**COVID-19**

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I tossed and turned in my bed hoping that I could suddenly fall asleep as I had to wake up early the next morning. It was a random December night of 2019 and I was finally out of school for Christmas break. As I still struggled to fall asleep, I grabbed my phone and started looking through my news feed. I began reading an article on Covid-19 in Wuhan, China and how the World Health Organization classified it as an epidemic. I did feel sympathy towards the people of China; however, I did not think much of it. For the next month or so I continued my days without thinking or hearing about Covid-19. Little did I know that in March this virus would temporally change my life and everything around me.

I attended Myers Park High School in Charlotte, North Carolina, and it gave seniors an option that had met the requirements the opportunity to graduate a semester early. I had an abundance of credits and decided to graduate early, so I could live with my other family in South Carolina. I also wanted to live there to hopefully find a job to save for college. After my graduation in early February I moved back to my hometown and began enjoying my time off. It was near the end of February when I began to hear more about the coronavirus. The cases began to spread worldwide with a few in the United States. At that point I did begin to feel a little anxious, however I still did not think much of it. I thought it was going to be a phase and everything would be back to the normal soon and would not be a pressing issue anymore.

During the month of March, the cases began to suddenly increase throughout America. Restaurants, Schools, Churches, and more temporarily closed, bringing us to the age of quarantine. The quarantine did not phase me as much since I already graduated school and now that I was in a very rural area there was not much to do anyway. However, my anxiety began to become worse as the news reported many deaths and people struggling to survive. The pandemic did not take a toll on my family economically wise because as my mom worked from home and my other family members were already retired. My aunt and her son both have a lung disease along with many other health problems, so we had to be extra cautious in order to protect them. Instead of going inside stores like Walmart to shop for groceries, we would take advantage of their contactless pickup options. Once in the house we would disinfect the groceries and we would do this same process with any packages received. This process went on for months and I honestly thought by the summer that the cases would dramatically decrease but it did not. Stores, Restaurants, and other public places began to open, but with guidelines that would reduce the spread of Covid-19. I completely agreed with the new guidelines and restrictions that was out in place to decrease the spread of the coronavirus. Face masks and social distancing was and is the only thing that can slowly bring us back to a sense of normalcy.

After months of staying in my house without much to do I began to get more excited to finally start college. Throughout the summer I read about multiple colleges deciding to alter their semester and or cancel in person classes for the rest of the year. I knew the dangers of the coronavirus and how its easily spread but I felt like it was still possible for students to come back on campus safely. When East Carolina sent their plan for returning on campus, I felt more confident and safer to go back to school. My parents agreed with the plan however warned me that we could still get sent back home. During the short time that I lived on campus I made a great number of friends and safely experienced campus life. As the first week went by and cases began to appear which I think is mostly from parties and nonsocial distancing, I began to worry that we would be sent back soon. However, I was not expecting to get sent home literally the next week! Though I was saddened by having to leave campus, I understood that it was the best decision to keep students and faculty safe.

The spread of Covid-19 throughout America has been incredibly challenging and life-changing for majority of us. This virus has unfortunately taken the lives of over 200,000 Americans and has left multiple people jobless struggling to survive. It was difficult to adapt to these temporary changes in this new lifestyle, but it was possible. I know that soon there would be vaccines to protect us but in order to keep ourselves and others safe is to follow the guidelines that is put in place.