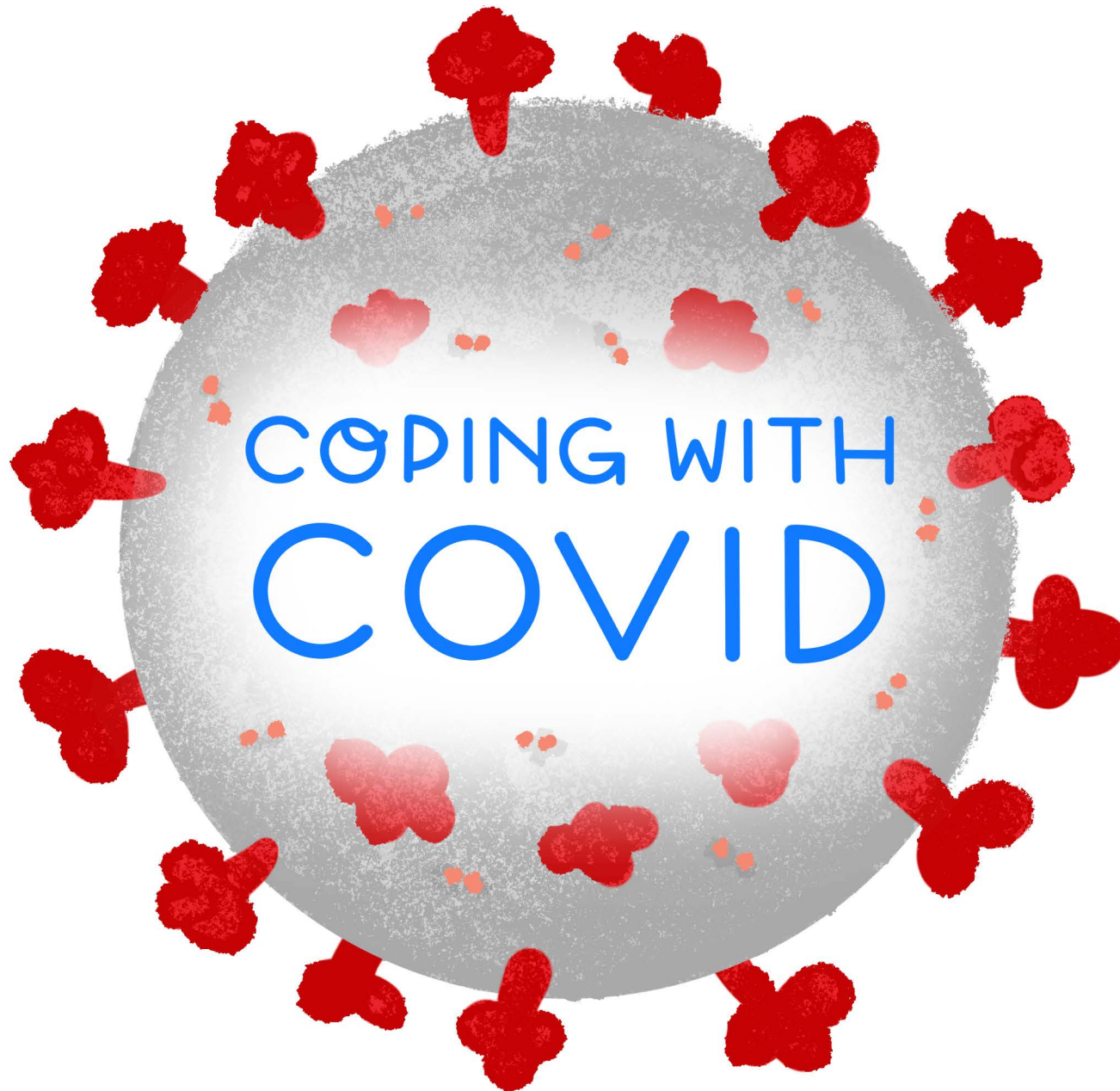


ALLIANCE FOR EQUALITY



Alliance for Equality and Coping with COVID

A production of the George Wolfe Youth Interns at Topeka Independent Living Resource Center:

Katelyn Arnold Jaylen Austin Terah Dexter

Natalie Kahre Daisy Lopez-Jara Josulyn Salsbury

Design and Illustrations by: Dean Strauss, <https://coffeeandtheartist.com/>

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Who We Are

The Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILRC) is a civil and human rights organization. Our mission is to advocate for justice, equality, and essential services for a fully accessible and integrated society for all people with disabilities. At TILRC we practice Independent Living Philosophy. Independent Living Philosophy emphasizes consumer control. People with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs. People with disabilities deserve equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities.

