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Welcome to our special digital edition of the Westsider!



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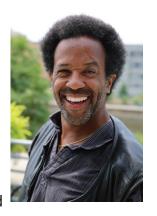
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(☑**)** Forward

Hello Westside Neighbors,

I hope that you are in good health. It is fun welcoming another spring, as this time of year lends itself to a less rushed hello when we head to and fro. Like spring and summer in the past, the Westside Neighborhood Board hopes to host several events. However, due to the current state of things, it remains to be seen whether or not we will be able to mingle. We will do our best to keep you informed



in the most timely way possible. We hope you continue to offer a "socially distanced," yet friendly, wave and smile as you pass your neighbors in your own pocket of the neighborhood.

I marvel at the number of people who walk their dogs in our beautiful Westside Neighborhood. It is fun to see the different dogs sniffing around, oftentimes leading their owners more than the owners lead their four-legged companions! As friendly and playful as your dog may be, we still must be diligent to ensure the safety of others. The Lansing City Ordinance requires that, "A dog owner is required to secure his or her dog within the limits of the owner's premises, except when the dog is securely tethered on a leash and under the control of a person holding the leash who is capable of restraining the dog at all times."

(Ord. No. 1050, 6-10-02) If you notice something out of the ordinary about a dog in the neighborhood, you are encouraged to call the Lansing Police Department (LPD) non-emergency number or the Ingham County Animal Control (ICAC). Please be able to tell dispatch where the dog lives or was last seen. LPD can be few reached at (517) 483-4600 and ICAC at (517) 676-8370.

Spring is also a great opportunity to see if your neighbors could use an assist. Perhaps something prevents them from being as diligent on things like lawn maintenance. I know of one Westsider who was not physically able to mow his lawn, nor was he in a financial position to hire someone. Wouldn't it be cool if you could mow that neighbor's lawn or hire a neighborhood teen to help?

Let us know what you think about the digital version of "The Westsider". The Westside Neighborhood Board knows how vitally important it is to be able to reach all of our neighbors. And we want to make sure we can do that in an efficient, as well as, frugal manner. Although your paid ads do help out immensely, we took this opportunity during the Stay Home Stay Safe period to try out this digital version. Please contact the editors with your suggestions on how we can improve. And of course we also welcome knowing what you liked about the newsletter.

It seems a lot of you have jump started your spring cleaning. I admire those who were able to take advantage of the Stay Home Stay Safe situation. The kids and I enjoy walking around the neighborhood admiring the beautiful lawns. I'll be happy when the littlest ones in the house will be able to help us plant a few flowers. Until then I'll make sure they don't pick yours!

We are going through this together. Let's do so in the most neighborly way possible.

On behalf of the Westside Neighborhood Board of Directors, be well fellow Westsiders. We are glad you are here, because it is you that make the West Side the Best Side.

~ Metro Melik

President of the WNA Board

2020 WNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Melik Brown

Vice President: Mitzi Allen
Treasurer: Merry Rosenberg
Secretary: Jenny McInerney

Laura Hall | Matt Black | Jamie Widing Black | Heath Lowry | Maya Jones

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Sympathy

On behalf of the Board of the Westside Neighborhood Association, we express our deepest condolences to our WNA families and all others who have lost a loved one to Covid-19.

There is never a convenient time to lose someone, but the current circumstances are making a difficult process even harder. We know that there are few words, if any, that can ease your grief. Until we can once again indulge in simple gatherings, we send virtual hugs your way.

To you and your family, may the peace that comes from the memories of shared love comfort you now and in the days ahead.

With deepest sympathy and condolences.

Remarkable Westsiders Help Make City Safer



The Westside is a beautiful historic neighborhood known for its wonderful homes with unique character and winding streets lined with mature shade trees. It is home to what some consider the best high school in Lansing, J. W. Sexton High, and it has a mix of vibrant young crowd and longtime residents, known for their strong sense of community.

So, it's no surprise that many residents have stepped up to help make Lansing safe against the Covid-19 pandemic

The Board of the Westside Neighborhood Association wants to thank our essential workers and first responders, all of whom deserve our appreciation and admiration. This includes health care workers, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and respiratory therapists who now find themselves on the front lines of this fight against Covid-19.

