

Everyone has that one day from the past that they can never forget and will live with them for the rest of their lives. Some of these days include the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, and November 22nd, 1963, the day J.F.K. was assassinated. For me that day is March 13th, 2020, the day the world shut down from the coronavirus.

Back in March 2020 watching the world news every night with my parents used to be a daily ritual. Seeing a new virus reported in Wuhan, China was something quite mysterious to hear about, but I never imagined it would be something that it amounted to today. Being from New York and living only thirty miles away from the individual who reported the second case of COVID-19 in the United States, things changed fast. The Governor brought in the National Guard into local towns and a state of emergency was declared. My mother, a hospital secretary, was told to stay home from work for a couple of months due to elective surgeries being postponed and only having essential employees stay to go on the front lines. My mother was scared and told me of how refrigerated trucks behind the hospital were being converted into makeshift morgues for the dead. Being an essential worker, my father worked from home most of the time and went in when he absolutely needed to. The restaurant I worked at was closed for three months but provided unused food to the community for free. I even heard stories of people complaining about the smell and pollution from crematoriums within my county because they were operating at such a high capacity. Despite the loneliness faced during quarantine I consider myself lucky. Once my boss reopened her restaurant, I was able to return to work in a very safe environment with all precautions taking place. As soon as restaurant workers were given priority for the vaccine my dad and I waited on the phone until we were able to schedule an appointment. My mom was able to receive

vital PPE to bring home for use during the pandemic and received unemployment benefits which helped support my family. No one within my household ever officially contracted the virus. Compared to mass layoffs, financial turmoil, food shortages, and the struggle to initially obtain the vaccine my family and I are extremely blessed.

If I could tell only one thing to future generations about the hardships of the pandemic, I would tell them that no one thing in life is permanent. Things you could never imagine being temporary can be taken from you in an instant. The pandemic has taught me how to adapt during difficult times. I am very grateful for the efforts of our essential workers and have hope this pandemic can improve given it has gone on for two years now.