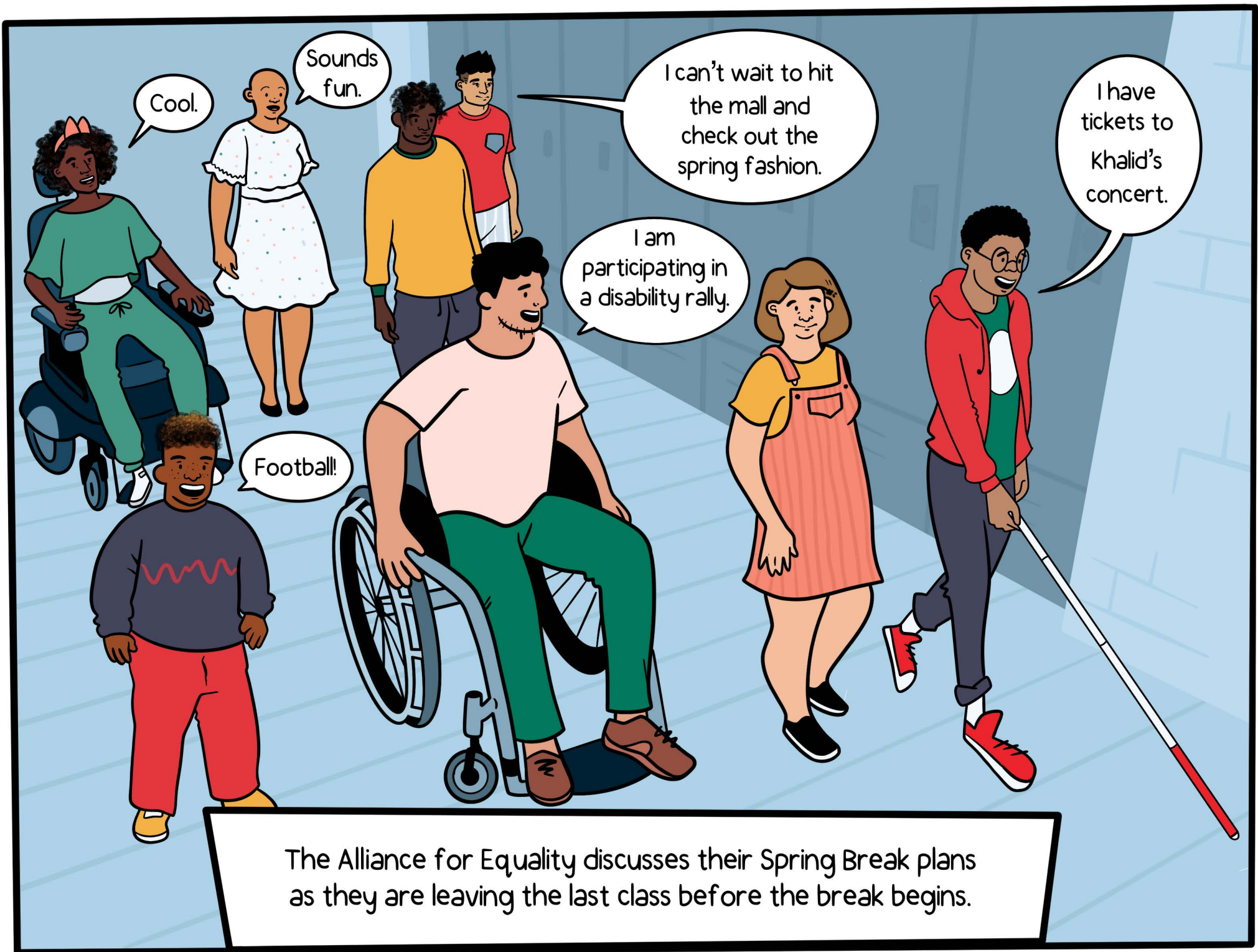
Every summer, TILRC hosts the George Wolf Youth Program (GWYP). GWYP is a paid summer internship for students between the ages of 14 and 19. Although we have a hiring preference for students with disabilities, any student in this age group with an interest in learning about Disability Rights and Independent Living Philosophy is encouraged to apply.

George Wolf was a former President of the TILRC Board of Directors. As a consumer, TILRC helped George get moved back into the community. He worked with TILRC to find a job with the Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns and a passion for grassroots advocacy. George had an abiding love for Justice and supporting the people around him. His love was expressed by joining in arrests for civil disobedience, or in working with young people to find their voice.

After his untimely passing, the TILRC Board of Directors developed the George Wolf Youth Program to honor his memory. The program supports new generations of advocates committed to a fully accessible and integrated society for all people with disabilities.

In the early days of COVID restrictions, TILRC invited past members of GWYP to take part in an “impromptu” internship. Building on their past work publishing the Alliance for Equality series, the interns took on the very real issues they were facing. We honor and appreciate their honesty and courage in this book “Coping with COVID,” and the upcoming “Early the Next Morning.”

To learn more, check out our websites at: www.tilrc.org and www.outofthemargins.org



Cool.

Sounds fun.

I can't wait to hit the mall and check out the spring fashion.

I have tickets to Khalid's concert.