Also deserving of our gratitude are our police officers, emergency medical technicians, firefighters, utility pole workers, and others who continue to respond to calls and medical emergencies.

And we certainly must include postal workers; custodial workers who keep others safe by disinfecting work spaces; grocery workers who keep the shelves stocked and check us out at our favorite stores; and delivery people who bring our groceries, medicines, and other essential supplies.

Necessity has borne a cottage industry within our borders as many of you are making masks and scrubs for the first responders and hospitals.

You are unselfishly volunteering to distribute food to those in need, checking on our senior neighbors, arranging visual tours for our neighborhood kids, donating books, games, and money, and so much more. In other words, YOU ALL ROCK, and we are very appreciative of your efforts.

We all rely on these services and your actions make a difference when it counts the most.

The Board applauds all of our neighborhood workers. We will get through this together.

For City of Lansing Covid-19 information and resources, visit the City's website.

Crime and Safety Updates

On March 23, 2020, Governor Whitmer issued a "**Stay Home, Stay Safe**" directive to help curb the spread of Covid-19. Initially set to expire on May 1, 2020, the Governor has now extended the restrictions to May 15.

As we approach the end of one month in quarantine (and the prospect of a slow establishment of a "new normal"), Crime and Safety wanted to share the current state of crime amid the pandemic — and offer some suggestions to help you and your family stay safe.

Across our community, property crime is down in most places —especially acts against private residences. And there is a dip in most violent crime as well. But not all criminal activity is decreasing with social distancing. Here are crimes that seem to be growing as our days on lockdown stretch on:

- Vehicle theft and vandalism
- Domestic and family violence
- Burglary of commercial businesses left vacant
- Hate crimes (especially against Asian Americans)

- Financial scams
- Price gouging
- Defying stay-at-home orders and restrictions on public gatherings

Domestic Violence

If you or someone you know is the victim of domestic abuse, the <u>Michigan 24/7 domestic violence hotline</u> is available to provide support. They offer a call line with translation, on-website chat, a texting line, TTY for deaf and hard-of-hearing callers and more. Nationally, the <u>National Domestic Violence Hotline is available online</u> or at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). Calls are free, confidential, and offer support in more than 200 languages.

Be on the lookout for children who you suspect may be abused. For some children, school is their only safe place; the only place they are safe from abuse; and the only place they receive proper meals.

If you suspect abuse or neglect, call the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' hotline at 855-444-3911 any time, day or night. This toll-free phone number allows you to report abuse or neglect of any child or adult. One number. One call.

Scams to Watch out For

Possibly the only thing as pervasive as Covid-19 is the unending stream of scams targeting us when we are at our most vulnerable. Do not give the scammers any victories as they prey on the fallout of a pandemic. Here's what to look out for—and what you can do about it.

IRS Stimulus Check Scams

Stimulus money is starting to hit bank accounts, but scammers have been trying to swipe your funds since the bill was approved by the White House. Do not respond to any of the following in regard to your stimulus payment.

- Emails from the IRS or Treasury Department
- Texts from the IRS or Treasury Department
- Calls from the IRS or Treasury Department
- Mail from the IRS or Treasury Department

The bottom line is that **neither the IRS nor the Treasury Department will contact you for any information** related to your stimulus payment. Do not give anyone your social security number, full name, birthdate, or precious time.

"Economic impact funds" will be automatically deposited into bank accounts for eligible tax filers who already filed taxes this year. If you did not receive your refund via direct deposit, you will be issued a check in the mail. If you have not yet filed your taxes, or are not usually required to file, you can <u>fill out an online IRS form</u> to receive your payment.

Charity Scams

There has been a spike in emails, texts, and phone calls soliciting donations for phony charity organizations and others claiming to represent the World Health Organization (WHO) or the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

- Do not respond to these messages.
- Do not click on any links.
- Do not provide any personal information.

There is little question that scam artists come out in droves when crises strike. Now they are online and making robocalls.

Because it is difficult to tell what is legitimate, you need to be cautious. There are several guidelines you can follow to avoid getting fleeced. **Suggestions** from the <u>Charity Navigator</u> are available online, including asking the charity what their "EIN" is. If they don't have one — don't donate. Once they give you their EIN, you can find them on the <u>Charity Navigator site</u>. If you can't — don't donate.

