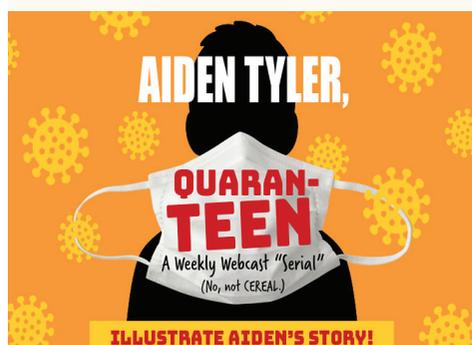




## Online resources for reading (and listening) at home

By Alissa Rosellini



As soon as schools closed, many authors, publishers, and libraries went into high gear to offer resources to support families during this challenging time. As a librarian, I have been trained to organize information, but even I have been overwhelmed by the number of amazing resources that have been shared in the last few weeks! Here are a few of my favourite free resources to keep children and teens engaged with reading and stories:

### For all ages

**Aiden Tyler, *Quaran-teen*** Author Rex Ogle has started writing a new series, aimed at students in grades 4-8, about a young teen going through school closures due to the coronavirus. Each week, he writes new chapters and reads them aloud online. Note: chapters can also be downloaded and read. <https://www.juniorlibraryguild.com/quaran-teen>

**Audible Stories** This special collection from Audible offers audiobooks for kids of all ages, from toddlers to teens. Audiobooks are offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

**Everywhere Book Fest**, coming up on May 1 and 2, came together organically just a few weeks ago! From picture books to young adult novels, there will be something for everyone. <https://everywherebookfest.com/>

### For elementary students

**Coronavirus: A Book for Children** Do your children love the pictures from *The Gruffalo*? The publisher Nosy Crow has collaborated with a team, including Axel Scheffler, *The Gruffalo* illustrator, to produce a straightforward, reassuring book about the coronavirus.

<https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-to-day-free-information-book-explaining-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler/>

**Heure du Conte** This rich French resource, put together by L'Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec (ABPQ), includes recorded storytimes as well as a calendar of upcoming live storytimes.

<https://heureduconte.ca/>

### For high school students

**Sync:** From April 30 until July 29, 2020, teens can use the Sora app to access two free audiobooks per week! For specific set-up information, see the FAQ portion of the website.

<https://www.audiobooksync.com/>

**YALLSTAYHOME:** This festival for fans of young adult literature was held online on April 25 and 26 and featured over 70 authors! Recordings from the author panels will be available soon.

<https://www.yallwest.com/>

Don't forget that school and public libraries offer many digital resources as well! For example, residents of Quebec can sign up and use the extensive online resources of the BAnQ (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec).

<https://www.banq.qc.ca/formulaires/abonnement/index.html>

*Alissa Rosellini is a board librarian with the English Montreal School Board.*

## Cummings Centre provides free access to its Virtual Learning Library

By Janice Besner

To help break social isolation, the Cummings Centre is offering free access to its online library featuring over 150 English and French-language videos on-demand to the community-at-large. The Virtual Learning Library funded by the Leonard Albert Family Foundation houses previously recorded videos of past Cummings lectures, blockbuster events and classes from experts in the field of well-aging. Topics include music, art, exercise, entertainment, politics, travel and more!

### Adapted exercises classes, sing-alongs available online

"As an organization, we never expected to be living through these unprecedented times," said Maria Fragapane, supervisor of Adapted Fitness and Wellness at the Cummings Centre. "Our primary objective has always been to provide customized health and wellness programs to older adults. Although our mission has not changed because of these critical circumstances, we have definitely adjusted the way in which we deliver our programming to comply with social distancing recommendations. We are leveraging technology such as expanding our video library to include more online classes, emailing and FaceTiming with members. We're also using 'old school approaches' such as letter writing and care calls to keep our participants connected, engaged and physically active. So far the response is really positive and we feel that we are contributing by helping them to stay motivated and on track."

The Wellness Centre has worked to provide members and non-members alike with free on-line exercise class options that can be done at home. These classes include adapted programs for participants whether following a stroke, progressive neuromuscular disorders (Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis) or other health challenges.

Victoria McNeil is a music therapist and staff member at the Cummings Centre and

Exercise for Multiple Sclerosis with Maria Fragapane



stresses that singing together is the key to cognitive and emotional health for many individuals. "I knew I needed to provide a service to our program participants once the Centre's program closures hit. The Virtual Library was the perfect platform to ensure that I could reach as many Cummings members as possible in their homes. A little bit can go a long way where music making is concerned. Taking time to breathe and feel a little music in your body helps calm our nervous systems, boosts cognitive function, and allows us a moment to play," she said. McNeil's Happy Hour Ukulele Club winter sessions ended prematurely due to the shutdown. She has been sending her club members instructional videos so they can continue to master their skills.

"Ultimately, we are doing our best to keep our participants connected, engaged and physically active," added Fragapane. "Hopefully we're succeeding in helping them stay motivated and on track with on-line exercise program support."

*New videos are uploaded weekly. Individuals can sign up for free at [www.cummingscentre.org/virtual-learning](http://www.cummingscentre.org/virtual-learning)*

*Janice Besner is the Communications, Marketing and Membership manager at the Cummings Centre.*