

In March of 2020 I was planning for prom, shopping for dorm room decorations and itching with “senioritis”, completely unaware that my world would be flipped in two weeks. I vividly remember the word “covid” being used as a joke around my high school and not taken in the slightest bit serious until mid-March. I remember the day Covid-19 was announced as a national pandemic, it was March 11th, my sisters birthday. The week prior I was extremely sick, I was out of school for a week, my last day of high school was my first day back.

I was so sure that I would be back in my high school in two weeks, everything would be normal, I would get asked to prom, I would stress for weeks about plans, I would have my senior awards assembly, graduation party then graduation. The day I found out I would never go back to my high school again is a day that I can recite perfectly and is a story I will tell my kids and their kids. I am from Richmond, Virginia, our governor was giving a press conference that day at around 3pm, I had just left work right when the press conference was starting, I plugged my phone up to listen on my drive home as my high school class of 2020 group chat was blowing up. Right as I pulled into my neighborhood Ralph Northam stated that all K-12 schools would not reopen for the rest of the year, I parked my car and sobbed. At this point my biggest nightmare became a reality. I looked at my phone and saw a text to meet in our high school parking lot from my huge class group chat. Everyone wanted to just sit in our cars in our parking lot and soak up the last high school moment. This might be my favorite high school memory, almost all of my senior class sitting in our cars, crying, laughing, watching the boys in their trucks do donuts around the parking lot, it was really a bonding moment and a moment we needed. The students who didn’t get a lacrosse, softball, baseball, or soccer season all hopped the fence and just sat on their field alone. Teachers and staff saw this but they didn’t care and they let us have our moment.

We made the best of this awful situation, our community and families were so supportive. There were organizations such as “adopt a senior” where a stranger would “adopt” you and bring you a basket full of college gear, snacks, and more. Parents organized socially distant graduations and prom’s to try to make it better.

A year ago I thought my life was awful, I was at a loss and was upset at the world for bringing us the pandemic. Looking back now I am still upset for all the pandemic took from me and so many others however, I lived through a major historical event and I grew more in one year than all eighteen years of my life. Covid-19 was by far the worst situation I have ever lived through and I would not have believed anyone if they had told me this is what my life would look like for a year but at the same time I learned to be more grateful and appreciative for my health, for my families health and I became a stronger person.