Where to Report Scams

To report fraud or a scam in the state of Michigan from Lansing to Detroit, contact the Attorney General, the Better Business Bureau, or local police.

Michigan Department of Attorney General Consumer Protection Division P.O. Box 30213
Lansing, MI 48909
517-335-7599

Fax: 517-241-3771

Toll free: 877-765-8388

Lansing Police Department

Non-Emergency phone: 517-483-4600

The Crime and Safety Committee of the Westside Neighborhood Association will again hold meetings when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we will

continue to monitor the crimes happening in our neighborhood and work through the Neighborhood Watch Program to keep residents updated.

If you have not signed up to become a member of Neighborhood Watch, please contact <u>Laura Hall</u> of the WNA Board.



Stay-Home Stay-Safe. If you must go out, please remember to wear a cloth mask and stay at least 6 feet away from others. Along with social distancing, regular and thorough washing of your hands is one of the best defenses against acquiring Covid-19. Give your hands a thorough scrub for twenty seconds each time you return home.

By working together and complying with the stay at home order, we will safely get through this pandemic together.

Time to Plant: Median Captains Wanted

In addition to our grant applications, the WNA has applied for 25 neighborhood planting kits from the City's Neighborhoods in Bloom program. Each kit covers 24 square feet and includes 2 bags of colored mulch and assorted annual and perennial flowers. If you would like a planting kit, there are many lovely parks and medians around the neighborhood that would benefit from a beautiful pop of color!

We know that many of the neighborhood's common areas have been thoughtfully and lovingly cared for over the years by dedicated neighbors. We are not asking you to disrupt those carefully planned medians! If you have a question as to whether your local median has an informal caretaker, this is a great opportunity to ask your neighbors and find a way to work together. Maybe those caring for your nearest median have recently moved away or are no longer able to maintain it as easily. Perhaps they would like to share

responsibility for the upkeep, taking turns weeding or watering. Maybe you can work together to incorporate your favorite flower in the planting scheme. However, if the Neighborhoods in Bloom program can supplement that plan, or if it can be the foundation of a new garden in your area, we would love to help.

Additionally, we would like to create a master list of "median captains" for the neighborhood. If you have been caring for a common area, please email <u>Jenny McInerney</u> with a description of the area and the names of any caretakers.

If you would like a flower planting kit, at this point the city is proceeding with the program and planning to deliver them to Letts Community Center between May 15 and May 17. They cannot guarantee a delivery time or date at this time, but if you provide your contact to jenny.mcinerney@gmail.com, we can email you when the kits are delivered.

While we're on the beautification topic, please make sure trash is not left lying around now that spring has arrived. With the Covid-19 virus rearing its ugly head, it is more difficult for people to pick up trash not knowing where it has been, including cigarette butts, dog waste, and protective masks and gloves. Thanks for keeping the Westside beautiful.

Curbside Yard Waste Collection:

The city's curbside collection of yard waste began Monday, May 4, 2020. Due to the large amount of yard waste that residents have at the curbside already, it is likely that collection will not take place on the normal collection day until crews are able to catch up. Read more.

Eagle Scout Project Underway in the Westside

Submitted by Josh Russell

My name is Josh and I am a 14year-old Boy Scout who lives in the Westside Neighborhood. I am currently working on my Eagle Scout Project and, in partnership with the Westside Neighborhood Board, we will be planting trees in our neighborhood, hopefully next month.



Covid-19 has thrown us a little curve, but we still plan on doing the project. My part of the project was recently officially approved by the Scout Council and we will be ready to go as soon as we have the trees.

Although the WNA Board applied for a grant for trees from the Board of Water and Light, we are unsure of how many trees we will be receiving. If you haven't already signed up for a tree and still want one, please email me at jrerussell@yahoo.com. When it comes time and we are able to do the project, I will be asking for volunteers to help. I expect that boys from my Troop 111 will also be helping out.

I am also raising money for the project to buy any extra trees and materials that we need to fund the project. I have made Michigan compass keychains that sell for \$5.00 a piece. Email me at jrerussell@yahoo.com, or send a text message to 517-749-6946 and I will deliver them to your doorstep.

