



PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH TO EARN PUBLIC TRUST

AMANDA CLAY
Health Correspondent

Many Americans are becoming concerned with the frequent COVID-19 guideline changes from the CDC regarding quarantine and mask wearing. Many have said that these guidelines aren't enough guidance and it appeared as though they changed their minds every week. It is exhausting and difficult to adapt to new guidelines and the constant changes.

An NBC News poll performed in January of this year in tandem with Hart Research Associates found that 43% of Americans distrust the CDC's communication regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly up a whopping 30% points from the 13% that distrusted the CDC in April 2020.

It is clear that there is a steady skepticism from some regarding the advice coming from public health officials. Part of the reason for the frequent guideline changes, while they might seem chaotic, comes from updated COVID-19 information from research being performed in real time and reflects advancements in our understanding of the virus. But the CDC doesn't seem to be taking enough initiative to combat the confusion the general public seems to be having.

The first step in fixing an issue is first acknowledging that there is one—and the

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press
CDC isn't doing that well. Even with their apparent lack of concern, it is certainly not an easy dilemma to rectify. How can scientists go about communicating this to the lay public, who may perceive this back and forth as a lack of organization and knowledge?

An extraordinary part of public health is the communication to the lay public. When this fails, most public health measures will suffer as a result. An evaluation of what went wrong and what could be done better is necessary to mend the relationship between public health officials and the public going forward.

An article recently published in ScienceDirect entitled, "Walking the Tightrope: Reevaluating science communication in the era of COVID-19 vaccines," lays out some potential causes of public mistrust and lays out a series of solutions. The authors cite a wide variety of factors at place that potentially have an effect on scientific mistrust, issues that even skilled scientific communication may not be able to fix, including structural racism, health disparities and healthcare access issues.

These issues are deeply historical and cannot easily be fixed with a simple press release from the CDC regarding the pandemic—but it is a start to first understand the current perspective of the individuals they serve in their public health roles and to

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determine the best ways to reach individuals who have not been reached historically.

The authors of the study compiled a series of potential solutions, the first of which the importance of science remaining an objective field, with medical updates only coming from members of the science community, who should be seen as the neutral party. Politicians, they argue, should not become main communicators for COVID-19 related updates due to the public's association of politicians with deception. Scientists should keep their communications short and focus solely on the facts that are known, neither understating or overstating the facts. They also cite public education and public outreach as ways of decreasing community distrust.

Public health organizations internationally and across the United States, including the CDC, have done a poor job not only of properly connecting with members of the public, but even acknowledging and attempting to rectify these issues. There needs to be initiative set at an international level to better disseminate public health information and attempt to rebuild some of the trust that has been lost. It takes only a second to break trust—but it can take generations to build it back up.

LIVING WEST



CARROLLTON'S FUR BABIES CAT CAFE: THE PURR-FECT STUDY NOOK

JANNETTE EMMERICK
Feature Editor

Photo Courtesy of FurBabies Cat Cafe

Carrollton’s local Furbabies Cat Cafe offers a perfect place for guests looking to enjoy the warm embrace of a cat in your lap while focusing on giving cats and kittens a new home.

Furbabies will be open to students on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and while students do have to provide ID and pay \$7 to sit in with the cats, coffee, tea and other refreshments are included in the payment.

“There’s no music going to be played, no adoptions during that time,” says Becky Preston, one of the three Furbabies co-founders. “It’s basically just a quiet place where they can sit and study.”

During normal hours, Furbabies is open Friday and Saturday at 10 a.m. to 6 p.m and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., with admission normally costing \$13 per hour with all proceeds going straight to the shelter and feline residents.

“We are a foster home for the Carroll County Animal Shelter,” says Preston. “So we house adoptable cats, and they stay with us until

they find their forever homes.”

Recently opened on June 4, 2021, Furbabies Cat Cafe has already made leaps in serving the community and managing to adopt over 340 cats since opening. Owners Becky Preston, Sarah Siegel and Jesse New all helped to run the business alongside working their day jobs.