I am participating in a disability rally.

Football!

The Alliance for Equality discusses their Spring Break plans as they are leaving the last class before the break begins.



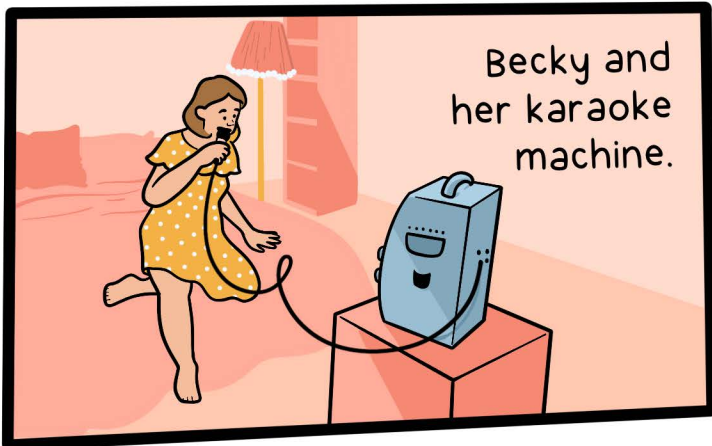
Tom playing football.



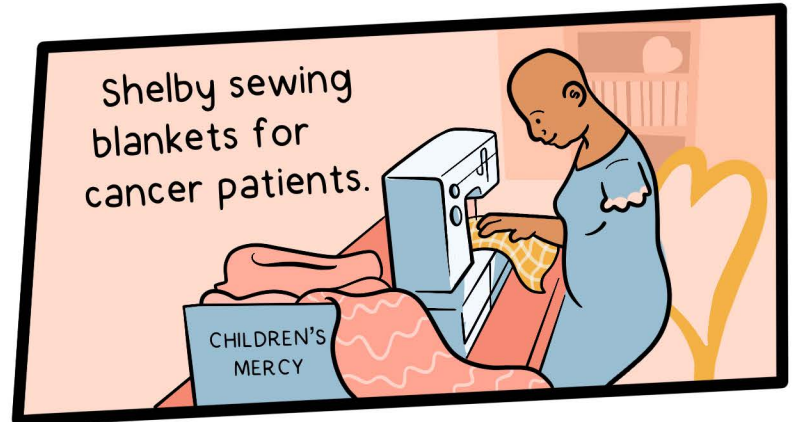
Jordan developing a new game.



Kinsey taking selfies in the park.



Becky and her karaoke machine.



Shelby sewing blankets for cancer patients.



Dre at Khalid's concert.



James shopping.



Carlos at the disability rally.

Taking a break from playing video games, Carlos and Kinsey hear breaking news. A pandemic is happening all over the world. School is cancelled. Carlos sends out a group text.

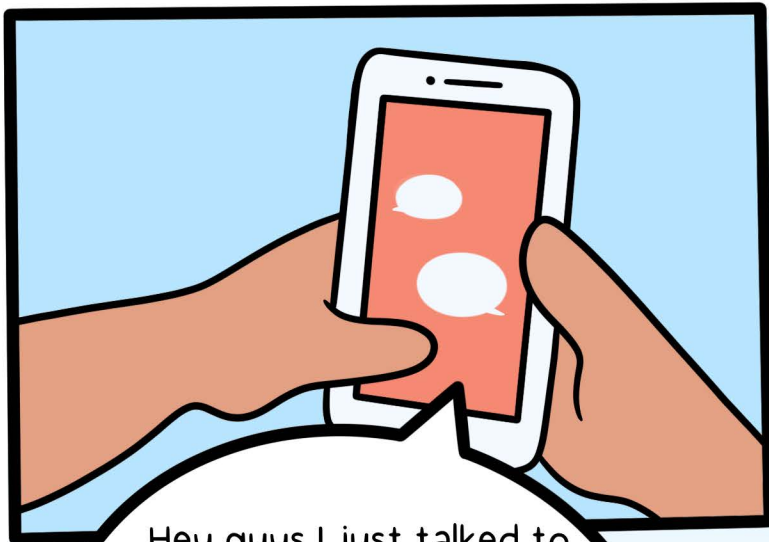


Becky is the last to respond.
Shelby reaches out to Becky to
see how she is doing.

How am I going to
do school? I really
look forward to
seeing my friends.
How will I do my
homework
without help?

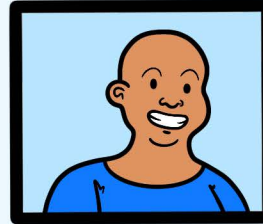
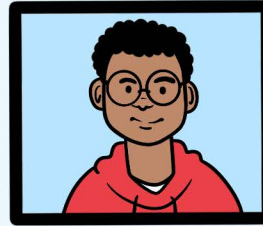
Oh no.





Hey guys I just talked to Becky. She is really struggling. What can we do to help her? I'm setting up a Zoom meeting. Everyone get on ASAP.