WNA Annual Meeting Brings Neighbors Together



WNA Board President Melik Brown kicks off the 2020 WNA Annual Meeting.

The WNA Annual Meeting was held Jan. 15, 2020, at the Sexton High School cafeteria. Approximately 50 neighbors of all ages attended and they were treated to a great experience. This included the fabulous food spread that featured a delicious taco bar offering both vegetarian and meat options and yummy pot-luck contributions from neighbors, but also wonderful programming, AND a surprise musical performance by two amazing singers from the outstanding Sexton choir. Maria Camacho and Delaiah Trainor accompanied by choir teacher Josh Hicks regaled us with musical performances and displayed the remarkable talent that resides right here in our neighborhood.

The programming was both informational and interesting. Josh Russell explained his Eagle Scout project to us. Per the above article, Josh is organizing a tree planting project to replace some of the many trees we lost in the 2013 ice storm. He is partnering with the WNA, which has applied for a donation of trees to assist in this project. Read more.

Andi Crawford and DeLisa Fountain from the City of Lansing spoke about issues impacting the City and our neighborhood. They explained the Census 2020 Project and fielded other pertinent questions from neighbors, including the grants process and the new trash pickup regulations.

We were also treated to a presentation from Pave the Way. This group has assembled a treasure trove of data and memorabilia from the project that built 496 smack through the City of Lansing and extending into East Lansing. While the project had merit in its purpose of improving travel across the City, it also had an unfortunate impact on neighborhoods that were broken up by the construction, most notably the Westside. Houses were torn down to accommodate the project and the neighborhood was split in two. Pave the Way has prepared a presentation that explains all of the nuances of this project. It was initially scheduled for April but is currently on hold, pending the end of the state of emergency necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lastly, Board members were elected: Melik Brown, Mitzi Allen, Jenny McInerney, Merry Rosenberg, and Laura Hall. We have since added four additional Board members: Matt Black, Jamie Widing Black, Heath Lowry, and Maya Jones. And at our first monthly meeting, officers were elected: President Melik Brown; Vice-President Mitzi Allen; Secretary Jenny McInerney; and Treasurer Merry Rosenberg. The Board is meeting virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic; contact board@wnalansing.com to submit topics for an upcoming meeting.

Neighborhood Angels Support Food Bank

Members of the Westside Neighborhood have continued to ensure access to food resources by contributing money to cover the delivery costs of the food delivered to Letts Community Center by the Greater Lansing Food Bank. The food itself is supported by a grant from the city. The WNA chips in about \$200 to cover the delivery costs of that food. After putting out a call for volunteers to sponsor the delivery costs, our neighbors responded in a big way, covering half of 2019 and the first 6 months of 2020. Food Angel Sponsors are still necessary to ensure we do not deplete the dwindling coffers of the WNA treasury. If you are able to assist, or if a few neighbors want to combine resources to sponsor a month, please message Merry Rosenberg. Thanks in advance!

Black History: Clara Busby



An unsung champion of Lansing's black community for more than fifty years, Rev. Clara Busby was born on September 19, 1894, in Mound, Illinois. She and her husband Grover moved to Lansing in 1927.

Clara Busby broke race and gender barriers in Lansing in a number of fields. In late 1930, she was the first black woman hired by the Reo Motor Car Co. as a security matron. In 1940, she became the first black owner and operator of a Lansing women's shop, the West Side Apparel Shop.

She and her husband, Grover, operated Lansing's first black full-service restaurant, the Black Forest Restaurant. Mrs. Busby was also the first black licensed female realtor in the area. In 1957, at the age of 62, Rev. Busby was ordained as a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She went on to found the Oak Grove Community Church, in the late 1960s, she completed a degree in sociology at Michigan State University.

Rev. Busby also mentored hundreds of black people who migrated to Lansing, including the late civil rights leader Malcolm X. She was also listed in The Negro Motorist Green Book, an annual listing of lodging, diners, gas stations, and other businesses that would accommodate the needs of the black customer. Created in 1936 by Harlem-based postman Victor H. Green, the Green Book served the public until passage of the Civil Rights Act in the 1960s ended legal segregation.

