**COVID-19**

2020 started off to be what I thought was going to be one of my best and most exciting years. It started when the ball dropped. I was in Jamaica with my family, grandparents, aunt, uncle, and cousins. We were there celebrating my grandparents 50th wedding anniversary and the start of a new year. 2020 was my senior year of highschool and the start of my college career.

It was just a regular day after school when my father got a call from his aunt and uncles saying that their cruise on the Diamond Princess around Japan has come to stop because of COVID-19. They were all quarantined in their rooms and couldn’t leave for anything. They were stuck on the ship for weeks until going to an Army facility in Texas for their last 2 weeks of quarantine until they got to go back home to New York. During this time, my family and friends would all talk about how the virus is only overseas and won’t make its way to the United States. We would say even if it did make it to us, the country would be able to handle it well and get through it quickly.

A couple weeks later, we had our first cases in the States and we all started to get a little nervous. I remember my last day of highschool. I wish I knew it was going to be my last day or I would have done many things differently. I would have made sure I talked to all my closest friends and said goodbye to my teachers, since I never got to actually say goodbye to them. One of the toughest things for me was that I wouldn’t get to play but only 2 lacrosse games my senior year. My school had just built a new sports complex and we were on the schedule to play the week after schools were closed down. My mom would sit on the couch with me while I cried about not seeing my friends and family, not having a sports season, not having a prom, and not having a graduation. I went from going to school, lacrosse, hanging out with friends and family, etc. To going to a different park for a walk, or going to the grocery store was the highlight of my day.

I was sad and bored throughout the whole quarantine, until I found out one of my friends from highschool was selling his pottery wheel. I had been doing pottery all four years of highschool and I was missing that activity. I was an intern/teaching assistant in all the ceramic classes at my highschool. My parents and I thought that would be a great thing to do during the pandemic because it would keep me busy, and I can do it without coming in contact with anyone. We came to the decision that a pottery wheel, enough clay to get started, and all the tools I needed could be my graduation present. Once I got my pottery wheel, I felt like one of the pieces of me I lost from the coronavirus, was gained back. From that point forward I would be outside all day making pottery. I found a covid safe place to drop off the pieces I made and they would put them in the kiln for me. I then made the choice to start my own Etsy page. Etsy is a website for artists to sell things they make to anyone around the world. I soon had countless amounts of orders from family, friends, and other people I didn’t know ordering my handmade pieces. I loved being able to stay busy during these times and make some extra money while having fun doing it.

Covid-19 was extremely tough for me and my family for many reasons. It challenged me to be a more independent person and be confident in my decisions. Even though these were hard times in my life, and it was not the year I was expecting it to be. 2020 was still a beneficial year for me. I grew in ways I didn’t know I could, and became more confident in the person I am today.