

Life Through COVID

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Spring

It all started on March 13th when I was sitting writing an essay for a scholarship. I got a text message that said the schools will be shutting down, and the state of Wisconsin is under "lockdown". I was also in a musical at that time and was told to get to the theatre ASAP because we were having a show that night. I was in a super panic mode because I had to contact my parents so they could get out of work to come to my show. It was overall a very stressful night.

The rest was history, we had to empty our lockers and say goodbye to our friends and teachers. Everyone was saying "See you next year" and other things like that, but I couldn't say the same. I was super upset because there was no more in-person school, no more seeing friends and, no more "normal."

At first, my parents were pretty strict, I was only allowed to go to work. This was hard for me because I loved to hang out with my friends as most people my age do and it was being taken away from me. Because of this pandemic, I was able to work a lot more than I had ever done in the past, and was truly able to focus on school without having to juggle all of my extracurriculars too. Despite that I missed my friends dearly, there were a lot of facetime calls, phone calls, and telling people to come and visit me at work so I could talk to them. It was nice to still be able to see them because otherwise, my senior year would have been even worse. I was already missing out on many lasts including; my senior soccer season, final musical performances, band and choir concerts, senior class trip, senior prank, and so, so much more. My younger brothers were doing what most younger brothers do and saying that I was "overreacting" and that it was not a big deal. To me, it was because senior year is what most students look forward to all of their high school careers. I then prepared myself to do online school for the next three months. It wasn't all that bad, I enjoyed the aspect of being able to turn

in my assignments early and get ahead in all my classes. I got through the end of the semester and hoped that we would have a decent graduation ceremony, but it wasn't much. We sat socially distanced, then got up and grabbed our diploma, and then had a parade down Mainstreet. This was nice because we got to see all of our family, friends, and teachers who were not allowed to attend the ceremony. I loved being able to talk to people after being cooped up in my house for so long.

Summer

Most people look forward to their graduation party because it is a celebration of all their school accomplishments. I had been looking forward to this day since my freshman year, to only have it happen during a pandemic. We had booked our venue six months in advance, and when this whole pandemic started we tried to move it later in the summer, but they were fully booked. Then we threw out the idea of having it at my house, in the middle of the country. I didn't want this, and either did my dad because that involved major cleaning in the house and garage. We then took it to Facebook to see if people would want to come or if it was too risky. A lot of people still said that either they or their entire family would come. At the time, the virus was not bad in my area, so we gave them the option of whether or not to wear a mask. We took some precautions by putting out lots of hand sanitizers and making sure people kept the pen after they wrote on an envelope. Overall, I was very happy with the day, the weather was beautiful, most of my family was able to come, and the friends that were truly important to me showed up. After my graduation party was over, I was kind of upset because that was the real end of my school career in my hometown.

After all the school stuff was over, my summer basically consisted of working, deep cleaning, preparing for college, spending time with my family and friends, and writing thank you cards. My parents were getting sick of listening to us complain, so they decided we could hang

out with friends. We still had to be very cautious about what we did and who we saw, but it was still fun to be able to spend time with them.

The numbers started to rise in my town and the unthinkable happened, my family got COVID. We were being very careful and not going out unless we had to. I was still working at the time and so it was pretty much going to happen at some point, but we were hoping it wouldn't. I did not feel that sick, I barely had a fever and didn't have any other symptoms. A few days after my dad started feeling sick and had a major headache and a higher fever than me. He works for the school so they suggested that we both go get tested and it turned out that we were both positive. This was kind of a shock for me since I was never really sick. We then had to start the quarantine process which felt like forever. I was only allowed to be in my room or my dad's room without a mask on, and when I was outside of those areas a mask had to be worn even in my own home. This was a struggle for me because I missed seeing the rest of my family. The clinic suggested that the rest of my family go and get tested and it turned out one of my little brothers was positive as well. He started feeling sick the night before. My mom and other brother continued to test negative. We then decided that it would just be best if we all got it rather than waiting a month and a half to quarantine. A few days later my brother started to get the same symptoms so he went and got tested. This resulted in another positive test in the family. Then last but not least, my mom started feeling sick and tested positive as well. This all happened while I was starting to get ready to move to college and was nervous that my mom would not be able to drop me off. It also didn't help that I was moving in early for band camp. All in all, my entire family recovered and are all back to our normal busy lives.

Fall

Moving into college is hard in the first place because it is your first-time sort of being independent in life. Having a pandemic is a whole other scenario. While moving in it was 90 degrees and we had to wear masks, so you could probably imagine how we all felt. There is

also a huge hill on campus and we had to walk up that hill twice. I got all settled and then started rehearsals for our marching band. This was also going to be way different than in the past years because we had to play with masks on and maintain distance at all times. Although it was a challenge, we were able to persevere and still make the most of our season. We even got to film a performance for our local news. I enjoyed being in the marching band even though we were not able to meet everyone in our section.

Then we started classes and that was also difficult because we had assigned seats, and had to also be socially distanced. This made it hard to make friends and find study partners. I guess overall, it was hard to make friends because a lot of the activities that normally happen were virtual or not happening at all.

Grades were also terrible for me because most of my classes were online, and I do not function well that way. I also had super high expectations going in, and not having all A's and B+'s was a struggle to get over. I hit a low point in my life where I was calling my parents almost every night and complaining to them how much I hated college. They got sick of me complaining and told me to join a club. I decided to join Cru which is a Christian organization here on campus. This was a turning point in my college experience because I had found my friends and most importantly my roommates for next year.

Ever since, I started to love college again and then we got shut down.

The cases were getting extremely bad all over Wisconsin and so they decided to put all of the classes online. This was upsetting because I was just starting to find myself again. I had to learn to make the most out of everything because there was a chance that at any point we could be sent home. Every event, band rehearsal, lunch with friends was not taken for granted, because I knew that at any moment in time we could be put online. As I am writing this, I am almost done with my first semester in college and even though it has been rough, I am still able to make the most out of it.