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Office of University
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Chorus Teacher Keeps in Touch with Google Hangout

Story and photos reprinted with permission from The Shelby Star

By Dustin George
Staff Writer, The Shelby Star



Gardner-Webb alumna Julia DeSerio, chorus teacher at Crest Middle School, stays connected with her students via Google Hangout. Photos courtesy Brittany Randolph / The Shelby Star

It's been more than three weeks since the singing stopped in Julia DeSerio's classroom at Crest Middle School, but the ever-dedicated chorus teacher is still finding ways to keep music in her students' lives thanks to technology.

DeSerio, a Gardner-Webb University alumna, has been hosting digital meetups for chorus students so her kids can still participate in music-making together.

Every day at 1 p.m. DeSerio boots up her laptop and signs into a Google Hangout created specifically for her class and, using the site's screen share feature, shares audio and lyrics for students to sing to while at home.

"They have to keep their mics off or else no one would be able to hear (the music) in the video, but they still get the chance to create music communally every day," said DeSerio. "It's nothing fancy, and it's not the same as being here in the classroom, but at least they are still able to create music with other people."

Rather than stick to their standard fare sheet music and piano accompaniments, DeSerio instead looks for more popular music and finds songs about staying positive for her students to sing along to

Instead of directing performances from her chair, she either leads the singalongs in the chat or joins in at certain intervals to keep everyone on track.

In the first few weeks of school being out, the online chorus meet ups have been a success. DeSerio averages about 10 students per meetup – not nearly all of her students, but enough that she can connect with and check in on a few at a time while away from school.



“I really like it. I just like to sing and don’t have anything else to do,” said Madilyne Scruggs, an eighth-grade student who joined a recent session. “And it still gives me a chance to see other people without leaving my house.”

In addition to the group sessions, she has also created a portal for one-on-one sessions with students using Google Hangouts. Students can sign up for sessions using a Google document only the class has access to and get individualized help with their performance.

“It’s kind of strange turning a performing arts classroom into an online one, but it’s kind of a good challenge in a way. It’s really challenged me to rely on technology in a way I’m not used to and to create different opportunities to keep my kids engaged,” DeSerio said.

[Read more about GWU alumna Julia DeSerio.](#)

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