Everyone joins the Zoom meeting to discuss ways to help Becky.



Becky really likes music and singing.



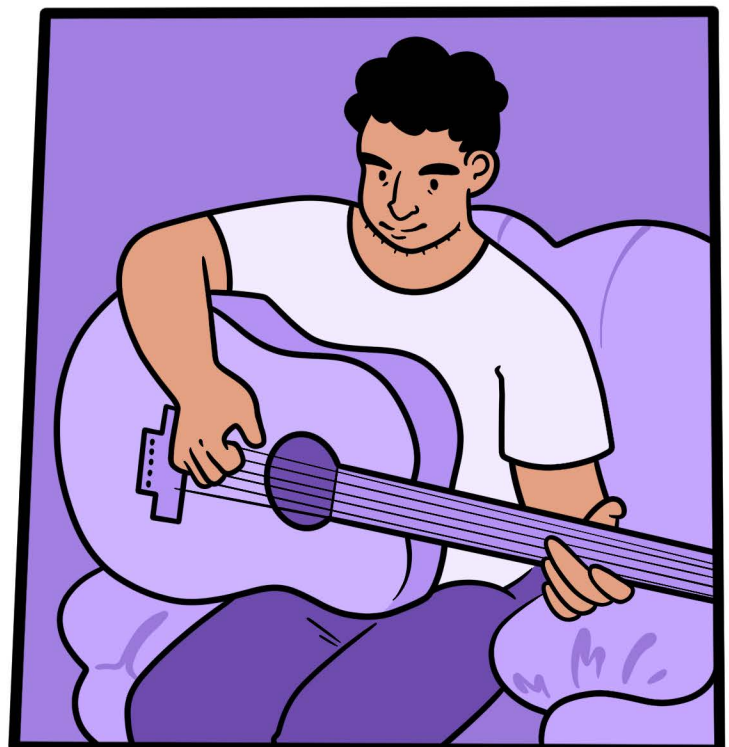
I remember how isolated I felt when I was getting bullied last year so maybe we could write songs and tell her our own struggles so then she doesn't feel so alone.



That's a great idea!



The next week the Alliance for Equality crew worked hard on their songs for Becky.



A Zoom meeting with Becky was set up and the show begins.



I use a communication device to speak my mind
Lately Covid-19 makes me feel left behind
I just want to ROCK!
With my friends
But that's kinda hard on Zoom

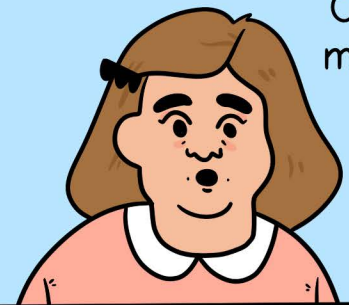
YEA YEA YEA
Second verse is for you Becky

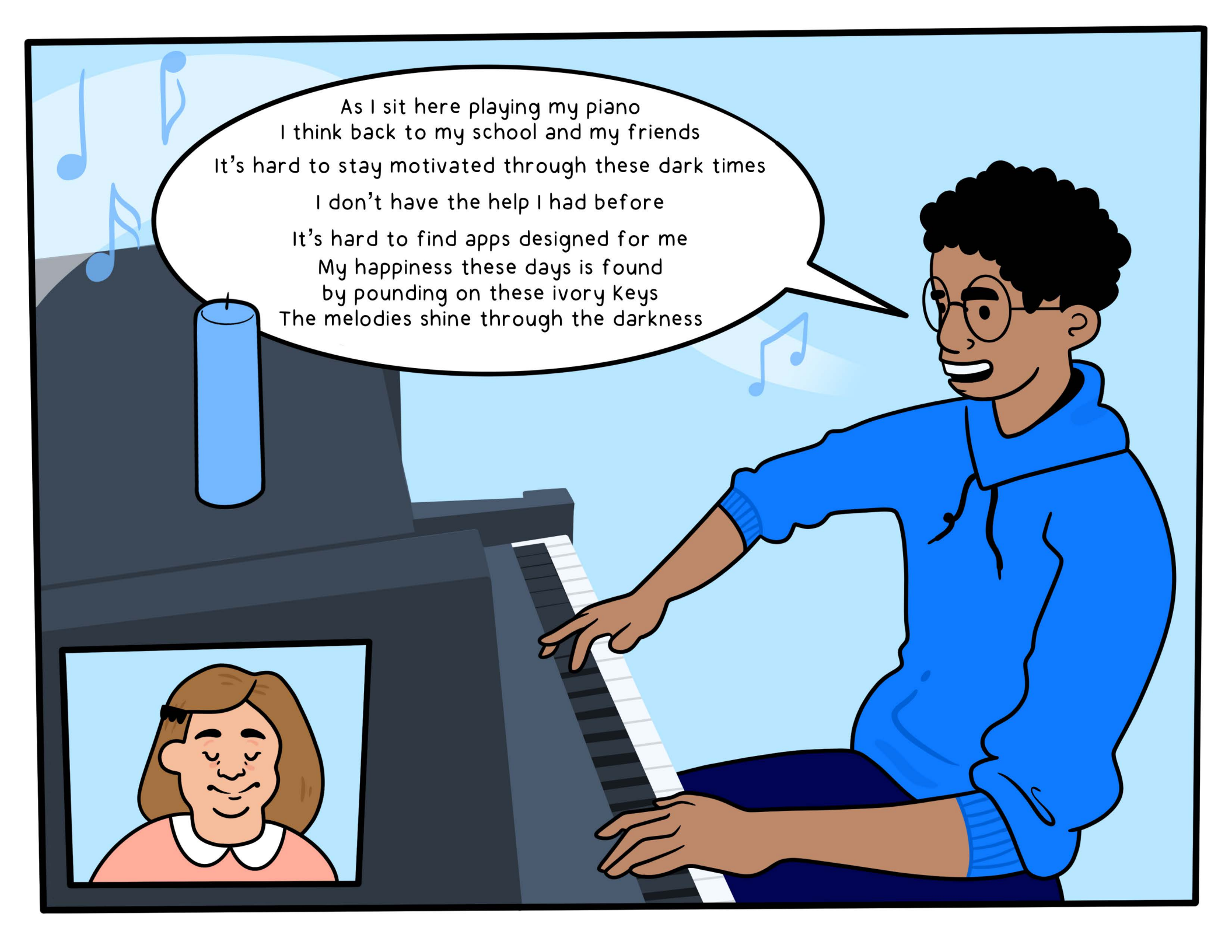
I know I may not type real fast
But I can listen to my tunes on Full Blast!
I know this Covid won't last
One day it will pass

