

# thankful

thoughts



# thankful thoughts

*In these unusual and social distancing times, we find comfort in the small things. Balfour advisers and reps share what they're grateful for.*

**"I am grateful for Dropbox and laptops with enough memory to run Adobe CC so my kids can finish the book from home. I'm also grateful for a server I can take home, a tech dept that lets me decide what to get, and yearbook kids who are still working."** –Anne Hayman, Arlington High School, Arlington, WA

**"A little more time to get my yearbook finished!!"** –Allison Cooper, Day Middle School, Temecula, CA

**"I'm incredibly blessed and thankful for a creative, dedicated and persistent yearbook staff! This year we bonded, we laughed, we cried, we overcame every obstacle thrown in our path and they created one of the best books I've ever seen! Though they are little, they are fierce!"** –Caron Peck, Riverdale High School, Murfreesboro, TN

**"I'm grateful that we finished the yearbook the day before our spring break started (which turned out to be our last day of school) and all we had to worry about yearbook-wise was changing an index spread to a COVID-19 spread on the final proofs. SO grateful for amazing editors who helped get coverage from home."** –Kim Lynch, Brenham High School, Brenham, TX

**"I am grateful that my unappointed editor in chief of three yearbook classes and only one book is still motivating me to keep sending pages that she edited! Go Jasmine!!"** –Anne Tilford, North Bullitt High School, Shepherdsville, KY

**"I'm thankful for my students who care enough to help me improve the program for next year and sell our remaining books."** –Stephanie Cox, Woodcreek Middle School, Houston, TX

**"I'm grateful for my rep, Lisa Schwartz, and my sweet staff who are with me through every step of creating a yearbook. I also couldn't do this without my journalism community. The group chats, Zoom brunches and long FaceTimes bring me so much joy!"** –Samantha Berry, Bridgeland High School, Cypress, TX

**"I'm SO grateful for my yearbook staff, 100 percent of whom continue to work despite being forced to meet online for a month now! No other teacher in my school has reported that level of engagement. My students even created a video for my birthday since they couldn't honor me in person! I was in tears listening to the nice things they said and thinking about them being so thoughtful from afar."** –Christa Daugherty, Big Spring High School, Newville, PA

**"I am thankful that my dedicated staff finished the book two days early. This allowed us to spend our last day before break relaxing and enjoying each other's company, not realizing we wouldn't see each other again this year."** –Teresa Zemaitis, Dixie Hollins High School, St. Petersburg, FL

**"Grateful for my yearbook reps Scott and Tami [Stalcup]! Always willing to lend a hand and teach me so many useful tips and tricks! They motivate me to want to do more and get this yearbook moving to where it should be!"** –Suzanne Rubenstein, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA

**"I am grateful for Zoom meetings. Sometimes it's more of a check-in for my students, but the ability to still see each other face-to-face is needed more than anything right now. Having those meeting allows my staff to feel a sense of normality in a very non-normal time."** –Bekah Vest, Cypress Ridge High School, Houston, TX

**"I'm grateful for [AE] Carol Collier because she is a powerhouse. I could not complete the book this year without her."** –Kyla Scelzi, Davidson Middle School, Crestview, FL

***"Grateful for coffee and video conferencing apps so I can still connect with my family! I'm also grateful for my silly students who keep sending me photos of their pets."***  
–Katherine Sands, Duiett Middle School, Spring, TX



# thankful thoughts

**"I'm forever grateful for my yerd herd—12 kids who persevered and finished 73 pages from home over the course of 26 days. They are my rock stars. I'm also incredibly grateful for my amazing rep and dear friend Ryan Almon for answering my frantic phone calls even when he's got glass in his foot, and also our AE Tracy [Noren] for opening a spread for us at 10 pm the night we finished the book because our fireworks didn't fire the first time. And I don't know where my brain would be without my adviser friends Kel Lemons, Samantha Berry, Hayley Booth, Andrea Negri, Katie Moreno—so many texts and calls and Zooms and hyping each other up has been so helpful. Even though they won't see this, I'm forever grateful for the most patient husband on Earth because he knows how crazed I am every March/April and this was crazy on another level, and my two boys, and of course, my rude, aloof, overfed cats. They give me so many laughs."** –Danielle Bell, Foster High School, Richmond, TX

**"I am so thankful to have co-workers who sent out messages to their students asking for quotes and helping with pictures. I'm grateful for the staffers who helped me finalized pages and gave me ideas. I'm also thankful for [rep] David Miller who helps keep me sane during the year at deadlines. Here's to the next book and a less hectic year."** –Cassandra Shuptar, Berry Miller Junior High School, Pearland, TX

