

Community asked to 'share the love' with the Class of 2020

Alachua County Public Schools is reaching out to the residents of Alachua County to ask for help in honoring the Class of 2020.

Because of COVID-19, this year's graduating high school seniors have missed out on many senior year traditions, including proms, Grad Bash, and awards ceremonies.

The district is finalizing plans for a combination of activities, programs and events to celebrate graduates, but is also asking local citizens to display messages of support for the Class of 2020 sometime during the period from May 26 through June 10, which is the final day the district will be holding graduation ceremonies. That could include messages on marquees/signs at businesses, churches, schools and other organizations, yard signs, even signs in windows or along fence lines at homes and businesses.

"We'd like everyone's help in blanketing the area with messages so that any students and families who may be out and about will know that this community is behind them," said the district's Director of Communications Jackie Johnson. "Even a 'We love the Class of 2020!' in shoe polish on a car window will be meaningful."

Johnson is also asking local citizens to share their messages on social media. The district plans to post some of the more creative messages seen around the community on its Facebook (@AlachuaCountyPublicSchools) and Twitter (@AlachuaSchools), and is encouraging people to use #WeLoveACPSGrads on Twitter.

The district is currently working with local media outlets to honor the Class of 2020 in other ways. Through a collaboration with CBS4 and with the support of Scorpio Construction and other local sponsors, graduation videos will be broadcast on the station featuring the names and photos of graduating seniors from each of the district's seven high schools. The district is also working with the Gainesville Sun on a special insert highlight the Class of 2020 that is being sponsored by Florida Credit Union and other supporters

"I've been so heartened by the number of individuals, businesses and organizations that have reached out to find out how they can support our graduating seniors," said Superintendent Karen Clarke. "They want the students to know that they recognize what they've missed and that they deserve recognition."

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