Rock on!

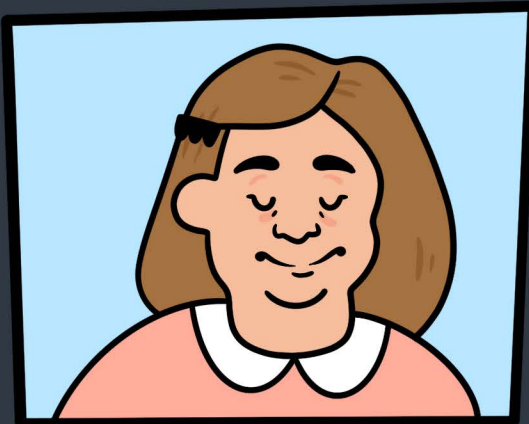


Oh my!





As I sit here playing my piano
I think back to my school and my friends
It's hard to stay motivated through these dark times
I don't have the help I had before
It's hard to find apps designed for me
My happiness these days is found
by pounding on these ivory keys
The melodies shine through the darkness





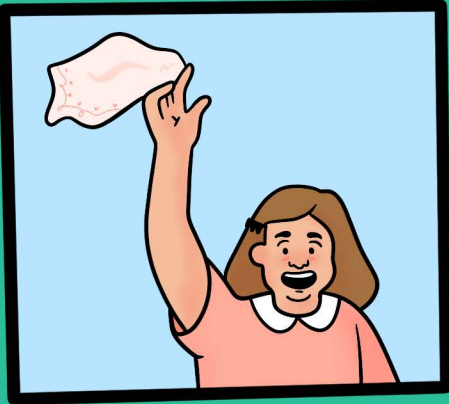
Going to the doctors is
something I can't miss
But because of this new virus,
I'm being put at risk
Seeing groups of people on
social media hanging out
gets on all my nerves
People treat this like a joke
But it is a reality for a lot of folks
But if we keep a positive mindset,
there's nothing we can't do!



Woo
Hoo!

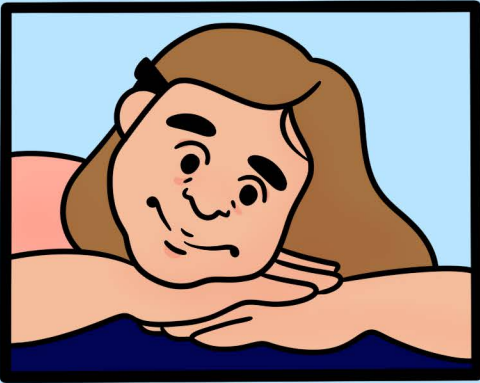
playbill

DC



Oh Becky my friendo
it will be OKo
I have problemizo
sometimes with aZoomo
I can't distinguish sound
But my friends are
always around!





