

# *Holding on to Hope*

*An original student-led showcase*

## *Motivation Jar*

*Written by Taylor Putzek*

"It's only temporary," they said the day the buses pulled us out of the school parking lot for the last time. But now it's been a year, and it doesn't feel temporary. I've watched the leaves change from green to brown, to gone and back again, all from my small desk looking out a small window to reveal a small neighborhood, with small families. My grades went from A's to B's as the months go by, yet somehow I feel like I am doing more work than I was before. And worst of all, I have nobody to talk to. Even family time seems like a chore lately.

"Anne, come here!" Mom yells from the bottom of the stairs. "I found something for you." With a grunt, I stand and run down the stairs to my mom. She is holding a small jar. "Want to put this to use?" She says, shoving the jar into my hands.

"I'm sure I can do something," I reply. Mom has been encouraging, and practically forcing the creative process on me, as if that will make me feel more social. Though. . . it could. I look down at the jar. "Wait, I know exactly what I'm going to do."

I run back upstairs and grab my notebook paper and my favorite black pen, ripping out a sheet, and writing in big words "ANNE'S DAILY MOTIVATION. Rules: Pull one task a day, and, well, do it. Either reach out to someone, or get involved." And then I filled it.

The sun set and rose again, as did I, and it was time to pick my first piece of paper. I stuck my hand in the jar and ruffled through until I found the paper. I picked it up, and I opened it. "Reach out: Camilla."

Camilla was an old friend from my old school. We used to be close, yet we hadn't talked once since quarantine hit. I picked up the phone and took a deep breath, then dialed her number.

"Hello? Is this Anne?"

"Camilla, yes, this is Anne!"

"Anne! How are you doing? I miss you so much!"

I hid my smile behind the phone.

"I'm good! We should definitely talk more."

"Definitely. In fact, let's start something. How do weekly calls sound?"

And just like that, I had a friend on my side. I went to bed that night with a smile on my face.

The sun beat down on me while the birds sung through my window. My hand reached into the jar the next day for my second slip of paper. "Get involved: Drama Club."

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Auditions were coming up for a virtual play. I opened my computer and went to my email and started a fresh thread.

*Dear Mr. Davis,*

*I heard that you are the drama teacher at my school, and I would love to audition for the school play. Let me know what I can do!*

*Anne*

I didn't have to wait long before I got a reply.

*Anne,*

*We are thrilled to have you on board. Here are audition details. Fill out the form and send in your videos, then you're in.*

*Best,  
Mr. Davis*

So I filled out the form, and spent hours practicing, and then even longer making sure the videos were just right. Finally, I emailed my videos. By then, the sun was already up again.

"Get involved: Volunteer," read the next paper I pulled from the jar. I had been thinking about volunteering for a while, at my old school to help with their play. So I called the school.

"Hello? Hi, I was wondering if you could use a volunteer? If I could help with the play online?"

"Of course. We will reach out to the director shortly. Thank you –"

Mom bursts into my room, "Anne!" I whipped around to see my mom at the door with her phone in her hand.

"Mom? Bye, thank you," I said hanging up. "What's wrong?"

My mom looks at me with a smile forming on her face.

"Anne, you can go back to school!"

