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COVID-19 Journal | Anonymous

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March 30, 2020

I did not go to bed until six this morning. I have been running around packing all night. My mother would be there at nine and I still felt like everything was disastrous in my room. My two best friends would be moving out on different days than me. I felt a pang in my heart as I knew that was possibly the last time, I would ever see them again. They are both transferring to other schools next semester due to personal reasons. My mother arrived and we spent around two hours taking my things out to the vehicles and cleaning up. The space I had called my home for the previous months felt so hollow.

I arrived home and was tackled by the love and affection from my dog. A small yorkie mix that my boyfriend had gotten me for my seventeenth birthday. I look around at my room that is covered in my high school memories. It is strange how much has changed for me in the matter of a year. A hotspot from my phone was all I had to do my work. It was crappy and only worked half the time. The rest of my day was spent trying to find internet and finding all my clothes for work the next day.

April 4, 2020

In January I discovered that I am allergic to gluten. My grandparents know nothing about a gluten free diet. I had been eating eggs for breakfast and mash potatoes from work. So, it was time to face the mad house known as Walmart. If the smaller local stores had gluten free sections, then I would not try to make the thirty-minute drive. My boyfriend picked me up to go with me because I don't like going to Walmart by myself. When we arrived at Oxford there was an extremely long line extending out into the parking lot. So, we decided to go to Lenlock and see if it was less crowded, it was much calmer there. It hurt my soul to see all the disposable gloves and masks on the ground. Isn't this what spreads the virus? Someone must pick that up, and if anyone has the corona then throws that glove down spreads the bacteria. It's truly disgusting how people are treating essential workers.

The rest of my day was spent reorganizing my room. I barely have space in my room in for what are inside my boxes. Some of my furniture was taken out and the rest was rearranged. My room felt crowded from boxes yet bare from all my high school decorations taken down. I went to bed late that night with so much on my mind to do.

April 5, 2020

The day started off wonderful. My boyfriend took me to the park, and we had a picnic early that morning. We went early to prevent from being around a crowd. When I got back my great grandma called me telling me how excited she was for my mom. She said that mom had gotten accepted into the New Jersey program. I didn't what she was talking about. My mom is a nurse, and she had gotten accepted into a COVID-19 center to work at for the next thirteen

weeks. In New Jersey they are converting nursing homes into COVID centers for people who have tested positive for Corona.

I was very upset. She wasn't going to tell me until she had to leave. My grandma walked in my room and she asked me what was going on. My mom had already told her as well. My phone rang many times at least five minutes later. My Grandma had told my Mom that I knew. I grabbed my keys and drove around. I was more upset that she didn't tell me than anything. I had to wrap my mind around it so I didn't say anything that I would regret. How could she not talk to me first? How could she just up and leave her family for so long in such little time? I just got home and now she's leaving? When I finally pulled into my driveway, I called her. At first, she tried to act like nothing had happened. Then she told me I would do the same if I were in her shoes. That this is what she signed up for when she became a nurse. Everyone has a choice, and this is hers. I told her to do what she felt she had to do and hung up.

April 6, 2020

I couldn't go to sleep until 4 am. As morbid as it sounds, every time I closed my eyes the image of my mom in a casket came to life. I couldn't focus on anything but the fight I had with my Mom. I was diagnosed at 14 with depression. I have been on different medications and therapy for it. I still have my bad days. Today is one of them. I feel too sick to eat, but my stomach was growling for food. I was too numb to care.

I was only able to sleep for a few hours. I am too stubborn to pick up the phone to call my mom. I know I am in the wrong for being upset with her. She is being selfless, and I was nothing too upset to care. Although I do wish she would have spoken to me about it first, she is just trying to do what she is called to do. New Jersey has some of the worst cases of COVID-19 right now and they are very short staffed on nurses. At some point before I went to work, I called my mom and apologized for being rude. She was very understanding about the situation forgave me.