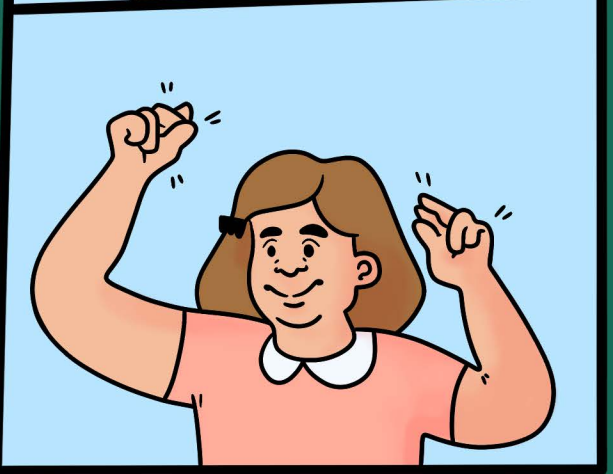
I want to be on the field with all my friends
Without them I'm late to all of the trends
Playing football gets everything out of my head
But recently all I've been doing is going to bed
With all this isolation I get real depressed
Cause when I'm at school I'm at my best
I hope to see Jordan very soon
Lately I can only talk to him on Zoom



Oh yeah,
Tom! That's
my boy!



When I wake up
in the morning,
I just want to go outside
I wanna see my friends
but I am forced to stay inside
Quarantine is killing me but I will survive
I just got to take one day at a time
We can make it, we just got to try
So smile, so laugh
And dance your worries away
Because some day we will
wake up to a Brighter Day



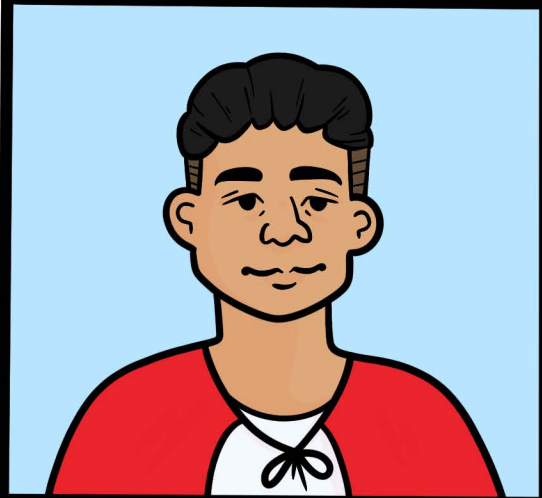
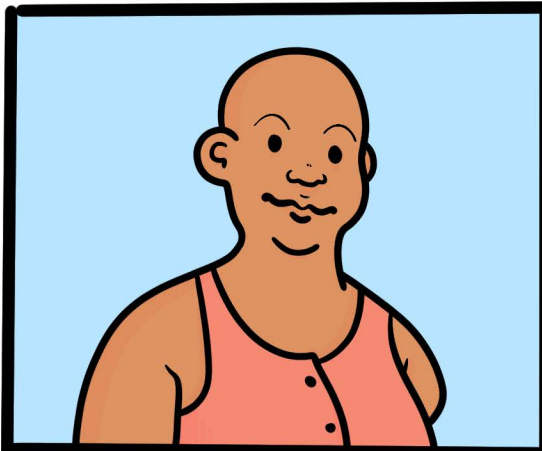


Covid has got me sitting alone
I only excel with peeps in my zone
I have to make Zoom
My new social scene
Got to make it work
You know what I mean
We just have to

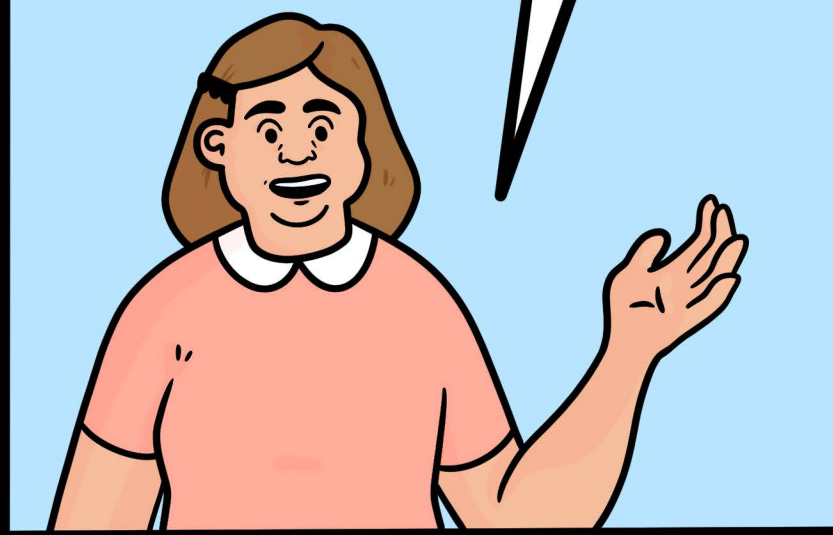
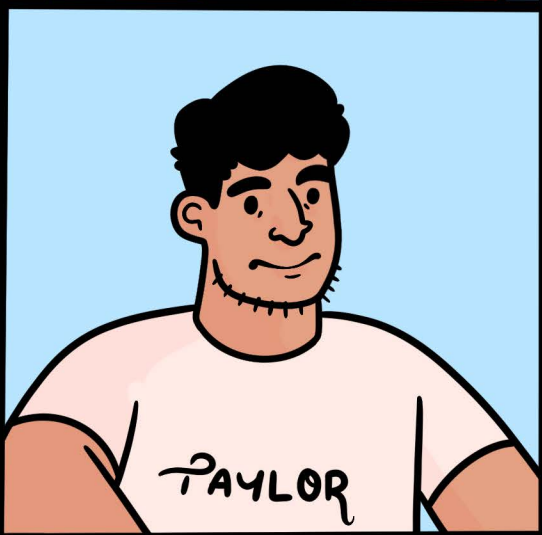


