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**COVID-19**

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Life as a young man in a disease ridden world has been tough. This pandemic has really opened my eyes to a lot, and closed doors on many. I personally have experience the virus at least twice. The first time I had Covid was about two months before lockdown. I recently had the virus again in the beginning of March. The second time I had it was one of the worse sicknesses I have ever had. I could not eat, I had no appetite, taste, smell, energy… I was bed ridden for some time. Thankfully, came out on top and am back at it.

Life at the beginning of the Pandemic was pretty calm. I was just getting settled in as the General Manager at an La Fitness in Columbus, Ohio. Was just wrapping up my first year at The Ohio State University. I was just switching from in person classes to online classes, so that I could pursue a career and education. Everything was going smoothly… then boom, the world went on pause. Nobody knew how serious to take this, nobody knew if they could leave… nobody knew anything. That was a big adjustment period. Thankfully, I am a Marine Corps vet… so waiting around for something to happen is my strong suit. So the pandemic and lockdown was full swing. I go and visit my family here in Greenville around Easter time. I decide, sheesh… I kinda like this place. I’m going to just drop everything, and move to a city I’ve only been to once. So after going back to work in June, I moved here in August.

Started a whole new journey by moving to Greenville, North Carolina. I am originally from the Camp Lejeune area (Grandfather is a Marine as well). So here I am in Greenville. I do coincidentally have my best friend in the same area. So we get a place together and now I’m in school and working. I had one friend and was the most bored person on Earth. Pandemic has everything shut down. So you literally have hardly any way to let off steam, or just relax. The toll that’s taken on my mental health has been quite interesting to say the least. But, we adapt and overcome. Back in Ohio I was in a car club. So after moving here and having no friends, I thought “Well I should start a chapter of the same club here”. So that’s what I did. Now we are the Number #1 club in North Carolina. Now we have developed a family like atmosphere amidst all this pandemic lifestyle. We engage in community service when possible, car washes, beach cleanups, security, and all kinds of other good stuff. We even have an agreement with several police departments and businesses to do certain activities that we typically would not be able to do. Thankfully, the community is welcoming us and our organization.

Ultimately, life as a young man in a pandemic lifestyle has not been easy. It has caused me to do things and change things in such a way, that I feel probably isn’t how most of my elders before me grew up. So being as we are all in uncharted territory… I don’t really have too many outlets to go and ask advice from. It’s difficult being in this life. Not knowing what’s all going on in the world. One news station says this, the next one says that… its all so confusing. But you kind of just have to come together with your peers and just figure it out together. So that’s what we have been doing. Life has been difficult. Life has been challenging. But ultimately I feel this pandemic opened my eyes in so many ways. While simultaneously allowing me to close other doors.