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Longwood: Life during COVID-19

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## **Historical Pandemic That Changed the World Forever**

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## The Historical Pandemic That Changed the World Forever

Imagine waking up to a world in turmoil with people all around you dying from a new disease that nobody saw coming. This is what happened in March of 2020 as the coronavirus ravaged the entire earth and left people jobless, scared, and panicked. These characteristics, however, are not what stood out most to me as the weeks following the outbreak unfolded. What stood out most was the communities that took care of each other and the individuals who helped out their fellow neighbors even when they did not have enough for themselves.

The first time that I can recall hearing of the coronavirus was when I was walking on campus talking to my fiancé on the phone when his father jokingly mentioned stockpiling water. I remember thinking to myself that “it is not that serious it’s just another over-exaggeration from our government”. This thought, however, was incredibly wrong as the world including myself was not ready for what was to come in the weeks following. Shortly after this conversation with my fiancé, I got a text from my sister saying that Virginia Tech had moved all of its classes to an online format for the remainder of the semester. It was at this moment that I had finally realized that the coronavirus was not a political ploy to get people involved but rather a major call to action.

In the days following this text from my sister, we were advised to stay at Longwood as classes were not yet canceled and no decisions had been made. We were expected to act as if life were normal despite the fact that the entire world was closing down around us. This became increasingly harder as students started to panic wondering when we would be sent home next. It wasn’t until an unnamed student had been diagnosed with the virus that we were permitted and advised to do so. After receiving this news, I like most of the other students on campus left that night in fear of being infected.

Once, I had arrived home with my luggage in hand and only the memories of my first year at Longwood I began to wonder what was to come. I started to picture a future that resembled shows like *The Walking Dead* and movies like *The Carriers* as these were my only references for the apocalyptic nature that the media was portraying as our near future. I quickly came to realize that these thoughts were wrong as the worst thing that people did out of fear was buy all of the toilet paper as if it were going to shield them like a protective blanket from catching the virus. As the next few weeks unfolded people began to surprise the world and themselves as they took the time that was given to them during the government-mandated quarantine to do good. One of the first things that I noticed people doing more often was donating to charities and then posting it on social media to get other people involved in donating as well. I also noticed people ordering more often from their locally owned businesses to try and keep them alive. In addition to this, I observed people putting up art and other decorations in their windows to simply brighten other people's day as they walk by. Much like these positive occurrences, I saw people donating things like puzzles, movies, and books to the elderly so that they would not be so lonely while kept away in isolation. I also saw the number of dogs and cats in shelters drop as more people began to foster and adopt. These are just a few of the positive things that the coronavirus inspired people to do.

In short, the coronavirus may have been portrayed by the media as a mass murder who only wreaked havoc on our world but it also saved it as it created the be kind movement and showed people how to care for one another. I believe that it is safe to say that this pandemic may have crippled the world as we know it but it also uncovered something much more beautiful as humanity was finally forced to take responsibility and care for one another as it should have been doing all along. With that being said the lives of those lost will never be forgotten as they are a

part of our history and the evolutionary impact that the coronavirus has had on our planet and the way we view the connection we have to others.