The concept and dream came together from a visit to Chattanooga, TN when the friends visited Naughty Cats Cat Cafe and decided that Carroll County needed a cat cafe of its own. Within just five months after their idea sprouted, Furbabies established in Carrollton partnering with the local shelter to take in whichever cats and kittens were designated to them.

“We just say [to the shelter] ‘send whatever you think is going to be best,’” says Jesse New. “Sometimes it might be ones that are struggling because they are shy and timid and struggling to come out of their shell. On the opposite end, it might be ones that are super energetic and fun and need something like this where they

can run around and have fun.”

The cafe fosters around fifteen cats at a time. They also offer adoptions and everything needed to adopt a cat the day of adoption including a cat carrier and food.

In some cases, the adopter’s initial choice might change as they interact and bond with a different cat who was never on their radar. However, adopting a cat can be a commitment unavailable to some, so cat cafes offer a place to pet cats with no commitment needed.

“We had a girl [visit], for a while, from the university and she would come every Friday, because she had this fear of cats,” says Sarah Siegel. “She was doing this immersion therapy. She enjoyed it even though she was like ‘don’t leave me alone in here.’”

With the exception of those with allergies, any prospective visitors including those skeptical of cats are invited to drop by for a weekend dose of serotonin.

“We always tell people: you’ll either leave with a cat, or lower blood pressure,” says New. “Maybe both.”

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Kayla Henderson
Editor-in-Chief

Brittany Mersfelder
News Editor

Amanda Clay
Health Correspondent

Kinadi Dill
Copy Editor

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Advisor

LIVING WEST



NEW BREWERY “LOCAL TIES” SET TO OPEN IN DOWNTOWN CARROLLTON

ALANNA KING

Contributing Writer

Photo Courtesy of Local Ties

The craft brewery business has exploded in Georgia over the last ten years. One Carrollton couple, Alex and Tori Griffin, decided to jump in and open Local Ties Brewing Company in Downtown Carrollton in May and haven't looked back since.

“The name Local Ties comes from us being local,” says Alex. “Our family is local, our kids go to school here, our parents went to school here, my grandfather taught at the university, our sister's a teacher, we're all local.”

Breweries have been a hobby for the couple for the last ten years. They have visited most of the breweries in Georgia and many across the country.

“After visiting Sweet Water in Atlanta for the first time, we said, ‘this will be us one day,’” said Alex. He began brewing his own beer at home and making plans for a brewery of his own.

Alex says that the brewery will utilize a five-barrel system. Each time the barrel is empty, a new kind of beer will be brewed in its place, offering customers something new each time they visit.

“Our goal is that every time you come, we have

a different style of beer,” he says. “We don't want to shoe-horn ourselves into one style.”

The couple signed the lease on the 119 Bradley Street location over a year ago and have been hard at work restoring the space ever since.

“We don't have investors, we don't have millions of dollars behind a big company,” says Tori. “It's just us. What you see has been done by us and our best friend, Justin Schellhorn.”

“Our goal for the building was to restore it to what it was before with a nice industrial feel,” says Alex. “I want it to feel like we were always here.”

The space will be divided in two with one side will have the brewing equipment and the bar and the other will be a gathering space with comfortable seating.

“We want this to feel like the coffee shop vibe, but beer,” says Tori.

While Local Ties is almost complete, the journey hasn't always been smooth for Alex and Tori.

“We had a building that used to be Nuway Cleaners behind the presbyterian church under contract,” says Alex.

“With Carrollton's laws, breweries have to be in an industrial

zone. During the rezoning process, a lot of people spoke out against us being there and we were denied 0-10. They turned us down unanimously. That put us down for a few months.”

However, their current location was a dream come true.

“As soon as I walked in through the door I said, ‘this is it’” says Alex. “Right across from the amphitheater, you can't beat it. We always wanted to be near downtown. Location is everything.”

Local Ties is about more than just beer for the couple.

“All my life I wanted to be a part of something that gave back to the community,” says Tori. “We want to give back in a positive way, somewhere where everyone is welcome.”

“I'm not in it for the money,” says Alex. “I'm in it cause it's what we like to do, and we want to share it with everybody. I want to host a beer run. I want to give back to animal shelters, anti-bullying, and stuff that's important to us.”

