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NEWS

GRANDPARENTS GETTING CREATIVE TO BOND WITH GRANDKIDS

MELANIE HENNESSEY
mhennessey@metro-land.com

As the world continues social distancing, local grandparents are using inventive and tech-savvy ways to stay in touch with their grandchildren during the pandemic.

From giving goodnight kisses up against the glass of a window to the world of online video chats, grandmothers and grandfathers are going the extra mile to maintain the bond with their special little ones.

Rosemary Hart has been spending virtual time with her four grandchildren via Zoom — the video communication technology that's experienced a surge in popularity since the pandemic began.

"I'm just so thankful that we have that way to keep in touch," she said.

The Georgetown native said she's also been picking up groceries for one of her children and using the time when she drops the food off to stay on the property and watch her grandchildren play, from a safe distance.

"It's just so hard to not be able to hug them," she said.

With Monica Van Helden's grandchildren being on the younger side — five months old, and two and a half years old — the Acton grandmother has been getting creative to keep their attention on video calls.

She hosts virtual scavenger hunts for her grandson's favourite toy dinosaurs. The boy also enjoys his grandfather reading stories during their time to-

gether on Facebook Messenger.

"Another day I showed Forrest how Oma made bread in the bread maker, and we did a dinosaur puzzle together. Forrest told me what pieces matched," said Van Helden. "Sometimes he gets sad and we need to cut it short. I'm sure he wonders why he can't see Oma and Opa in person."

With Van Helden seeing her grandchildren weekly since they were born, the separation has been particularly tough.

"Now, I haven't been able to hug and kiss them since March 16," she said.

For grandparents living in long-term care facilities, there have also been challenges to overcome to stay

See - page 11

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