April 11, 2020

My Mom left for New Jersey tonight, she was driving and wanted to get a head start. I spent the day with her before she had to leave. One of her nurse friends were going with her, so it made me feel better that she wasn't traveling alone. No matter how I feel about the situation my mom always put others before herself. She has touched the lives of many patients and I know that she will touch lives in New Jersey. Even though I am scared for her I know that she will be okay, and I will see her the second week of July.

After she left, I went to my boyfriend's house to use his Wi-Fi, since my hotspot chooses when it wants to work, I have had assignments building up from more than just one class. I started on my anatomy because that is where I had most of the assignments at. I think the world hates me though because his Wi-Fi___33 was so slow, because there are around five people on it

at once, that it took an hour just to do one assignment. I eventually just had to leave because it was late, and I had to get home once my grandmother called me.

April 12, 2020

My Mom made it to New Jersey around 11:30 this morning. She called me to say goodnight after she got into her room. They made the fourteen-hour drive only stopping for gas and she starts her job tomorrow. I am almost 800 miles away from my Mom.

I know it is not healthy for me to think bad thoughts, but I would not know what to do with myself if something bad happened to her. None of us would be there with her except for her friend. If something bad happens, then she needs her family with her. I wouldn't wish for sickness on anyone, but I wish the COVID center was closer to home. Maybe then I wouldn't worry so much.

April 20, 2020

This morning as I was getting ready for work, my Mom made a post on Facebook about her first week in New Jersey. No one can pump their own gas there, everything of that sort is done for her. No one can go out without a mask and gloves on. She was unaware was what unit she was going to be on when she got to work, and they immediately put her in the special unit of patients with Huntington's Disease that also have COVID. The other nurses told her that she was in the hardest unit and they were surprised with how well she is doing. Huntington's Disease is something that mom has never dealt with before, she explained that it is like having Parkinson's, mental health issues, speaking issues, uncontrollable movement, weight loss, and eating and drinking issues all in one. That becomes much worse when COVID is thrown in the mix. The fever is harder to control because the

I called her later and she told me she is grateful to have this experience as a nurse. She said she is continuing to learn something new every day. She said it was not easy, but she was not a quitter. She said she missed me a lot and she can't wait to come home. She has run into a few rude people in New Jersey, but she said she looked at them and said, "Bless your heart," and went about her day. Other than that, everyone has been very nice to her and they absolutely love the way she talks. If you know my Mom, then you know that she is very southern.

April 21, 2020

I woke up to a phone call from my Mom, she asked me if I wanted to come to New Jersey for one week in July. This shocked me and I didn't know what to say other than yes. She told me that she would take me to all the parks that she walks at, and that we may even drive into New York and look around. I will catch a flight the first week of July and then ride back home with my mom since it would be her last week in New Jersey.

Of course, I had to make sure it was okay with work. So, I asked my general manager when I got there if I could take those five days off. She is a very understanding lady, so she let me have those days off. The excitement of seeing my mom again ran through me and put me in an amazing mood for the rest of the day.

April 22, 2020

My mom bought my plane ticket as soon as she found out that I would be able to go. I understand why she was not going to tell me she was leaving until later now. I have not told anyone yet. I just want to keep the excitement to myself for a few days. This is going to be the type of trip that I will never get to take again.

The sad part about today is that it is my great grandmother's birthday. I cannot get out of my car and hug her. I have not been able to get a gift for her. There is always a possibility of me being exposed to COVID at work. I do not want to risk her getting any germs, because I know if she catches it, she will not recover.

April 25, 2020

My grandparents know I have been having a hard time doing assignments lately, so they bought data on their iPad. The hotspot from the iPad works perfectly. Most of my assignments are late, but I am finally able to get things done. The feeling of relief is rolling off me. I have been working so hard that I don't realize how many hours pass.

I still must work, but every night I make myself a large coffee and stay up as long as I have the energy to work on my assignments. I go to work running off two to three hours of sleep, but it is worth it. I at least want to pass all my classes. I am not used to having things turned in this late and my anxiety has been bouncing off the walls. I have redone one assignment so many times I don't think I will ever be satisfied enough with it, but I will get it done.