**"I am grateful for my Balfour family, especially my rep, Steve Ferguson, who came in like Super Steve, as he always does. I'm also grateful for my EIC who kept fighting right on till the end, our Super Woman!"** –Candace Gilbert, Seminole High School, Seminole, FL

**"I am grateful for how my entire staff worked together to gather everything they could for finishing pages before our school closed. I am grateful for the amazing [reps] Ali Schroeder and Whitney Baker and their continuous support through all of this craziness. I'm grateful for [AE] Catherine Simoneaux and her attention to detail and her infinite patience. I am grateful for the Balfour Tech support team and their help with problem solving. I am grateful for my district allowing us to have a few laptops for some of my students without technology. I am grateful for all of the inspiration from fellow Balfour advisers, giving us great ideas and solutions. I am grateful for Kel Lemons and her tireless efforts to support us in every way she can."** –Stephenie Conley, Bellevue East High School, Bellevue, NE

**"I am very thankful for [AE] Janey Garrison—she was super helpful to me in finishing this yearbook."** –Brenda Jones, Currituck County High School, Barco, NC

**"I am grateful to my co-workers who are keeping me sane during this crazy time. I am grateful to my child's teacher for being understanding and helpful. I am grateful for my yearbook staff for rallying to finish our book and helping me plan next year's book. They are helping me edit worksheets and PowerPoints to make them work better so we are ready to roll as soon as the year starts. I am especially grateful for [rep] David Miller for always being there. He's not just a yearbook rep, he's a friend. He checks up on me not because of the YB, but because he genuinely cares and wants to make sure I'm doing okay."** –Julie Pasha, Pearland Junior High West, Pearland, TX

**"I'm grateful for my amazing staff and our GroupMe chats and our Zoom meetings that help us keep in touch. I'm grateful that StudioWorks is online, making it easier for my staff to finish on time. I'm so very thankful we sold out before we left for spring break! I'm incredibly grateful for the guidance I've received from Kel Lemons, Samantha Berry and Kathleen West; they've helped us raise the bar every year."** –Candice Thomas, Katy Junior High School, Katy, TX

**"[Rep] Susan Fearnside and that March 16th final deadline—I hated it originally, but it saved us! Book done!"** –Melissa Reagan, Deer Valley High School, Glendale, AZ

**"This forum to discuss/question/ask for help, my rep Ben Smith, and my amazing staff working from their homes on a supplement right now!"** –Nola Henderson, Jefferson County High School, Dandridge, TN

**"The support of Lisa Schwartz, Hal Schmidt, my dean, my EIC, most of my staff and my amazing family! [And, AE] Tracy Noren and all the Dallas plant staff!"** –Marilyn Othon, Strake Jesuit College Preparatory, Houston, TX

**"I'm grateful for my rep who reaches out, Lauren Schwartz, and checks to see how we're doing both personally and with the book. I'm thankful for the weather. Washington State is keeping kids and teachers sane with a beautiful spring. We're out here with our laptops in the garden and loving it! (For the record, that's not normal until mid-summer.) I'm grateful for a company that cares about their customers and is never more than a phone call away with ideas and inspiration."** –Annie Green, Glacier Peak High School, Snohomish, WA

**"I am grateful that I can still stay in touch with my great advisers, in various ways and I am thrilled to hear about certain yearbook staffers who are really stepping up in a most challenging situation. I am also grateful for creative people at Balfour who are helping to supply advisers and students with creative pages and ideas."** –Kerry Nelson, Balfour Minnesota Representative

**"I'm thankful for my rep Jim Anderson! He held my hand and taught me everything I needed for my first year advising. He displayed patience and grace with me and my entire staff of newbies. He cheered us on and he put out fires. I could not ask for a better mentor. I am also thankful for my amazing staff who worked their tails off to finish our very first yearbook! We couldn't have done it without you, Jim!"** –Christine Sidhu, John Horn High School, Mesquite, TX



**"I'm grateful for my yearbook adviser friends within my district. I can reach out to them through text, email, Zoom, whatever and they will be there to give advice, ideas, kudos or a funny gif! I love that even though we all want to be great individually, we will always share our ideas, lessons and opinions to help each other to be great as well. I'm very thankful to be a part of such a wonderful group!"**

–Paige Hert, Cedar Park High School, Cedar Park, Texas

**"I am grateful for [AE] Sally [Voss], [reps] Hal [Schmidt] and Lauren [Schwartz]. I can't tell you how many times I had to call them to get the book done. My kids stopped working long before we were out of school. These three folks kept me sane, from killing my kids, and from giving up. My book will never win any awards, but it means a lot to my community (even if they think there are little yearbook elves that come in and put it together). I tell anyone who will listen what a fabulous team I work with. Other yearbook reps have stopped trying to talk me into changing, why would I ever change when I am working with the best!"** –Jami Owens, Gonzales High School, Gonzales, TX

