

Cablefax Daily™

Tuesday — September 8, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 173

#BacktoSchoolTogether: ViacomCBS Offers College Kids COVID-19 Advice

Millions of college students are returning to college campuses, and **ViacomCBS** is ready with a new ad campaign that communicates the key actions students can take to slow the spread of COVID-19. The #BacktoSchoolTogether initiative, done in partnership with the **Ad Council**, is a new phase of ViacomCBS's #AloneTogether public awareness campaign, which encouraged young people to stay home and find human connection through entertainment.

Since the launch of #AloneTogether in March, the campaign has had 8.7bln impressions across ViacomCBS platforms. "When we started #AloneTogether, people were very much in quarantine and separated from one another, and we wanted to, even though people weren't physically together, create connection," ViacomCBS Entertainment & Youth Group svp, brand creative production *Amy Campbell* told **CFX**. "As the spring rolled into the summer and to the fall... we thought it was a natural place to evolve the Alone Together hashtag into Back to School Together."

Components incorporated into the initiative include information on the importance of wearing a mask in the prevention of COVID-19 outbreaks, as well as dispelling false beliefs about immunity that have spread amongst young people. ViacomCBS also examined the idea of peer culture, and aimed to show in its ad spots that part of being a good friend during the pandemic is doing all you can to prevent spread of the virus.

"Part of being in school is that social part of it, so we wanted to talk about that too and make sure that people understood that wearing masks is a part of being in a social group and you're doing that for the others in your life," Campbell said. The spots will air across all platforms of the ViacomCBS Entertainment & Youth Group brands starting Sept 14 during its "Back to School" week, but expect to see more of them on your social media feeds than on ViacomCBS's cable networks. It's all part of the company's effort to meet the students where they tend to be: online. "We have a 600mln social media following, so we're really able to connect with a lot of students," Campbell said. "So while there will be some linear play, we really wanted to go with a digital- and social-first approach."

ViacomCBS isn't alone in its quest to support young populations during this difficult time. **Cartoon Network** launched "In This Together" Friday, a global initiative offering support and resources to kids and families preparing to head back to school in the age of COVID-19. New on-air spots will feature kids across the globe, along with some of their favorite

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Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefax.com ● 301.354.2101 ● Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Publisher, Cynopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, rcaploe@accessintel.com ● Senior Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com ● Associate Editor: Mollie Cahillane, 212.621.4951, mcahillane@accessintel.com ● VP, Sales: Mike Farina, 203.218.6480, mfarina@accessintel.com ● Sales Exec: Albert Nassour, 917.545.3129, anassour@accessintel.com ● Dir of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com ● Prod. Mgr: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com ● Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, ksmith@accessintel.com ● Group Subs/Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com ● Annual subscription price: \$1,749.00/year ● Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

Cartoon Network characters, sharing their new school experiences and what others should expect as the world bands together to fight against the spread of COVID-19. Cartoon Network's PSAs will begin rolling out Monday.

Goodbye Set-Top Box Proceeding: The FCC terminated the so-called set-top box proceeding, which was teed off by former chmn *Tom Wheeler* and aimed to unlock the boxes for third parties. Cable was not a fan of the [item](#), which was pulled from a meeting vote in late 2016 after Democratic commish *Jessica Rosenworcel* expressed concerns about the impact on licensing arrangements. Shortly thereafter, *Ajit Pai* took over and removed it from circulation as one of his first actions as chairman. The Commission approved officially killing the proceeding Friday, with Rosenworcel and *Geoffrey Starks* concurring. "The record fails to convince us that the proposal is necessary to accomplish its intended goal, and we conclude that the proposed regulations do not reflect the past four years of substantial marketplace changes in the delivery and consumption of video programming," the FCC order said. Separately, the Commission eliminated rules requiring large cable operators to report info on support and deployment of CableCARDS, saying it's no longer necessary.

Never Gonna Give You Up: Cogeco may have rebuffed **Altice USA's** unsolicited bid, but the US operator and Canadian op **Rogers** are still hoping to keep communications open. "We strongly believe that we presented a very attractive offer—one that would reward all Cogeco shareholders with a significant premium—and we stand by that offer. We remain committed to pursuing this transaction and are open to engaging with shareholders and the boards in a constructive dialogue," Altice and Rogers said in a joint statement late Thursday. Under the proposal, Altice would have sold Rogers the Canadian assets and kept **Atlantic Broadband** and its 1.1m homes passed.

