

COVID-19 has impacted my life in a way I never would have imagined. It has been almost a year since I walked into a store without a mask or seen my grandparents and cousins. When COVID-19 hit, I certainly did not realize the intensity this virus would be. I thought we would be off from school for two weeks and return after spring break. Instead, March 13 marks the last normal day before COVID-19. In the beginning I was allowed to see my boyfriend and my family that lived in my town. As the many weeks went on, more restrictions were put in place. The state of NJ, along with most states in the US, went into lockdown. That meant no eating in restaurants, no going to stores except the grocery store, and we could not leave our house.

March felt like ages went by, and by late April things started looking up. I was able to go on hikes with my close friends and boyfriend, outdoor seating in restaurants opened back up with a limited capacity, and small businesses were able to open again. Of course, all of these pros came with a face mask. In the beginning of the summer, schools announced their reopening plans for the fall. For me, that meant that I got to attend my freshmen year of college at Sacred Heart University during a pandemic. Classes were hybrid or online, masks had to be worn at all times unless in your dorm and food lines were longer than ever due to limited capacity.

Now, life is completely different than it was a year ago. You have to make reservations to go to the gym and most restaurants, COVID tests are given at colleges daily, classes are split up so that only a certain amount of people can attend. Travel has started opening back up and most restaurants allow for indoor dining at 25% or 50% capacity. It is hard to imagine what the young kids are going to grow up with, if this virus continues to impact the world.