



Out My Window

By Chris Carducci

April 6, 2020

This story begins on Friday March 13, the day I realized that everyday life was about to change. And change it did – in a big way. My sister and I had planned a trip to visit our parents in Nevada.

Friday, March 13 we cancelled our visit due to scare of coronavirus and wanting to be cautious of being in public social settings such as airports, lyft rides and inside the retirement community where our parents reside. That left me home.

On Monday March 16, Six SF Bay Area counties were ordered to shelter in place - advised not to go out except for “*essential business*” and told “Wash your hands. Don’t touch your face, Don’t get close to other people.” It was all very scary and surreal. I went to bed and stayed there.

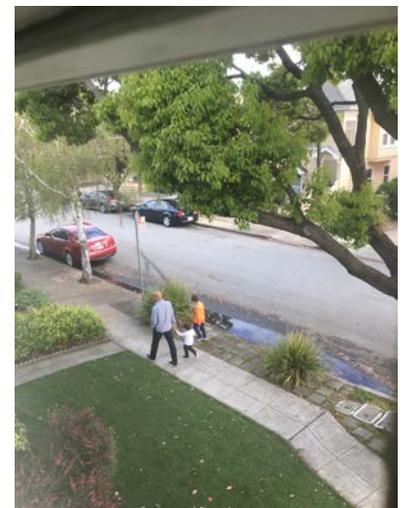
A few days later, as the shock, uncertainty, and disequilibrium settled a bit, I decided I needed to snap out of it, get out of bed, get up, get dressed. I was one of the fortunate who could work virtually from home, so I took action. I moved my home office from the back part of my apartment to the front room by the window. Here I discovered joy out my window.

It was the sounds of children laughing. Families were taking walks in the neighborhood. Children who would otherwise be driven to child care or spent their days in school were out on my street. I first noticed one day after a morning of rain, children wearing bright yellow rain boots and splashing in the lake-sized puddle out side my window.



As parents captured the moment on cell phone, I grabbed my camera also to retain the joyful moment and share via text with my friends and family 😊

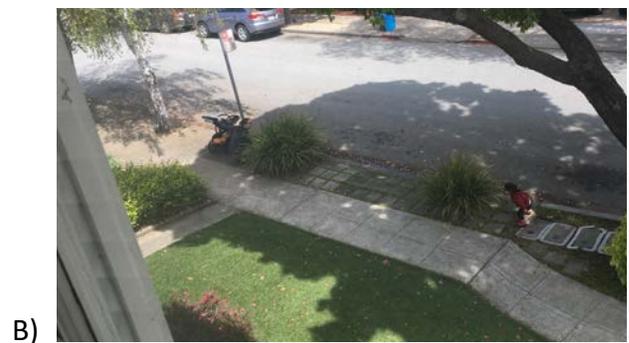
After this first experience, I came to welcome your presence in my day. Many times, I would hear and see you walking by my window. Dad and boys; calling out, running, laughing, walking together hand in hand.



Over time, I noticed more families outside my window. These children discovered my neighbors 'fake grass' was the best place to drive a remote control car. I wondered to myself, how often you actually played with this toy? Was it a long forgotten gift now pulled out of a closet because of the shelter in place order? Or were you drawn to bring it along on a walk because the house was getting too small for driving cars for a distance at high speeds? I fondly recalled the days when my now teenage nephews used to play in such ways.



One day I noticed a little toddler enthralled with the classic "peek-a-boo" hiding game in the bushes outside my window. It touched my heart to watch your adult play with you in this way for quite awhile until you moved on down the sidewalk and she followed pushing the empty 'just-in case you need it' stroller. Nature offers such an abundance of opportunities for spontaneous interaction and play. I wondered if this was your first time down my street or if this spot was a part of your routine walk and it was my first time to notice you because I didn't often spend time looking out the window when working from my home office seated in the back of the apartment.



What Learning is Happening?

I recognize how much I relate to children's development and learning through everyday experiences. The educator part of my brain is reaching to label my observations of the children in the context of assessment. Both New Zealand's Te Whariki strands and CA DRDP outcomes are evident in these observations. Without going into details of what learning may be happening for the children, suffice it to say that there are many, many connections to child assessment happening in everyday experiences at home with family and neighborhood walks.

We are all learning about how resilient we can be in the face of extreme difficulties. These families are doing the best they can to cope. They are making time to get outside and offer the children a change of environment and some exercise. This is significant to mental and physical health. I do not know any details of the families' context or situation that brought them to be walking down my street when they did – I only know that I am extremely fortunate to live in the neighborhood that I do, where it is safe, clean and welcoming for families to walk. I do not take this for granted and I recognize the privilege of my social class status and to be living in this way.

Opportunities and Possibilities

My first thought is to respond in a more global perspective. I pose the inquiry question: *What good may come out of living through an international pandemic?* After the shock of change more or less resolves, and people come to feel a 'new sense of normal' what behaviors, values, routines, and practices can be kept which promote more humanistic practices and policies?

What about the environment? With fewer cars on the roads and factories not producing materials in abundance – has the earth been given a respite from environmental pollution?

What about technology and education? Where there was great inequity of access to digital devices and internet – some companies and government stepped up to provide to many (though not all) who did not have such. This was the solution to the problem faced because of the decision to close physical schools and from pre-school through college, virtual schooling from home was initiated. Many educators were faced with really questioning the purpose and practices of their curriculum structures. Thus, another inquiry question: *What good might come from an intentional 'pro-active' look at this re-active solution to create more effective and equitable education structure in the 21st century?*

It may be my desire to stay positive and optimistic in an outlook of a hopeful future resisting against the news and negativity of dread coming at me from television, radio, internet and e-mail boxes. The joy of the children walking down my street, which I see out my window, gives me hope. Writing this learning story has helped me to be reflective and thoughtful and for that I am thankful.

Perspectives of others: As I share this Learning Story with friends and colleagues I will include their thoughts and reflection here. I am most interested to hear others' thoughts on connections from the children outside my window and their stories to the larger global issues of equity, humanity, and sense of place in these trying times.