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COVID-19 Journal | Madison Brooks

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Madison Brooks

Day 1: March 30, 2020

We have already been quarantined for a couple of weeks---give or take---and it is beginning to feel odd. I am very lazy, but honestly what else is there to do. This morning, my chemistry class had our first online class meeting on Microsoft Teams and it was quite frustrating. I can tell this will be very challenging; I cannot imagine the stress being put on all of us students nationwide as we have to completely learn online and try not to let our grades diminish. I will move out of my dorm tomorrow.

Since the lockdown of classes, restaurants, and most of society, I have had a lot of time on my hands to reflect on my past. I have begun to think about my freshman year and wonder what life would've been like if the COVID-19 would not have taken hold of our lives and left us in the dust. Would I be at home? Taking a nap? In my dorm preparing for my 1:45 psychology lecture? It is very unknown what our lives would've been like and that is a scary thought. We do not know what events the next few months hold or if this will go away as fast as it occurred. All I know is, this is hard on us students and those who are now unemployed. I pray that our world overcomes this because it is truly terrifying.

Day 2: March 31, 2020

Today I moved out of my dorm on campus. I always said I hated it there, but today is bittersweet. A "new" chapter of living on my own has come to a screeching stop. On top of that, I somehow have to try to fit two car loads of stuff I didn't realize I had into my bedroom back home. I decided to stay in my dorm last night for the last time, and room 305 (my room) felt eerie as I did not hear my neighbors laughing and playing music as they usually did. I heard no showers or sinks running or heavy feet trampling across the hallways. For the first time, the gym parking lot was empty as well as the TMB. JSU feels like a ghost town.

I am finally home and it feels like summertime already despite the cold temp today and the overwhelming amount of assignments I have procrastinated to do. How is spring break already over? I miss seeing my friends, parking out of my orange zone to go to Stone Center, and having unlimited meals in the TMB. I've lost track of what day it is, but I think we can all agree that it seems like we have been in the month of March since 2020 began. I will update tomorrow on my boring quarantine adventures.

Day 3: April 1, 2020

They found a cure for COVID-19!!! April fools...sadly (lol). Today I had my second online lecture for chemistry and it went worse than the first time. I almost fell asleep and honestly couldn't tell you what we talked about. I am using this time as a catch up on homework and try to get ahead in classes so I can go for a hike this weekend to clear my brain. Despite my severe allergies, the outdoors has been so helpful during this process.

I am beginning to be more thankful for this quarantine. I have been able to spend more time with my family and pets which has been almost impossible this semester while living on campus. I've been able to see my boyfriend's family more, have more sit down dinners, and even have a nice bonfire with a few of them. I haven't roasted marshmallows in YEARS. I have also been able to stop and let the world spin and actually enjoy it. The days may be going by slower, but I thank God for that because the world needs to slow down and be more thankful for what we have. Time is so precious.

Day 5: April 3, 2020

Staying at home and doing online classes has gotten easier. COVID-19 seems to be evening out. I hope it clears out before the summertime because I have a cruise planned for June 15. I got a job today at my local nursing home to help my family's financial struggles due to business's closing. My mom will be out of work for a month and my dad works as a Respiratory Therapist. Everyday my family is at risk due to my dad being exposed to the virus.

The days have been so beautiful that I set myself up a desk outside. It is relaxing to sit in the yard and listen to the birds chirp and let my older dog sun on the porch. I love being out of school, but it is challenging. I cannot leave the house very much. It feels like the summer when I was 14 and couldn't drive. I love spending time with my family, but one can only take so much. The governor ordered a shelter in place that begins tomorrow at 5:00pm. This should be interesting.

Day 7: April 5, 2020

Today is Sunday so usually I would have been up and headed to church, but I had to watch it online. I went to my friends house to watch it on their tv and we grilled hamburgers and hotdogs. We also made homemade ice cream. No worries, there were only ten people there. This was the first day on the lockdown and I assumed there would not be very many people on the roads, but there was quite a bit. I have only left the house for church and groceries.

I have to go to my new job tomorrow and get everything set up for when I start. This pandemic has affected the financial side of my family very much. My mother is out of work for a month, but thankfully a lot of places are allowing bills postponed for a month. I have yet to unpack my stuff from my dorm. Even though I thought I would have a lot of free time being at home, I seem to be busier than ever before. Classwork has doubled as well as my expectations from being home.

Day 9: April 7, 2020

Yesterday, I found out I will start my new job on Thursday so I had to go buy scrubs. When I was at Walmart, there was a woman with a large water jug over her head. I guess she couldn't find any masks laying around (lol). Today I am catching up on homework and hopefully cleaning my room. Sounds exhilarating... If you haven't caught on to my sarcasm yet I'm not sure you ever will. Thankfully all I have to do today is watch lecture videos and take notes.

My next entry will be after my first day on my new job so I hope that goes well. I am nervous, but excited because I've never worked in a healthcare facility before. When I went in yesterday, they immediately made me wear a mask and checked my temperature. I guess that

will be an everyday thing until this mess is over with. Driving around seems like a crime and it is still weird to me that Walmart is not open 24 hours a day. I am used to being able to go get ice cream at 1 am, and them only closing on Christmas. Now, back to homework and hopefully catching up on my chores.

