie, we sometimes get selfish and ask why can't we be non-essentials for just a week but at the end of the day we did sign up for this kind of work. I don't think healthcare workers are paid what they should be getting paid that's for sure, but we do get our breaks and we also take them more often so we don't get "burnt out" and get overly stressed and possibly letting things get heated. I find myself smoking more on my breaks and looking forward to getting off work just to have a cold Mike's and doing this all over again."

## Corona vs College Sports

by Linzie Severson

With a shelter in place being set in many states across the country and colleges being moved to online format, all college sport events have been

canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, all winter and spring sporting events have been canceled.

With schools across the state of Illinois being closed for the rest of the remaining semester, it is unlikely that sporting events that were to take place this semester will be rescheduled.

Scouting has also been put on hold as the coronavirus pandemic has caused complications with there being no sporting events for scouts to attend.

## Walmart Guidelines and Restrictions

by Giselle Sotelo

Since the COVID-19, or more known as the Corona Virus spread, Walmart, located 4115 E Lincolnway, has made current guidelines and restrictions.

The 24 hour store shortened its hours to 7:00 am to 8:30 pm. Following the limited amount of people, Walmart will also be closing its Garden Center.

There are alterations presented in the entrance

and exit of the store. The entry and exit contain caution tape and cones in between the two lines to separate physical contact. However, it is recommended to stay as a minimum of six feet away from others.

Walmart wants to make sure social distancing policies are acquired, so employees and customers are safe. Walmart employers have taken extra measures to ensure a clean environment by sanitizing areas in high touch demand and shopping carts.

Employees are required to have their temperatures checked before entering the facility. If the temperature is high, they are required to be sent home and wait at least 72 hours before they can return.

Several employees are utilizing masks and gloves for precautions.

Walmart has increased its promotion of its online pick-up service for the wellbeing and health of associates and customers.

Customers are taking

advantage of the online pick-up service. There is a high demand in online grocery, and many products are out of stock.

Walmart employees are working hard to make sure food, medicine, and other supplies customers need are available.

While many customers have been following the guidelines for their safety, Walmart will continue to do its best to have a clean environment for everyone.

### Day 1 of Quarantine



### Day 60 of Quarantine



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# REVIEW: Half-Life: Alyx is an experience you'll have to see to believe



Official photo from the Half-Life website, property of Valve.

by Carolyn Graham

Created by Valve Corporation, this virtual reality first-person action game is one for the ages, boasting visual delights unlike any other of its kind before. Released on March 23rd, 2020, and playable on the Valve Index, HTC Vive, Oculus Rift, and Windows Mixed Reality, Half-Life: Alyx has truly set the bar visually for VR games. According to Steam, the platform that sells the game, “Valve’s return to the Half-Life universe that started it all was built from the ground up for virtual reality. VR was built to enable the gameplay that sits at the heart of

Half-Life.” Running on the Source 2 engine, Half-Life: Alyx treats its players to visuals that are stunningly life-like, to the point that players can look around and feel as if they are really there. This especially stands out when compared to other recently released VR games, such as The Walking Dead: Saints & Sinners by Skydance Interactive, or No Man’s Sky VR by Hello Games. While these other games do work well, Half-Life: Alyx’s used of scale, details, and physics truly sets it apart from the rest. Without spoiling anything, the moment

that really drove this point home is when the player is being pursued by something massive and is forced to jump between different sections of the floor. Looking up and being able to see the foe glaring down at you in full detail is truly something that you need to experience for yourself. Combine that with the light cascading across its back and the metallic squealing of its joints right next to your ear, and you’ve got an experience of a lifetime. If you’re bored during quarantine or are just looking to have some visually satisfying fun, you can’t go wrong with Half-Life: Alyx.

# Illinois takes measures to combat COVID-19

by Ermira Ramadani

Illinois has made drastic changes in order to combat the corona-virus pandemic. This mysterious virus was first confirmed in November of 2019, in Wuhan, China. It has been labeled a global pandemic and sadly is our new reality. Illinois officials reported 27,575 cases of COVID-19, and 1,134 deaths as of Friday, April 17, 2020. Illinois is currently under a “stay at home order” to slow the spread of the virus. This means everyone is to be a part of a mass quarantine until May 1, 2020. Only if you are an essential worker, doing essential grocery shopping, or any essential travel, then this rule does not pertain to you. Who is considered an essential worker in Illinois? Healthcare providers, food and agricultural workers, mass transit and airport workers, bank employees and many, many more. Restaurants in Illinois are still open for

delivery and take out ONLY. Grocery stores, gas stations, and pharmacies are among the essential businesses that are still open. Public parks remain open, but playgrounds are closed, as well as gyms and fitness centers. Illinois schools will remain closed for the remainder of the school year. Governor J.B Pritzker announced this on April 17, 2020. His main idea for this was “How do we save the most lives during this difficult time?” With this being a heart wrenching decision, Pritzker thought this was best for our state in battling the virus. One of the biggest issues during this pandemic is insurance. In a recent conference, Pritzker issued guidance to all Medicaid providers over a week ago stating that testing and treatment for the virus will be covered by Medicaid. This is for individuals who are currently uninsured as well as those enrolled in Medicaid. Illinoisans are sug-

gested to wear masks or any facial coverings when they are out doing essential tasks. Since this virus is spread by droplets, it was confirmed important by the CDC for everyone to cover the portals the virus could enter. A study shown and created by the University of Chicago, a new medication called “Remdesivir” is showing positive results in treating patients with COVID-19. The University has tested this new medication on 113 patients in critical care. Over 99% of these patients are currently in recovery. There will be further information to come. As the whole world is fighting against this virus, it is important for each state and country to abide by strict and effective rules to slow the spread. Illinois is taking their own measures, and we all hope by working together, we will overcome these difficult times.



The playground at Lowell Park in Dixon has been closed by the state of Illinois due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Photo by James Hutchison