April 26, 2020

My mom made her second week update post on Facebook. New Jersey doesn't have sweet tea, and mom said she was having sweet tea withdrawals. She bought herself some tea bags and sugar. Now she is currently making her own sweet tea. I can tell she's desperate because my Mom lives off Milo's sweet tea.

She also said that this week was better yet more heartbreaking than last. One of her patients is not going to make it and they both know that. She is having to hold the phone up while he video chats his family. He wants her to hold his hand everyday and not let go. She told him that she was going to hold his hand until the end. She called me after her shift, and I could tell she was upset. Mom is not a crier, but everyone has their days. She said that no one deserves

to die alone but the COVID was too serious for any of his family members to come into the facility.

April 28, 2020

This is my last journal entry. I can honestly say that I have enjoyed doing these and wish I could have been off work more to write more. This pandemic has caused more commotion in my life than I would have ever imagined. I wish I could have stayed in classes instead of having to move home early just to have assignments online. There are some classes that are just meant to be taken in person.

I wish people would stay inside unless they need something. My drive thru should not be packed like it is, and I should not be getting off at almost midnight when the store closes at ten. I feel as if I should only be serving the other essential workers right now. People not staying in quarantine is what spreads COVID. It is preventing my Mom from coming home early. The more everyone stays in, the sooner the pandemic will be over. I can only hope it ends quickly so my mom won't have to travel more, she is talking about going to Florida next. I love the kind heart my mom has, and I can only hope to be like her as a nurse someday.

Work

My work hours have extended graciously and there are too many days to log since I work almost every day, so I will summarize how COVID-19 has affected my job in one entry. I work at a fast food restaurant an hour away from my house. It is an hour away because it was closer to JSU, and now that we are in quarantine the company is not allowing any transfers or raises as of right now. I am also on night shift therefore I don't get home until midnight, sometimes one in the morning, or it can be later than that because every time I work, I close. How much I have done before close depends on what time I get out after we close. Since fast food places are practically the only thing that is open, we are busy every day. From the time I get there until the time to close there are cars consistently at the drive thru. There was a day from 8 AM till 8 PM that cars were wrapped around the building, at one point they were lined up in the middle of the road past a red-light blocking traffic by trying to turn into the parking lot.

Now we have a doorbell on our door to let people know if a worker has arrived for a shift or if a truck driver would like food. Before anyone enters the building, their temperature must be taken. We wear gloves for everything, which is more for our protection than anything. I must keep a piece of paper in my car with all my work hours just in case I get pulled over. I feel like I am in high school again carrying a hall pass with me everywhere I go.

Ever since all the non-essential places have closed the customers have become more irritable. They find every reason to complain about something. One lady was mad because she could not come inside to eat, she yelled at my general manager because she saw one of our managers sitting in our lobby making the work schedule for the next week. A guy cursed at my

coworker because we don't sell breakfast foods all day. I politely asked a customer if his order was completed once he paused and he cussed me out saying I was rushing him. We have specials during certain hours of the day, if we ring up those specials out of those time periods our computers will mess up, and I have had many customers cuss at me because they wanted a special out of the time period. Those are only a few of the minor things that has happened, my manager had a box of chicken thrown in her face.

This job has taken up more time than it ever has before due to COVID-19. Many of my coworkers have been quarantined due to the fact they were exposed to the virus. I can not ask for less days to work because they are too short staffed. I also cannot just quit either because this is my source of paying for college. I risk my life almost every day so people can get a hot meal. Then when I get home from work and my hotspot decides it wants to work, I start or try to finish assignments and I pass out from exhaustion. On my off days my hotspot wants to play rounds of hide and go seek.

In my journals I have discussed how people have been acting out, my mother working during COVID-19, the stress COVID-19 has caused me, how my work has changed due to it. These journals have summarized how challenging the month of April has been. I am a freshman and my major is nursing.