“We want to teach our kids the value of being a part of a community that cares,” the couple says.

Local Ties is set to open in mid to late May.

ENTERTAINMENT



“TURNING RED” PAVES THE WAY FOR A NEW ANIMATED FILM ERA

KAYLA HENDERSON

Editor-in-Chief

Image Courtesy of Disney Pixar

Disney Pixar’s “Turning Red” has paved the way for a new force in animated movie magic. The stunning animation pays homage to Chinese culture and the challenges of being a 13 year-old girl trying to find her place.

“Turning Red” becomes the first animated Pixar film in the businesses 36 year history to be led entirely by a female crew under the direction of director Domee Lee. Lee has no short resume, her other projects include popular movies such as “Toy Story” and “Inside Out”, along with her directorial debut in Disney Pixar’s short “Bao”.

The female perspective is evident in “Turning Red”, following the puberty-stricken main character Mei Lee. Set in 2002, Mei is obsessed with the band 4*Town, good grades and boys- much to her mothers’, Ming Lee’s, disapproval. Ming has diligently worked to protect

her daughter, mostly from Mei’s own self.

Mei’s family honors the traditions of her ancestor Sun Yee, who with the help of the Red Panda, protected her daughters from danger. Unbeknownst to Mei, women in the family become Red Panda after they enter their teenage years.

Mei experiences these changes overnight, waking up to a fuzzy tail and ears after becoming the Red Panda. Her fear only fuels her Red Panda, as she fights to understand what is happening to her. What was a gift, became a curse for the women when they would transform into the Red Panda when faced with high emotions unable to control it until their Panda spirit was banished.

Following Mei’s journey with her new identity, she leans on the support of her spunky and tight-knit friend group Abby, Miriam and Priya. When she feels grounded, Mei returns to her normal self and

can contain her new furry side. The girls vow to help her learn to remain calm and collected until Mei’s ceremony in one month.

With everyday that passes, Mei learns to embrace her inner Panda. Realizing it is a part of her that allows her to be more confident and feel bigger than herself. Her classmates and friends warmly accept her new changes, seeing it as a part of Mei that should be celebrated and not hidden like her family warns.

She is then faced with the decision to become her old self again or continue to use Sun Yee’s gift of the Red Panda forever after an intense moment with her mom who turned into the Panda herself.

“Turning Red” develops new animation styles and a new twist on the struggle of growing up. The film captures the beautiful Chinese culture and the importance of learning to be who you are, even if that’s a giant Red Panda.

ENTERTAINMENT



THE FRESH PRINCE OF BEL-AIR GETS ITS 90S REBOOT

TAYLOR BLESSETT

Contributing Writer



Image Courtesy of Peacock

The Peacock Original “Bel-Air” is a modern-day sitcom based loosely off of the classic “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” sitcom starring Will Smith and the late James Avery. Using the same characters as “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” and essentially the same storyline, “Bel-Air” infuses new dramatics and events to make the sitcom more modern day.

“The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” was a show that was loved world-wide and focused on the main character, Will Smith, moving to Bel Air, Los Angeles from his rough neighborhood of Philadelphia after getting into some trouble. Will Smith travels to Bel-Air to move in with his wealthy Uncle, known as Uncle Phil, his Aunt Vivian and his two privileged cousins Carlton and Hilary.

Taking a more serious turn, “Bel-Air” takes the same storyline as the classic but gives the audience a more emotional, anxious series of events in contrast to the classic.

Smith’s younger character in the reboot has just moved in with his politician Uncle Phil and retired artist Aunt Vivian. His cousins,

Carlton, Ashley and Hilary, also live with his aunt and uncle. Carlton struggles with cocaine use and anxiety in the show while Hilary is learning who she is while running a social media cooking account. Their younger sister Ashely is struggling to find her identity within the LGBTQ+ community.

Smith is sent away by his mother because of a dirty bet he made with a drug dealer. This dirty bet resulted in Smith firing a loaded gun and being arrested. This not only puts Smith who earned a full basketball scholarship at risk for serving years in prison but the drug dealer involved also swears to get his revenge on Smith.