In her spare time, Rev. Busby and her husband, a bricklaying contractor, renovated old houses to ensure that black laborers and MSU students could have decent housing. If Lansing's new arrivals didn't have money, the Busbys would let them stay until they found a job. She would often feed them and provide them with bed linens when they moved.

In 1970, as president of the United Mothers of Greater Lansing, Rev. Busby headed a drive sending food and 1550 pounds of clothing to flood victims in Fayette, MS. She convinced Oldsmobile's president to lend trucks for the effort.

Relocated by way of the construction of 496, Rev. Busby moved from St. Joe and Butler streets to the McPherson subdivision, where she remained until her death. Rev. Clara Busby died in July 1994.

Be Informed About Your Rights and Resources as a Lansing City Voter

Submitted by Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope

In this Presidential Election Year, I wanted to pass along information to assist you to make the voting process as easy as possible. Voters now have many more options to ensure that their voices are heard in our democracy.

Voting from Home (Absentee Voting)

As I write this in early April under the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order, I encourage every voter to take advantage of the opportunity to vote from home (also known as absentee voting). In order for my office to mail you a ballot, you need to complete an application. The application can be found on my website at Lansingmi.gov/clerk. However, the form is not even required. You can write a short note requesting that we mail you a ballot; include the address where you want the ballot mailed to, and sign the note.

There are many options to submit this written request:

- Take a picture of it and email it to me at <u>city.clerk@lansingmi.gov</u>.
- 2. **Fax** the request to 517-377-0068.
- 3. **Use a secured drop box** at South Washington Election Unit, 2500 S. Washington or Lansing City Hall.
- Mail to Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope, 124 W. Michigan Ave 9th Floor, Lansing, MI, 48933

You can fill out the application <u>NOW</u> and request a ballot to be mailed to your home for the August Primary and the November General Election. Ballots will be mailed to you about 40 days before the election. You have until Election Day at 8 p.m. to return your ballot. Under Michigan Law, we are not permitted to count ballots that arrive late in the mail.

We will accept absentee ballots at the South Washington Office located at 2500 S. Washington, or at City Hall located at 124 W. Michigan. If you do not drop off or mail your absentee ballot, you can still vote in person at your precinct. You will be required to bring and surrender your absentee ballot to your precinct. You will then be given a new ballot to vote at the polls.

Beginning forty days before every election and continuing until 4 p.m. on the Monday the day before the election, I open the South Washington Election Unit during regular business hours (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.), as well as extended Wednesdays and some weekend hours, to allow one-stop, in-person voting. Located at 2500 S. Washington, the Election Unit offers free parking, a 24-hour secure drop box, and is conveniently located on CATA Route #2.

City of Lansing voters may also come to the City Clerk's Office on the 9th floor of City Hall during regular business hours to register to vote, complete the absentee voter application, obtain their ballot, and even complete their ballot if they know their desired candidates and proposal choices. They can also take

their ballot home to have an opportunity to consider their choices in a quiet place. Just make sure to remember to return the completed ballot!

Voter Registration at Your Local Clerks Up To and Including Election Day
There is no longer a deadline for voter registration. Beginning forty days from
and including Election Day, a Lansing City citizen can come to either location of
the City Clerk's Office with proof of residency to register and vote both in one
visit.

Prior to 14 days before an election, U.S. citizens can register to vote at the Clerk's Offices, Secretary of State Branches, by mail, or even online with your Michigan driver's license or state ID. It is very easy to register to vote online at Michigan.gov/vote. One does not have to wait until they are 18 years old to register to vote. If someone will be 18 by the November 3rd Presidential Election, they can register NOW! There is no need to wait until Election Day to register to vote!

Many people incorrectly believe that they are unable to vote. Citizens who are no longer incarcerated can vote. Also people who have moved within the City are STILL able to vote. Don't assume that you are unable to vote. Call my office and let's make sure you have the correct information, including your polling location.

