

The Summer of Punching Back at the Pandemic

This is going to be a summer like no other, but it doesn't mean you can't use it to grow in new ways.

The reality is that organized camps and enrichment programs are either canceled or are going online. Summer jobs will likely be less plentiful. You can employ a self-directed entrepreneurial mindset to salvage it, turn it around, and build skills for YOUR future.

It's going to take initiative and imagination--something that young people like you have in large quantities.

It's going to mean a paradigm shift. A paradigm is a structure, framework, or organizing principle for how we view something. Then, as scientist Thomas Kuhn posits--something happens. We're shifted out of that paradigm by a new discovery or in this case by an event--the COVID pandemic.

Now it's time to cast off the paradigm of business as usual, of programs and events organized for you and think of ways that YOU can self-motivate, self-identify your own priorities and interests, and self-generate the ways to make things happen in your life.

I'm going to be sending links to you over the next few weeks with suggestions about how to redirect your energy this summer to move along your own continuum of development, broaden your horizons, and deepen your interest and knowledge in a topic that you're interested in.

There are vast online resources at your disposal. There are people in your community who are available to you and I can help connect you with. Your teachers can also help you locate academic resources that can help you along your journey. Email me and we can make an appointment to chat and brainstorm. I LOVE to brainstorm.

I'll ask Ms. Fuller to post these resources on the Career Experience page of the school website so graduating seniors can also refer to them as well after they've left.

So after you take a few weeks to restore yourselves after school ends, it will be time to punch back at the pandemic and propel yourselves forward.

Here are some ways to get started--and I'll keep adding to the list:

- If you're taking on a project at home with your family, like starting a garden, building a chicken coop, painting your house please understand that these are ALL resume worthy. Even caring for younger siblings or an older relative is not only about love and duty, but you're also building skills and there are ways to feature those on your resume even if it's and unpaid part of family life.

- Take a free online class through a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). The most common of these is [edX](#) and [Coursera](#). Here's an article with more information [Taking a MOOC](#). Most MOOC's have the option to pay a small fee and earn a certificate. This might be worthwhile for your resume and to prove your mastery of the content.
- Take an online college course through one of the CT State colleges and universities. [Northwest CT Community College Course Search](#). This course search for NCCC now is systemwide for all community colleges in CT. It's a great way to take a college course over the summer and build out your resume. I've linked an article that I wrote about online learning in the college setting in this email to help you acquaint yourselves with online learning at the college level. You already know a lot from your work this spring. However, colleges will likely not use Google Classroom so you might want to take a look.
- Enhance your computer skills with [Free Code Camp](#). Take a course on [Getting Started with Google Sheets](#). Although we operate in a Google environment, Google Sheets are very much like Excel. Having some fluency in how to create and manipulate a spread sheet looks awesome on a resume and many organizations use Excel.
- If you are really motivated, go the distance with Google and earn your [Google IT Support Certificate](#). This can get your foot in the door of a company and is a great resume builder.
- Options to learn about clouds beyond Cumulus and Nimbus can be found [AWS Education for 14 and Older](#)
- Build your reading list. Reading more builds vocabulary, imagination and empathy--useful workplace skills. Paying attention to writing is another excellent skill for your future and your career. There's no career out there that doesn't depend to some degree on the ability to string together cohesive and coherent sentences. Talk to your English teacher or check out this list [30 Books Teens Should Read Before 18](#)
- Create your own service project [Youth Service America Resources](#). I'm happy to help you think about how to structure something and connect you with people who can assist and enrich your project.
- It's a big election year--and your voice is important. Here are some resources to educate yourself about the issues. Even if you're not able to vote, you will be soon. You can use this as an opportunity to educate voters in your household about issues that are important to you. Here's a guide to how to get involved [Youth Service America-Ways to Get Involved](#). Here's a link to [Connecticut League of Conservation Voter](#). Your candidates need volunteers and youthful energy. If you are having trouble of thinking of issues that are important, here's what other teens are thinking [Top Election Issues](#)

[Teens Want to Talk About](#). If you'd like to create a voter's guide for teens around a particular issue, which documents candidates' positions in a non-partisan way--let's talk. That's something I did with a class I taught at WCSU.

- Think about something you'd like to know more about that really puts fire in your belly. Then start researching. Talk to your teachers for additional resources. Talk to me about connecting you with experts and how to describe this self-directed learning on your resume. If you need funding, let's put our heads together. There are sources of funds out there waiting to be tapped.

Let's do this--together.

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