

AUTHORS LAUNCH PANDEMIC DIARY PROJECT FOR CHILDREN

Embargoed until 30 March 2020, 6am

OurCoronaDiary.com

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STRAPLINE:

In the great tradition of Samuel Pepys, the Our Corona Diary project hopes to document the pandemic through the eyes of children.

SUMMARY:

Diaries have always been a window to extraordinary events in history – think Samuel Pepys on the Plague, Anne Frank on World War II, Nelson Mandela on Apartheid. A group of award-winning children’s authors are launching a project to encourage young people to keep diaries throughout the Coronavirus Crisis. The aim is to build an online archive and ultimately publish an anthology that can become part of the historic record of a time that has changed the world forever.

When the Coronavirus pandemic struck the UK, teen author Kathryn Evans had just finished reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Frank was thirteen years old when her family went into hiding in secret rooms during the second World War. She did not survive the war but the diary she kept while in hiding went on to become a multimillion bestseller.

“It was all the small, ordinary details that struck me,” said Evans, who won the 2016 Edinburgh International Book Festival First Book Award for her novel, *More of Me*.

“She was recording her family’s daily lives in hiding: how they managed things like celebrations, how they got irritated with each other. It was clear she felt completely disenfranchised. Everyone treated her like a child ... but history has shown us that she had very important things to say.”

The Diary of Anne Frank inspired Evans to spearhead the creation of **Our Corona Diary**, a diary-making project for children under lockdown during the current pandemic.

As schools closed across the UK, Evans got to work, recruiting a team of author chums to create the programme.

- They have created a website <http://ourcoronadiary.co.uk> where diary entries can be submitted and archived

- The website will link to the multitude of inspirational resources for children stuck at home that authors and illustrators have been producing in response to the outbreak
- With weekly themes and prompts posted on Instagram and Twitter, they hope to foster a sense of community amongst participants sharing their diary entries daily
- Collate the best of the content into an anthology, with a listing of the names of all the children who contributed to the project.

“A diary can give focus and meaning to a difficult experience,” said Corona Diary team member Candy Gourlay, a Carnegie shortlisted author. “We believe that this will be an important record of our children’s daily lives through this historical disruption.”

Adds Evans: “Anne Frank has shown us that young people’s voices deserve to be heard in the valuable telling of history.”

The Our Corona Diary Project launches on 30 March 2020

NOTES FOR EDITORS

WEBSITE

OurCoronaDiary.com will be live on 30 March 2020

SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram

@OurCoronaDiaryGram
#ourcoronadiary

Twitter

@OurCoronaDiary
#ourcoronadiary

THE OUR CORONA DIARY TEAM

Kathryn Evans

Kathy is an award winning author of teen novels living on a farm near Chichester. She loves dancing and fencing.

<https://kathrynevans.ink> [@kathrynevansink](https://twitter.com/kathrynevansink)

Jo Wyton

Jo is a User Experience Designer who writes novels for young adults and was a winner of the Undiscovered Voices anthology competition in 2012.

Addy Farmer

Addy is the author of many picture books for young children and the chair of the North Lincolnshire Children’s Literacy Trust.

<https://addyfarmer.com> [@addyfarmer](https://twitter.com/addyfarmer)

Candy Gourlay

Candy is a Filipino author living in London whose novels have been shortlisted for the Carnegie, Costa, Waterstones and Blue Peter Prizes.

<https://www.candygourlay.co.uk> [@candygourlay](https://twitter.com/candygourlay)

Matt Killeen

Matt spent a decade as an advertising copywriter, sportswriter and music journalist before publishing his first novel, Orphan Monster Spy, which was shortlisted for the Costa Prize.

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