

MCA FAMILY ACTIVITY: *CARING CONNECTIONS*

By Jacqui Reedy

Ages 3+*

*We encourage adults and kids to create together

Strengthen bonds of care and connection by sending letters to your community.



Quarantine Times posters by Paul Nudd and Alex Kirsch. 2020.

When Governor Pritzker issued the Stay at Home order in March 2020, everything changed. For the first time, schools and museums were closed, we had to be careful to not spread COVID-19, and everyone had to wear masks in public to keep each other safe. The months since then have been filled with lots of worry and fear. They have also been filled with creativity and care. Artists have been creating images and telling stories that can help us connect to one another and feel less alone when things around us are scary and confusing.

Early in the spring shut-down, a group of Chicago artists at the Public Media Institute came together to start the *Quarantine Times* as a way to raise money for other artists and share ideas on how to handle being an artist during these challenging times. They invited artists from all over Chicago to make pictures and share stories about what they were thinking and experiencing. You can read their stories at [quarantinetimes.org](https://www.quarantinetimes.org).

Just like the artists who formed the *Quarantine Times* to help other artists during the pandemic, you can use art to strengthen the bonds of care and support within your community. Acts of kindness will make others feel good, which can also help us feel good in our heart and soul. What is a little act of kindness that you have done for someone? How did it feel to do something for someone else? What does your community need right now? How can you help provide it?

MAKE A CARE CARD

Everyone loves to get special, handmade art in the mail. Have you ever gotten something in the mail that was just for you? What was it like to open it? You can send warm and fuzzy feelings to anyone!

STEP 1: Gather your materials

- Paper, any kind will work! It just needs to be able to fit in your envelope.
- Drawing tools like markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.
- Envelope
- Stamp
- Decorative materials like glitter, stickers, pom poms, felt shapes, etc.

STEP 2: Decide who to send a message to

What person in your community might need a kind message right now?

How about:

- Family or friends that live far away
- Nurses or doctors who are working in hospitals
- Elderly people who cannot connect with their families
- Veterans or people in the military
- Teachers who have made you feel special
- A friend from school
- Your mom and/or dad at their workplace

Have an adult help get their address.

Write their address on the outside of your envelope and put a stamp in the upper right corner. Include your return address on the envelope and maybe you can get a special piece of mail in return!

STEP 3: Draw a picture or write a message

Think about the person you're writing to. What makes them special? What do they do that helps make our world a better place?

Share something special about you. Draw a picture of something that brings you joy.

You can read some of the stories from the *Quarantine Times* for inspiration.

Step 4: Decorate your paper card and your envelope.

Step 5: Send it! Put your card in your envelope, seal it, and drop it in a mailbox.

THE QUARANTINE TIMES 2020

The Quarantine Times was produced by Public Media Institute and served as a COVID-19 emergency relief fund for over 200 Chicago artists between March and August of 2020. Each day, PMI commissioned a new creative response to the pandemic, the uprising against police terror, and the breadth of hardship our communities have experienced in 2020.

The installation includes posters made for the windows of PMI's headquarters, Co-Prosperity, three screens that scroll the entire contents of the web platform, and a larger screen that loops 70+ hour archive of live-streamed performances and conversations PMI has produced since the beginning of the pandemic. This screen will also display any new live content in real time.

Artist names are too many to list here, but appear before, after or during each video; the installation was assembled and designed by Paula Volpato of Public Media Institute.

Explore artist responses at www.quarantinetimes.org



Artworks from the *Quarantine Times* installed at the MCA as part of *The Long Dream* exhibition. Installation view, *The Long Dream*, MCA Chicago November 7, 2020–January 17, 2021. Photo: Nathan Keay, © MCA Chicago