

In January of 2020, I left America to go study abroad in Paris, France for a whole semester. When I left in January my biggest fear was being home sick, not being sent home by a worldwide pandemic. I was having the absolute time of my life meeting new people, exploring Paris and traveling all over Europe. I remember hearing about COVID-19 spreading like wildfire in China but never thought that it would get to Europe. As the middle of February came around, I had just gotten back from Italy and cases started to hit Europe. Still my concern for the pandemic was low even as numbers increased in Paris because things seemed pretty normal and under control of the media.

On March 15th, 2020 I had to abruptly pack up all my stuff and leave Paris to come back to America. When I arrived home to New Jersey I had to quarantine for 2 weeks. During the height of the pandemic in March and April, my family and I did not do much. The most exciting thing was going to the grocery store weekly or getting takeout on Fridays. Every time we left the house it was such a process. We had to put gloves and a mask on, make sure we had hand sanitizer, and wipe down everything we brought into the house. None of this even felt real.

My 21st Birthday was on May 28th, 2020 and we were still in quarantine. It was not the 21st birthday I had planned but my family and I made the best of it. I started working as a waitress in June and worked all summer. Working in a mask is not the easiest thing to do but it is also manageable. I spent the summer safely working, going out to eat, going to the beach and spending time with friends. They were traveling around Europe, going out to clubs, and just enjoying the summer.

During the summer, I was looking forward to starting my senior year at Sacred Heart, but I was also nervous. I knew it was not going to be the same, but I had hopes that it would. Majority of my classes had gone online but I was still trying to think positively. The school year rolls around and the first week back my whole house (6 girls) tests positive for COVID-19. We were in isolation for 10 days and could not leave our house. I was congested, tired and had a headache for about 3 days. I did lose my taste and smell for a few days but had no major covid symptoms besides that. If I did not get tested, I would have thought it was a common cold.

I thought this pandemic was going to last a couple of months at most but here I am today still dealing with the wrath of COVID-19. I never thought that I would experience living in a pandemic. Nothing at the moment is certain for me, not even my senior year of college. But I do know one thing for sure, as soon as this is all over, I am going back to Paris.