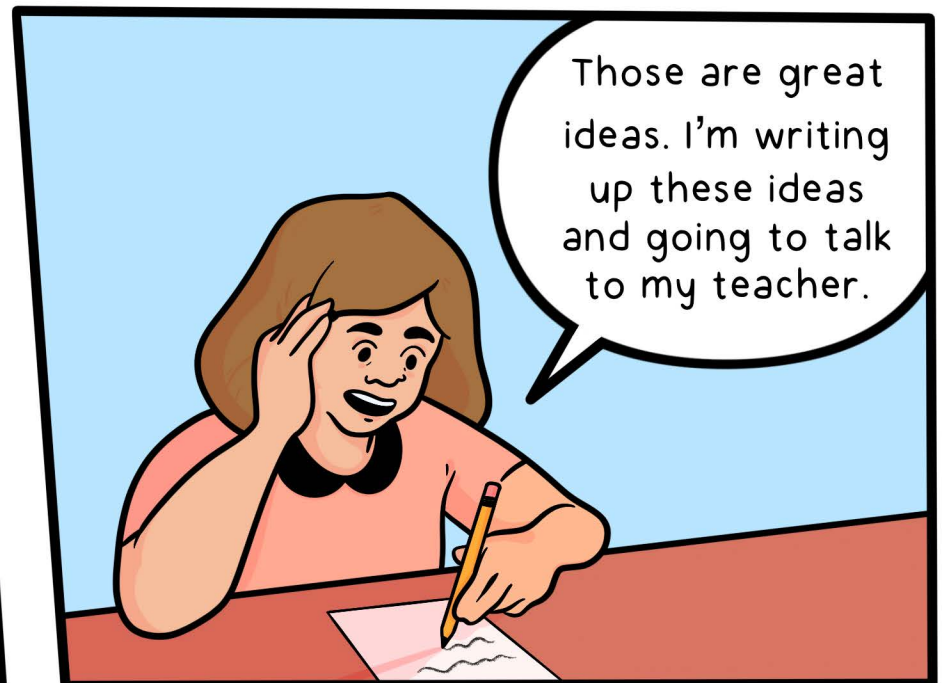
Shrug it off, shrug it off
Zoom lets us talk all
Day, day, day
It helps us keep the Covid blues
Away, way, way
Shrug it off, shrug it off



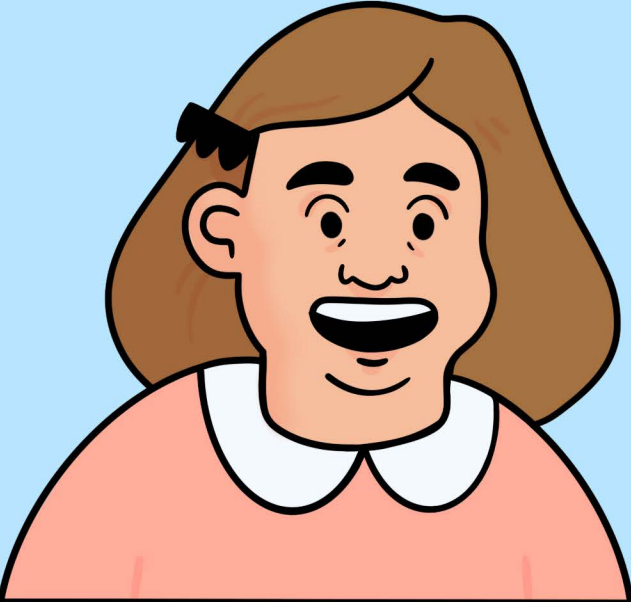


Thank you guys so much. You really helped me see we are all struggling. You guys gave me the courage to want to advocate for what I need. I love you guys so much! I really struggle with all the assignments I'm getting. It's so much! I get overwhelmed and can't complete my assignments. I had help at school but that's all gone now.






Becky has a Zoom meeting with one of her teachers several days later.

