

# Coronavirus Causes Americans To Have Fun At Easter At A Distance Of Less Than 6 Feet Apart

Article content NEW YORK Easter is a very special holiday for 6-year-old Nora Heddendorf. It's a time when she loves to dress up in fancy shoes and fancy dresses and go on a hunt with her family and friends to find brightly colored eggs.

The coronavirus pandemic forced her to adjust this year. She will complete her Easter outfit by wearing a white mask and blue disposable gloves and a bottle of disinfectant wipes. After hearing that the annual egg hunt in her New Jersey town might be put on hold, she thought of an "rock hunt."

The content of the article Nora's hunt not just substitutes brightly colored stones for eggs, which are scarce at some stores, but also allows her neighbors to do their hunting during their social-distancing walks.

"I was disappointed that it was cancelled because of the virus" the kindergartener said to Reuters in a telephone interview. "I would like to make people happy."

The pandemic has affected everyone from the White House to small towns parks. It also led to the suspension of the traditional Easter egg hunts across the United States. Closed churches and cancelled plans for Easter meals with extended families.

But many Americans are still looking for ways to have fun during the holidays, from an Oregon candy maker making chocolate bunnies with face masks to an Texas church hosting an egg hunt in virtual reality with the game Minecraft.

Article content Nora and her mother began organizing their hunt in Medford Lakes a few weeks ago. She assembled dozens DIY kits, each containing five rocks and four paint colors, directions, and all wrapped in plastic bags. She put on disposable gloves and sprayed the contents with disinfectant.

The kits were left outside her house for anyone who wants to take them home. On her Facebook page, Nora's Rocks the young artist encouraged her followers to return the decorated rocks to her to keep in.

"Thank you for helping Nora's Rocks bring our community closer but also separating us," she wrote in the instruction letter she included with the kits.

Her mother, Samantha Heddendorf, president of an environmental cleanup firm which has been removing toxins from structures affected by the coronavirus crisis. The hunt is scheduled to begin on Good Friday and continue through Easter Sunday, with new paint-stained rocks being hidden every day.

Article content The goal is to put 500 stone "eggs" in every corner and crevice of the 1 square mile (2.6 square km) town.

"When people are out on their walks with friends, they could look for rocks, or what are known as Easter Eggs. They could have something to look for and then grab them and at the very least, have a smile to share the joy of Easter," Samantha Heddendorf said.

In Central Point, Oregon, chocolatier Jeff Shepherd had a brainstorm to save his Lillie Belle Farms from shutdown due to the coronavirus. He told his Facebook followers that he would make "Covid Bunnies" which are dark and milk chocolate confections with white masks on them and white chocolate ones with blue face masks.

It was a roaring success. Shepherd was able to hire back seven of his full-time employees. The business sold 5,000 bunnies and is now scrambling to fill back orders.

Article content Safe distancing to stop spread of the virus is what prompted the Tate Springs Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, to go digital with its Easter Egg hunt, using Minecraft but removing potentially frightening game elements such as monsters.

"Our main goal is to spread the gospel, but we also want the kids to still enjoy Easter," said Reverend Curtis James.

Nora was thrilled to find that her concept was appreciated by so many. The mayor of the town stopped by to look at the kits, and the Lions Club invited her for lunch "when the whole thing is over."

Her most cherished "thanks" was gift-wrapped rolls of toilet paper. This was among the most popular items that people panic-shopped for during the pandemic.

Nora said, "My mom smiled when toilet paper arrived." (Reporting by Barbara Goldberg in New York. Additional reporting by Rich McKay in Atlanta; Editing by Rosalba O'Brien.)