Comcast Turns to SCOTUS in Ad Lawsuit: Comcast made good on its promise to ask the US Supreme Court to review a 7th Circuit decision that reinstated **Viamedia's** 2016 antitrust suit against it. Viamedia has alleged Comcast controls and excludes third party sales reps from interconnects in some of the most populous DMAs. Viamedia said Friday it will oppose Comcast's petition for certiorari to the US Supreme Court and looks forward to presenting its case at trial next year.

YouTube TV Adds NFL Network, RedZone: As previously rumored. **YouTube TV** struck a new carriage agreement with the **NFL** for **NFL Network** and **NFL RedZone**. NFL Network has joined the vMVPD's base channel lineup while NFL RedZone will be available as part of YouTube TV's new \$10.99/month add-on package, Sports Plus. Sports Plus will also include **Fox College Sports**, **Go!TV**, **Fox Soccer Plus**, **MAVTV Motorsports Network**, **TVG** and **Stadium**. Soon, YouTube TV customers will also have access to both networks through NFL.com and the NFL app.

A New Diversity Week: With **Diversity Week** going virtual this year, there's a new website with information for all the

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The Collapse of Theatrical Windows?: With theaters shuttering, will day-and-date releases become the new normal? **Sony Pictures** is the first out of the gate, announcing "Trolls World Tour" will be available April 10 for a rental. Other in-release movie titles are set to be available as soon as this Friday. The movies will be available on **Comcast**, **Sky** and a "broad range of on-demand partners." Titles to be made available include "The Man" and "Emma" with a suggested retail price of \$19.99 in the US.

Tuesday — March 17, 2020 What the Industry Reads First Volume 31 / No. 050

For Now: Providers Set Aside Disputes During Coronavirus Outbreak

As they face the common enemy that is the coronavirus pandemic, **Cox Media Group** and **DISH** have set aside their retrans dispute for now so that **DISH** can resume its carriage of 10 CMG stations in New York, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Louisiana, California, Mississippi and Idaho. No word on how long the truce will last.

Cablefax Daily™

Friday — March 13, 2020 What the Industry Reads First Volume 31 / No. 050

New Normal: Companies Roll Out Contingency Plans in Face of Covid-19

With a growing number of students and employees working from home, it's mission critical for the nation's broadband providers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Operators big and small are up-ending their day-to-day operations to ensure service remains uninterrupted.

Wednesday — March 18, 2020 What the Industry Reads First

Covering Covid-19: Content Companies Step Up Efforts

Programmers are shuffling schedules to respond to the coronavirus crisis. **The Weather Channel** is airing live programming at 50 minutes past the hour to share educational content during the school closure. Topics include why thunder happens, how rainbows form and more. **Pledge** during the school closure. Topics include why thunder happens, how rainbows form and more. Scheduled for Friday at 2pm.

From the Commission: Another 116 broadband and telephone service providers have taken the **Pai's Keep Americans Connected Pledge**, agreeing to take specific steps to keep Americans connected for 60 days. Some notable names taking the pledge include **Hotwire Communications**, **Middle**

various events, schedules and more at www.diversityweek.com. **NAMIC**, **WICT** and the **Walter Kaitz Foundation** are the core participants in the annual event dedicated to celebrating and supporting diversity.

FCC Details Carriers Using Huawei and ZTE: Verizon, Windstream, MetroNet, CenturyLink, Cincinnati Bell and Hargray are among the eligible telecom carriers with existing Huawei and ZTE equipment and services that receive support from USF, according to the **FCC**. In June, the FCC issued final designations of Huawei and ZTE as posing national security threats to the integrity of communications networks. The entities on the FCC's list report it could cost an estimated \$1.837bln to remove and replace Huawei and ZTE equipment in their networks, the FCC said, noting that they appear to qualify for approx. \$1.618bln in reimbursement from the government. The agency noted there may be other providers eligible for reimbursement that haven't been identified yet. FCC chmn **Ajit Pai** is urging Congress to appropriate funding to help with replacements.