**"Grateful for my ROCK STAR Steve Ferguson. Helping with the curriculum during the online platform, he has once again been the support I need when I'm unsure I have the energy to get-r-done."** –Kelli Lipe, Charlotte High School, Punta Gorda, FL

**"The support of family, colleagues, friends and my church during a very difficult time."** –Lisa Schwartz, Balfour Houston Representative



**"I couldn't get through this without adviser friends who know exactly what I'm going through. There is no one who understands quite like another adviser."**

–Hayley Booth, Dickinson High School, Dickinson, TX





# thankful thoughts



***"I'm thankful for my advisers working tirelessly to make this book amazing for their students. And for the advisers who are keeping me involved with finishing their book...and giving me something design-related to do, rather than only checking email! I'm grateful for being home with my sweet little bug! It's amazing to see her learn and grow, and hear all of her new words. Plus, I get snuggles with Lennox often throughout the day!"*** –Jenny Holmes, Balfour Ohio Representative

***"I'm grateful to the awesome Balfour folk like Lisa, Hal, David and Kel who support, inspire and encourage me no matter what the production obstacles may be."***

***I'm thankful for a journalism community of advisers who are friends for life, who make me laugh, and who can commiserate whenever we are together."***

***Lastly, I'm thankful that God blessed me with the awesome responsibility of teaching kids for the past 23 years. It's been a wonderful ride."***

***–Ed Larsen, Cinco Ranch High School, Katy, TX***



***"I'm so thankful for my awesome rep, Tara Hays. She is so encouraging. I'm grateful that my dedicated yearbook staff attended our school's spring sports events instead of putting it off. We had pictures of every single sport!"*** –Kathi Wright, Northgate High School, Newnan, GA

***"I'm thankful Ryan Amon told me to take home proofs and our backup of the yearbook server the Thursday before spring break started. I was convinced we would be in school the next day to finish up the book. I was wrong. He was right. (I'm also grateful he still takes my calls even though our book is done.)"***

***I'm also thankful my seniors decided we weren't really 'done' after all and that this story needed to be told in the book. They're continuing to work on adding coverage even as milestones like prom and senior week are postponed or uncertain."***

***And I'm thankful for journalism because I think what we do—reporting, writing, design—is one of the only normal things my students have right now. I think some of them are even more committed to telling these stories now than they were when things were going as planned."***

***–Andrea Negri, Bellaire High School, Houston, TX***

***"I am grateful for my rep Jim Anderson. He not only saved my life by telling me to take everything home, he has been a constant encouragement and a dear friend who calls to check on me and my family. He is such a blessing, and I often call him my second dad! Coronavirus or not, this book would not have happened without him!"*** –Jamie Ray, Vista Ridge High School, Cedar Park, TX

***"Kel Lemons, I'm grateful for you and Amanda Reynolds always answering your phone, even if you don't have all the answers right now. Love y'all!"*** –Milani Arguelles, Balfour Fort Worth Representative

***"So thankful for [rep] Lisa Schwartz and Tracy Noren, our AE. They've been with us every step of the way!! Also, love Dee in the Houston office and, as always, our patient and incredible guru Hal Schmidt."*** –Denise Adams, B.F. Terry High School, Rosenberg, TX

***"I'm grateful that we took the time to build our social media presence over the last few years. We spend every opportunity making sure students and parents know to follow us. When we had to go to finishing the book remotely, we were so grateful we could reach more than 6,000 people. We also still hear from our alumni on social media. Makes my heart happy that we are part of the information cycle and are valued by the campus as a force to mobilize."*** –Jennifer Rodriguez, McAllen High School, McAllen, TX

***"Incredibly grateful for Milani Arguelles, my rep. She is a genuine friend, and she was invaluable before the shelter in place. There were many times that she saved me from going insane. Her hard work and dedication makes everything go so much smoother. I love her to pieces!"*** –Nichelle Wright, Hurst Junior High, Hurst, TX

***"I'm grateful for my staff, especially my EICs, who worked around the clock to clean up pages, my rep Stacy Mehrens, who keeps me sane, and for these yearbook communities and posts that have been a bright spot (thanks, Kel!). From a technology standpoint, particularly for these last few weeks, I'm very thankful we started using the Band app this year, because the "Hey, who is this?" posts from my EIC get identified immediately (and with contact info!). We also discovered Google Drive File Stream for running our yearbook project (InDesign) and that was a lifesaver as well. Go team!"*** –Lindsey Shirack, Bowie High School, Austin, TX

***"I'm thankful for a supportive and loving staff, admin and school community."*** –Lauren McCauley, All Saints Episcopal School, Fort Worth, TX

