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Longwood: Life during COVID-19

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### Reflection on Quarantine

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## Covid-19 Experience

During the initial stages of the pandemic, I was one of the people who weren't really worried about the reach of Covid-19. Even when classes here at Longwood were first suspended in March for safety concerns, I didn't feel overtly threatened by the disease. I was actually relieved to be out of classes for a while and adjusted to life in quarantine pretty easily. I still had my roommates and more free time to spend with them playing videogames, going outside, or doing whatever else was convenient while living in Lancer Park. As the pandemic ran longer and longer, however, it eventually clicked that we were living through a major historical event, and maybe it would be smart to worry.

After growing up and observing several outbreaks that never affected me directly like the H1N1 virus in 2009, and Ebola in 2014, I think I had become somewhat desensitized to the seriousness of such events. I was already following appropriate guidelines for avoiding transmission of Covid-19, but only as much as I normally would. Luckily, I was already more than prepared with supplies like cleaning materials, facemasks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and things like that thanks to my mother. She has a habit of being the over-protective and over-prepared type, but of course mom always knows best. Upon returning from Spring Break right before classes were canceled, she sent me back to my apartment with enough gear for the house of three. Even now, I still bring the bottle of germ-x and wear one of the facemasks she gave me every time I go to Walmart.

As quarantine stretched further, we were eventually given news that Longwood was enacting a more serious lockdown policy and students would be going home for the semester. Since I live in a rural area where my access to internet is very limited, I chose to request the ability to remain in Lancer Park until further notice. The officials from housing approved the request and I was prepared to wait out the pandemic. My first roommate packed up and departed quickly after the announcement, while my second roommate requested to stay for a bit longer as I did. After another week or two however, he departed as well, and I was left to myself in our apartment.

The first few days of solitude were odd and a little eerie. Even though I was raised as an only child, this environment was one I had never experienced alone for more than a day or two. With time though, I started getting used to the peace and quiet as I got more comfortable living alone throughout the next month. Although I was getting comfortable with the new situation, it was still very easy to succumb to boredom and the occasional bad day where I only felt like staying in bed. It isn't always ideal, but I usually had the option of getting in touch with my roommates and other friends who had already left, and oftentimes this fell to me simply sending them a meme that made me think of them. A lot of my time alone was spent in my room watching YouTube videos, listening to music, or just sleeping the day away. When I felt the need to get active, I would go out for a walk on one of the numerous nature trails surrounding Lancer Park. This has been one of my favorite hobbies since moving in here, letting the calm surroundings take off some of the stress of the day.

As this strange semester winds down and I'm preparing to go home, I'm already expecting to be rushed away from my school supplies for disinfection on arrival. My mother has already mentioned that most of my stuff is staying out in the shed for a few days, just to be safe that there's no lingering virus. I'll make no objection to the plan as long as it keeps my parents in peace of mind, and there is a chance this might even be a good idea to prevent any transmission I might not expect. I think this time I've spent alone in Lancer Park, waiting and observing the world going through such a radical time period, has helped me to be a little more mindful of my headspace. I've recognized some issues that I would be smart to work towards resolving related to my work ethic and problem-solving skills. This next year of school will hopefully make for a more traditional college experience where these issues are more easily tackled.