Ratings: Tyler Perry's sitcoms brought a crowd to **BET** Wednesday. "Tyler Perry's House of Payne" and "Tyler Perry's Assisted Living" grossed 6.6mln viewers P2+ during premiere night across premieres and encores (simulcast across BET and **BET Her** on 9/2/20).

Editor's Note: Cablefax Daily will not publish on Labor Day.

Cablefax Dashboard

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Up Ahead

Sept 14-17: NATPE Streaming Plus

Sept 22: Cablefax's FAXIES Awards Celebration, Also Honoring the Cablefax 100, Top Ops and Work Culture List

Sept 29-Oct 1: NCTC and ACA Connects' Independent Show

Oct 5: WICT Leadership Conference

Oct 6-9: NAMIC's 34th Annual Conference

Oct 12-15: SCTE-ISBE Cable Tec Expo 2020

Research

> Americans are saving more compared to before the pandemic with 60% of respondents call themselves "savers," up from 54% in 2019.

> 14% of Americans say they have wiped out their emergency savings since the onset of the pandemic and 11% have borrowed money to cover emergency expenses. More than a quarter (26%) of 25-34-year-olds say they have wiped out emergency savings.

> 16% of Black and 20% of Hispanic Americans say they have wiped out emergency savings, versus 13% of White Americans.

(Source: Survey by CNBC and Acorns in Partnership with SurveyMonkey)

Quotable

"We've always had an emphasis at trying to grow our footprint at Altice USA. We're currently in 21 different states across the country with just about 5 million subscribers. So adding another 1.1 million homes here is attractive to us... We like cable. We think cable continues to be very attractive, has continued length and growth going forward. So this is something that is right in the middle of our wheelhouse in terms of things we want to continue doing."

– **Altice USA CEO Dexter Goei** speaking to **CNBC** about the company's unsolicited bid for Cogeco for Atlantic Broadband.

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THE WORK CULTURE LIST PROFILE:

PRIDE AWARD **DISH**

It can be nearly impossible to bring your best self to the office if you're not able to be your true self at work. Out at DISH, one of six employee resource groups at the company, promotes a culture of acceptance throughout the company by hosting both educational events and networking opportunities.

It all started nearly two years ago when Barry Hoyer, a manager on the corporate finance team, had a conversation about his positive experience with acceptance within his own team and what could be done to ensure everyone at DISH had the same experience. He now serves as one of Out at DISH's co-presidents along with senior IT manager Tina Spalten.

He and his team laid the groundwork with HR and organized the group around three pillars: education, equality and community.

"We wanted to look at how we can support the LGBT community at DISH, but also how can we build a stronger network of allies throughout the company and make sure that people are aware of the issues," Hoyer says. On the equality front, Hoyer and Spalten have a regular audience with DISH CEO Erik Carlson and EVP and Chief Human Resources Officer David Scott to discuss areas in which the company can focus on supporting LGBTQ+ employees.

And when it came to community, the mission was simple: be visible and let others know that it is OK to show up as your authentic self every day.

"The more that people feel comfortable to be themselves, the better their time here at DISH is going to be, both from a work quality and output perspective, but also for tenure and feeling valued," Hoyer says.

It may be young, but the ERG has already drawn in approximately 500 members across all of DISH. In February, the group organized an LGBTQ community panel at its Englewood headquarters that included DISH executives and three people from community organizations across Denver.

"They came and spoke with DISH about what it meant



to be your authentic self and gave some advice to those that were scared to be their authentic self at work. Plus, how to be a better ally and what does being an ally really mean," Spalten says.

Carlson, DISH COO John Swieringa and several other members of the senior leadership team were in attendance to learn themselves and show their support for the community.

"That really showed that they had genuine interest in understanding what does it mean to learn more about our community and how they can help make sure that DISH is an inclusive and inviting place," Spalten says.

The group also held a pride party in June to celebrate DISH's first time participating in the Denver parade. Smaller events are held monthly to give all members a chance to attend and learn from each other, and Out at DISH has begun partnering with other ERGs within DISH to host shared events.

Looking ahead to the next year, Hoyer and Spalten are aiming to have more consistent programming throughout the year for Out at DISH members. They also want to double-down on their educational focus. "I think last year was a lot about building the community and now this year's going to be a little more about engaging the larger DISH audience and the larger community, including allies," Spalten says.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE HONOREES!



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