The show later focuses on current issues on police brutality, the Black Lives Matter movement and the importance of being oneself in society.

While Smith is sent away to live with his family, he understands the importance of family and how having a family forces community, loyalty and trust. Smith is forced to build a relationship with his cousin, Carlton. Carlton is popular at school at the expense of being someone that he isn’t

and picking up bad habits. Smith reminds Carlton that being truthful in who you are allows for the right people to be a part of your team.

In the first episode, “Dreams and Nightmares”, Carlton introduces Smith to the Lacrosse team after watching Carlton play after practice. The team goes home and decides to play hip-hop music that includes the “N” word and it is obvious that Carlton is the only black kid on the team, but proceeds to dance and sing with the Lacrosse team and says the “N” word, along with his teammates. This upsets Smith and he almost fights Carlton’s friend and one of the players, Conner.

The relationship between Smith and Carlton has a rocky start after Smith confronts Carlton’s friend. The two characters end up understanding each other and the true relevance of brotherhood and accepting others’ flaws.

From the classic, “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air”, to “Bel-Air”, viewers can expect to be surprised by the change of events, but for a thrill when their attention is captured by the show. New episodes air on Peacock every Thursday.

ENTERTAINMENT



CELEBRATING FOUR YEARS AND NOW TWO SEASONS: DEEP ROCK GALACTIC SEASON ONE REVIEW

BRITTANY MERSFELDER

News Editor

Underrated and overlooked, “Deep Rock Galactic” is celebrating its fourth anniversary and the end of its first ever in-game season. This season was packed with new enemies and a new game mode that made fans thrilled for what is to come.

“Deep Rock Galactic” is a game available on Steam and Xbox/Windows where the player is in the point of view of a dwarf that works for a corporation. This game feels like a combination of “Minecraft”, “Doom” and “Team Fortress 2”. The player can select different classes such as the Scout, the Driller, the Gunner and the Engineer.

Each class has its own abilities, benefits and cons. The Scout helps the team by setting out bright lights in the caves that are a minute in length and can scout ahead with a grappling hook. The Gunner carries a large machine gun and can set ziplines for the team to use to get around the maps. The Driller helps by getting the team to locations or getting quick access to the drop pod when the clock is ticking. The Engineer builds sentry guns and places platforms for the team.

Of course working for a corporation would not be complete without corporate greed. The dwarves are sent into different missions, such as a mining mission where the players collect a type of mineral to a refinery mission where the players must protect an oil refinery from incoming enemies. The players are able to pick the difficulty of the missions. These difficulties are referred to as ‘Hazards’ making the easiest mission a ‘Hazard 1’ while going up to a ‘Hazard 5’ level.

Each mission has its own benefits; some even have buffs, such as a gold rush or modifications to the mission such as a haunted cave. This makes the missions more difficult as the team has to avoid a transparent enemy that chases the entire team, attempting to knock down each player one by one, while the players attempt to complete their mission type.

The new mission that was introduced this season involves destroying the products of another corporation, The Rivals, that has invaded the planet called Hoxxes. This is the same planet the dwarves’ corporation is currently invading

Image Courtesy of Ghost Ship Games for their own profit.

The players must take out machines that shoot lasers, spawn bombs in the vicinity of players and send waves of bots after the team. This mission was inherently difficult, even for an experienced player like myself.

Ghost Ship Games, the creator and developer of “Deep Rock Galactic”, released an update to this after having the mission type released for a few weeks. The update brought down the intensity of the mission as even developers were concerned about the intensity, even on a ‘Hazard 1’ difficulty level.

Season two has been previewed to be a new level of horror in the game. The preview video shows what sounds like a dwarf calling for help but no one is seen. Fans believe that this may be a mimic bot or even old sound logs of the in-game myth, Karl, lurking the team into a trap.

Season two releases April 28 on Steam and May 5 everywhere else. Fans are hoping for new enemies and new difficulties for season two. As always, “if you don’t Rock and Stone or you ain’t coming home!”