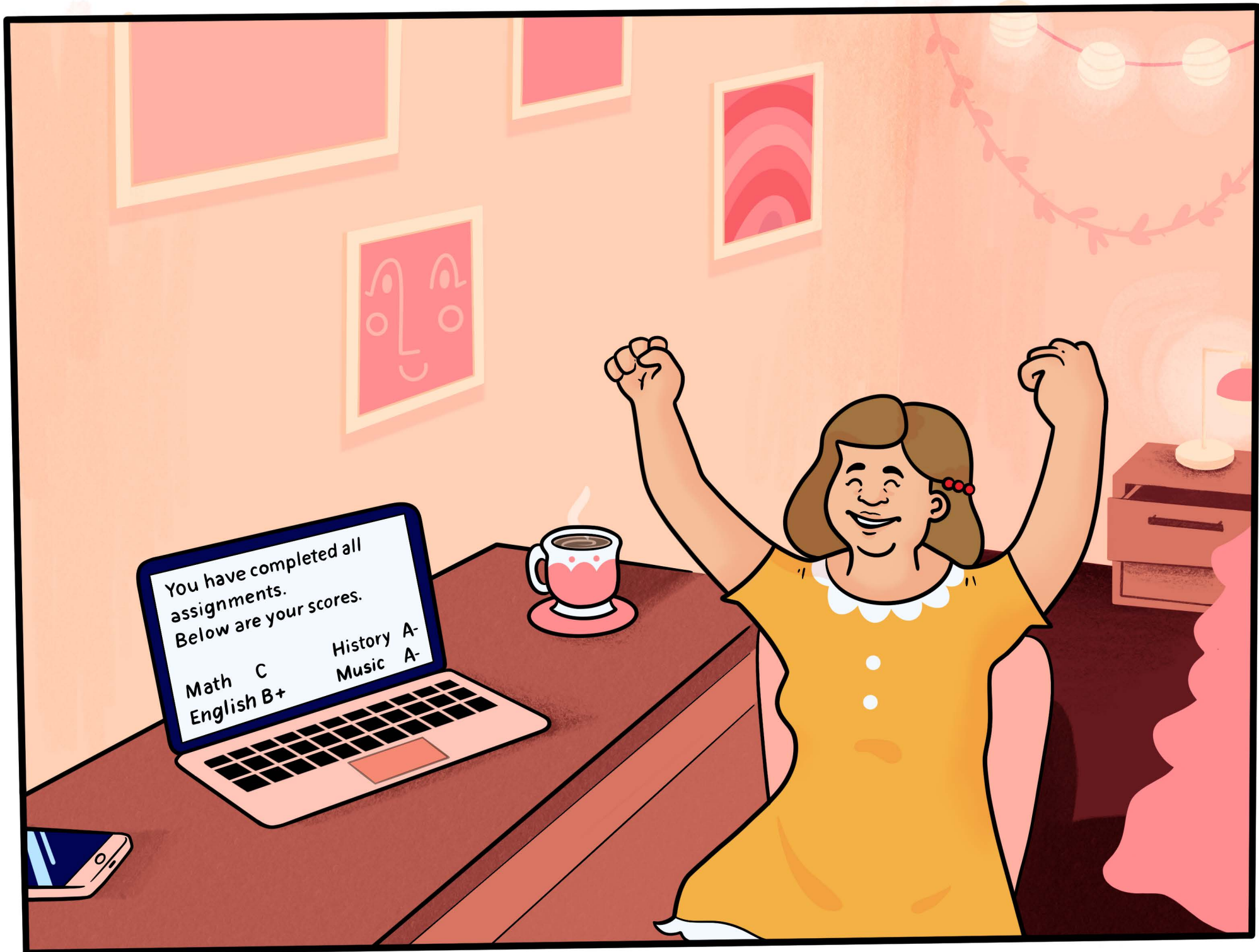


I need to ask for some accommodations. I would like prerecorded audio of reading assignments, shortened assignments, and only having to do assignments that are necessary to graduate.



Yes Becky those sound like great ideas. I will talk to your IEP team and get those implemented for you as soon as possible.

When Becky gets done with her Zoom meeting, she sends a group text to tell everyone the meeting with her teacher was a success and thank everyone again for being there for her.



You have completed all assignments.
Below are your scores.

Math	C	History	A-
English	B+	Music	A-

Early

The Next

Morning



<https://coffeeandtheartist.com/>

Once upon a time...

Dean Strauss was a tired illustrator working the majority of his day away. Every day, he worked on commissions that, more often than not, he didn't care about. One day, out of fun and frustration, he sent out an ask online and started drawing fellow disabled people—with pets, smiling, crying, posing, in love, celebrating, living. He ended up doing over 100 free portraits just for the joy it brought.

From there, he got an email to do an editorial piece about remote work and disability. Because of that, he realized that he wanted to use design to address the issues he cared about in real ways. Finally, he wound up as the media coordinator of a college's diversity, equity, and inclusion office. And ever since then, he's continued searching for more ways to combine his love of art with the things he cares about.

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