***"I am grateful for my rep, Carolyn Oldham, who is also my good friend. She helped me off many ledges this academic school year; we went from no tech to remote online all tech. I finished my eighth and final book on time with the help of my incredible staffers! They are seniors so they will have a 2020 yearbook!"*** –Cheryl Boyda, Souderton Area High School, Souderton, PA

***"I'm thankful for all of the communication outlets available to us in order to see, talk, work and connect with people outside our homes. I'm grateful of the wisdom of the school and district to make the decision to put our students and families' safety first."*** –Sean Claes, Akins Early College High School, Austin, TX

***"So thankful for [Rep] Ryan Almon and [AE] Janey Garrison!"*** –Michelle Robinett, Pearland High School, Pearland, TX

***"I'm so grateful for my fabulous Balfour reps Jill Garrett and Jenna Bryan. They went above and beyond to help my staff raise the bar on our yearbook this year. I'm also grateful for other Balfour staff who went to bat for me and my school when a previous publishing company threatened to sue my school for changing publishers. They were so supportive! Thank you!"*** –Meagan Hogg, Lumberton Middle School, Lumberton, TX

***"The world of yearbook keeps growing and growing. All of the posts of how WE were during our senior year sent to support the Class of 2020 nationwide support that. It's great to be a Balfour Taylor yearbook rep (retired)!"*** –Marcia Burpee, retired Balfour Florida Representative

***"So thankful for my rep and for my tech support. Without them getting the book done would have been a big issue. I am grateful Balfour hires some amazing people who care about our schools. Thank you Susan and Brian."*** –Pam Willard, Prescott High School, Prescott, AZ



***"I'm thankful for God, family, advisers, Zoom, and my health! I miss seeing everyone in person, but at least I can see them online."***

***–Stephanie Sherman, Balfour Florida Representative***

# thankful thoughts

**“Four biggies:**

**1) Encore:** having an online software has allowed our staff to finish our 256-page book and work tirelessly on our spring supplement.

**2) Google Meet:** we do weekly meetings and 95 percent of my staff chat and check-in.

**3) Mandy Zientek & Bill Postlewait:** our rep and account exec are the **BEST!!**

**4) An amazing staff:** I’ve seen so much with advisers having to finish on their own and my staff of 15 have worked their tails off through all of this transition. From the last day before spring break when I told them I was afraid I wouldn’t see them for awhile to the work they are still doing they continue to give their all for our school. I am blessed!”

–Holly Whitehead, Heritage High School, Maryville, TN

**“Lifewise—I’m so beyond thankful for God and Him bringing me a husband that can calm my crazy and my snuggly children who make me laugh every day, even if it’s laughing about toots.**

**Teacher/Adviserwise:** I’m thankful for an earlier due date for the book, sports photos that were able to take place, a stellar staff that celebrates one another so well, a rep (Kent Sutton) who reassures and provides, an AE (Patrick Burnham) who solves problems in a flash, a principal who trusts me, and a school community that rallies. We thought last year with Hurricane Florence sitting on our city for days was the wildest experience we would face, but this ‘Rona life is insanity!’” –Kylee Maarschalk, New Hanover High School, Wilmington, NC

**“I’m thankful for time to spend with my 9-year-old son. Precious time bonding over teaching him how to make cookies and him teaching me to play Fortnite. I’m thankful for family lunches every day. I’m thankful that my family is healthy. But mostly, I’m thankful for time to re-evaluate priorities in my life.”** –Mindy Zugelder, California Trail Junior High School, Olathe, KS

**“I’m super thankful for an amazing staff of eight high schoolers who worked diligently from home the week after our spring break (aka ‘spring break 2.0’) to get our yearbook finished...all from home! This was my first year as adviser and I think I’m broken in now!”** –Christie LaRue, Temple Christian School, Fort Worth, TX

**“As an old adviser who just finished her 29th book, my blessings list could be rather long. But I’ll give the ‘space is money’ version.**

**–Jim Anderson (BEST REP EVER):** mentor, cheerleader, father-figure, but most of all, my dearest friend.

**–Nancy Dewees (BEST AE EVER):** love her calm, reassuring voice on the other end of the phone.

**–Balfour (BEST PUBLISHING COMPANY EVER):** always looking out for their advisers through innovative ideas, excellent products and stellar service.

**–My Yearbook Tribe (BEST FRIENDS EVER):** they are always close (even if they live far away) with a kind word, support, a shoulder to cry on, and a generous spirit in sharing materials.”

–Theresa Proctor, East View High School, Georgetown, TX

**“I’m grateful for friends and family. I’m grateful we are blessed by still having our jobs. I’m grateful for students and colleagues who are flexible and can work through difficult times. I’m grateful my reps are just a phone call away.”**

–Sue Blackmon, Klein Forest High School, Houston, TX

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