

March 13, 2020. I went to the grocery store with my mom after the last day of in-person school for what I thought would only be two weeks. Standing next to us at the store was a man wearing a mask and gloves. Little did I know that that would be my attire for the next year. I want future generations to know that experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic can be summed up in two words: challenging and eye-opening.

Being completely shut off from day-to-day social interaction as a 17-year-old in high school was something I never thought I would go through. For me, I would get to school early and stay after for a few hours doing after school activities every day. That was my routine. That was what I looked forward to. That's what I took for granted before the world stopped. Adjusting to life where you can only interact with people outside your home through a video camera or by wearing a mask while standing six feet apart from them was a learning curve. Suddenly, you had to learn how to communicate your expressions through the tone of your voice and your eyes because the lower half of your face was covered. This along with many other things were part of difficult learning curves I had to experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite these challenges, I learned to be grateful for what I had and what was right in front of me. I was lucky enough to have the resources to buy protective equipment, groceries, other essentials, and be updated on the pandemic through the news. I had a house I could safely and comfortably quarantine in. When I got COVID in December 2020, I realized how strong my body really was despite having such a horrible virus fighting it. I was also lucky enough not have a case of COVID that required hospitalization. I recovered after two weeks of self-isolating in my bedroom, having meals left outside my door and doing everything by myself, leaving me with a newfound appreciation for how my body could function and heal.

