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Longwood: Life during COVID-19

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Effects of Coronavirus

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How Life Has Changed Since Corona Came Along

It was Friday, March 13th when our entire semester was changed by one simple email. This email was sent out by President Reveley, briefly summarizing and stating how Longwood would officially be moving to online classes for the remainder of the semester, thus turning this entire semester upside down.

From an outsider's perspective, it may be tough to understand how simply switching to online courses could affect someone so much. Even a good friend of mine messaged me and said "Shouldn't you be happy? Your work will be easier, and you get to go home. We'll celebrate!" just after the announcement became public. But in fact, I had quite the opposite feeling of happiness. Feelings of anxiousness, sadness, and confusion hit me like a tidal wave. How will I adjust? How will I be able to maintain my schoolwork load and work full-time while now being away from Farmville? How will I be able to even turn in my school or focus intensely on my work while living in a home that doesn't have consistent or working Wi-Fi? How will I be able to pay bills and work now that I'll be hours away from my primary job? These were just a few of the questions and thoughts that I had swirling around my head after the announcement was made.

Aside from having to tackle the new day to day challenges of doing course work from home and trying to figure out what I would do for a job... the biggest challenge ahead of me was something that I hadn't even begun to think of yet.

This coronavirus is something which targets and is more deadly to those who have pre-existing medical conditions... luckily for me I don't have any pre-existing medical conditions, so I am a little more safe and less likely to contract the virus as long as I continue to follow the instructions and guidelines being handed down by our government. The same can't be said for my housemate, one of my favorite people in this world, my grandmother. Yes, when I'm home I live with my grandmother and typically, it's the greatest thing in the world. Grandmas cooking never gets old and I'm always looking forward to seeing her on my breaks from school and getting back to spending quality time with her. But the harsh reality of this pandemic, is that it is detrimental and, in most cases, deadly for those who aren't as strong in health. My grandmother is considered one of those people. She has a serious case of COPD, which in lengthy terms is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It's defined as many different diseases that take place in the lungs, making it very difficult to breathe at times. Because of this, my grandma hasn't been able to return to work at all, as she is more susceptible to Coronavirus than your average American.

Now I'm sure you may be thinking or wondering, how does your grandmother being more susceptible to Coronavirus affect you so much? And how does it fit into everything else? Well, since she hasn't been able to work, there obviously isn't as much money being brought into our household anymore. Because of that, since losing my original job that I worked in

Farmville, I've had to find another job here at home to be able to support my grandmother and me. Since returning from school and starting this new job, I've worked close to 50 hours a week, not because I want to, but because I have to. With my grandma not working, she has no current income. Which means that she doesn't have the ability to pay bills, buy groceries, anything. So, since returning home, not only has my class load seemed to double, but I went from only working a part-time job in Farmville, only having to support myself, to working a full-time job and having to support both my grandmother and me.

But, after reading all thus far, I'm sure you're thinking that this is leaning towards a conclusion where I talk about how all of this change... the increase in workload of school work, increase in work of my actual job, and having to care for my grandmother has broken me? Made me crumble under the pressure and begin to endure a dark stage in life?

Thankfully, it's quite the opposite.

All of this change, the frenzy that coronavirus has caused, the changes in schoolwork and changes in my work force, has built me up stronger and given me a drive and determination that I haven't felt in quite some time. The feeling that knowing someone you love and care about (my grandmother) is depending on you to help them live, eat and make it through each day, is a feeling that I'd never truly felt before, but it's the strongest and greatest feeling to have. That feeling, helps me get up each and every day. That feeling helps me push through the double shifts at work. That feeling helps me grind out each and every assignment I can after a long day at work. That feeling, is what helps me provide for my household, my family, and it's a feeling I never want to lose again.

With a topic like this, it's very easy to focus only on the negative. Thinking about what Coronavirus has done to hurt you, change your life in drastic ways, but aside from all of the bad that the Coronavirus has caused... it's helped me find a new drive, a new fire that helps me push through each day and try to work as hard and as long as I can to support the ones I love.

Coronavirus has caused pain, tragedy, heartbreak, for families all across the world.

Coronavirus has shutdown governments, de-stabilized economies, and re-written the books on how we handle cleanliness and hygiene.

But for me, Coronavirus has helped me in a way I could've never imagined. It made me a better and stronger person, and for that, I am thankful.