Before going to the polls, make a plan. You have lots of options on exercising your right to vote. Please visit <u>Lansingmi.gov/clerk</u> or call 517-483- 4133 if you have questions. You will discover links on our website to:

- Voter Registration Verification & Polling Location (with a map!)
- Preview YOUR Personal Sample Ballot
- Absentee Ballot Request Forms
- Links to Nonpartisan Voting Resources

Photo ID and Voting

If you happen to forget your photo identification on the way to the polls or do not possess an acceptable ID, your vote will still be counted in most situations. There is a brief affidavit to sign that states that you do not have an ID with you at that time. Also, you do NOT need your voter registration card to vote. The following types of photo ID are acceptable at polling locations:

- Michigan driver's license or state-issued ID card
- Driver's license or personal identification card issued by another state

- Federal or state government-issued photo identification
- · U.S. passport
- Military ID with photo
- Student identification with photo from a high school or accredited institution of higher learning
- Tribal identification card with photo

There are a few first time voters who registered by mail that must meet a federal ID requirement. If you are a first time voter and you did not register at the Secretary of State, county clerk, or local clerk's office, I strongly advise you to bring ID or a document with your name and address, such as a utility bill.

Bradly and I are proud to have been part of the Westside Neighborhood for 20 years. It is easy to take for granted doing our civic duty - things like completing the census or voting. However, it is these actions which provide us a collective voice to elected leaders, myself included. Voting - Make it a Habit!

Graduation Wish to Sexton Seniors

By Mitzi Allen

Ever since kindergarten, you've been waiting, dreaming about your senior year. Your chance to walk across the big stage to receive your diploma. Every high school diploma is the result of a lot of hard work by both parents and graduates. High school graduation is an exciting chapter in the continuing story of your family's life together. It's also a moment to celebrate accomplishments, share your memories, and look toward the future.



Only this year, 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has put your senior excitement on hold.

There may be no graduation ceremonies, no award assembly, no prom night, no senior class trip, no celebratory hugs, no exchange of senior pictures, not even a class picture.

While you are in the middle of the pandemic, you may not realize how your life has been changed. When I graduated in 1968, little did I know that it would be the year that changed America. Taking center stage then was civil unrest, the

Vietnam War, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., astronauts circling the moon, and the Beatles.

You, too, will get through this pandemic. Many of you will go on to pursue secondary degrees; some will go into the Military; others will become gainfully employed. In other words, you will continue to live, continue to make memories, continue to reach accomplishments. At your 10 year high school reunion, you will reconnect with your classmates and compare notes of how the pandemic changed you. You will share pictures; you will laugh; and you will have been made stronger by way of it.

On behalf of the Board of the Westside Neighborhood Association, we would like to send congratulations to the Big Red Graduating Class of 2020. Graduation is not the end. It's the beginning, and we encourage you to be bold, to be courageous, be willing to embrace wonder, to experience unexpected discovery, and to go in unknown directions. Join other Big Reds who are spread out across the country. As a Big Red, you are unstoppable!

You are the Big Reds, the mighty, mighty Big Reds, Everywhere you go, people wanna know who you are, so you tell them We are the Big Reds

We salute you and all your accomplishments, past, current, and future!

Pet Spotlight: Ava

Ava is a 6-year-old black Labrador mix that has guarded the southwest corner of the Westside for the last two years. Her insistent bark at those walking down "her" street belies a sweet and well-behaved pooch. Since her humans rescued her from an abusive situation, she has accompanied them on several moves from the Lansing area to metro Detroit and back again, finally



settling in the Westside.

She is hopelessly devoted to her humans, and spends much of her time gazing at them adoringly and following them around the house.

A constant sidekick during her dad's work on their home to-do list and a keen observer of her mom's cooking adventures, she merely tolerates her furry siblings, rescued cats Morton and Banjo. Banjo fondly remembers the days when they were the same size and evenly matched in their wrestling contests. While his voracious appetite threatens to help him overtake her in size (he's 19 lbs to her 67), they've agreed on a truce for now.

Interests include tug of war, fetch, and convincing unknowing humans that she isn't actually allergic to grain and can eat whatever they give her. An unquestionable daddy's girl, she loves to snuggle her mom's giant teddy bear and prop herself up on any pillow and behave like the princess she is.

Ava hopes to join her mom for classes in apparition (magically transporting from one place to another) at Hogwarts, as she loves to visit new and old places but gets anxious about the process of getting there. She especially enjoys visiting her furry cousins Bailey, Finn, and Bruce in Cadillac, and her Lansing friends at Soldan's dog park, where she shows off her swimming skills.





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