Day 11: April 9, 2020

Today I started my new job. It is around five minutes from my house, but I was given a card saying I am allowed on the roads because I am an essential worker. It feels odd to have to have one of those cards because I have never been in this position before. At work, I have to take special precautions. Here are a few of the precautions: take temperature as soon as we clock in, fill out a COVID-19 form to assess symptoms, grab a mask if symptomatic, and wash hands or use sanitizer after touching pretty much everything ESPECIALLY resident rooms. Being clean is always something you have to take special precautions for in a medical facility, but now it is really emphasized due to the age of the residents.

We have two isolation rooms so far for the residents who either show symptoms or have exited the facility and had to come back in. To enter those rooms, you have to dress from shoes to head in personal protection equipment like gown, gloves, mask, shoe, and head covers. This is all very new to me since I have worked in food service since my first job, but I am liking it so far. The COVID-19 cases are steadily rising, and my dad has to see them first hand at the hospital so it is very dangerous for his health as well as ours when he comes home. I hope this ends soon I have a vacation in June lol.

Day 13: April 11, 2020

Things have either gotten to feel a bit more normal again or I am just getting used to this quarantine thing. It hasn't stopped me from seeing friends anymore or other family members. The only thing that is different is all of the stores being closed, but honestly maybe it is a good thing. I have spent overwhelming amounts of time with people who I only saw once a week during the school semester. It feels wonderful to reconnect with everyone.

This upcoming week and next week are going to be very tough on me. I have overwhelming amounts of school work not even mentioning that finals are being posted this week. On top of that I have to work this week so it is going to definitely be difficult. I am looking forward to this spring semester to be over so I can feel some relief. This adjustment has been odd and stressful for the most part.

Day 15: April 13, 2020

Last night there were large storms and it affected a lot of people negatively. Even though there is a quarantine, some people had to go to storm shelters which was quite dangerous for the health of a lot of people. Thankfully my family is fine. I am still working at the nursing home so it has been quite an adjustment to wake up before the sun for work.

I was very sick and had a fever last night and I was worried I was getting the coronavirus lol. Thankfully I'm fine now, but now our power is out in my house so I am having issues with WiFi and schoolwork. Next week is finals week!! We are almost done even though coronavirus

has affected us greatly. I'm praying for everyone and hope that everyone is successful in finals throughout these difficulties.

Day 17: April 15, 2020

Going on day 3 without power at my house. Alabama Power is working on getting it back on today. I am off work today and tomorrow so I can get my homework done and study for finals. Staying at home has been easier since I am allowed to leave and go to work. There is not much change in the amount of people going out, I wish more people would stay home. This virus will never stop until people take it seriously and stay at home. It is difficult to stay at home and be bored, but if it will help the world it is worth it.

I have seen some photos of China and places with large amounts of pollution that fill the sky. It is amazing how clear the atmosphere is in those places and seeing how turning factories off for a few months helps the environment so greatly. People in overpopulated, polluted cities are being able to view stars for the first time in years. That is so beautiful. I like to think that this virus may be hurting some people, but it is helping us as individuals and the environment. It is allowing people to spend much needed time with family, clearing the pollution, and allowing for nature to do their own thing without interference from the human race. Beaches are flourishing as there have been more turtles making nests and being undisturbed. That is just amazing.

Day 19: April 17, 2020

There are steadily more cases surfacing in the United States as well as Alabama. My dad works at the local hospital, as stated before, and he told us that they have a possible new case as well as a positive case in my hometown, Snead, AL. It is frightening to think that I could get the coronavirus from going to the local Dollar General, so staying away from places like that is my best bet. I do work in healthcare, and with the steady uprising of COVID, as well as diseases like C. Diff, I take special precautions to wash my hands, wear gloves, a mask, and not touch anything unnecessary. I do this more for the residents' health more than mine because I know that most of them would not survive if they were diagnosed with the virus.

Everyday I hope that the numbers of cured cases will outshine the positive tests, but we as a nation have not got to that point yet. I am frustrated that our citizens will not quarantine, stay inside, and avoid large populated areas. If we had to go on a permanent lockdown when this began, I believe it would have been better by now. It is hard to think that some stubborn Americans do not care for the population and would rather shop, converse, and party with large numbers of people instead of helping the country and staying healthy. I hope that this gets better soon, but my bank account sure is happy that stores like TJ Maxx and other clothing stores are closed, lol.

Day 21: April 19, 2020

Nothing much has changed except people will not stay inside. More and more cases are surfacing and no one seems to care to do anything about it. I cannot believe it has almost been a month in quarantine, and I am still managing to stay sane. I owe my thanks to work and spending time with family. This semester is almost over and then I will finally relax. I am beyond thankful I am still safe and healthy and the ones I love are healthy, as well.

I apologize for the boring entries, I do not really have much to say since nothing has changed. I am still working and going with the flow. When the stores reopen, it is going to feel so odd. I have adjusted to the new normal we are having to experience. Thankfully, my mother's unemployment has come through since she is off of work until this mess is over. I would love a vacation and I would love to take my family on vacation this year since this year has had a rocky start for my family. Finances have been quite hard especially since my mom is not working during this tough time. I pray for the safety of everyone around the world! Until Tuesday..

Day 23: April 21, 2020

There has been talk on the radio and news of other states reopening restaurants and most of the economy. Meanwhile, more and more people are diagnosed and die from the virus daily. I cannot help but to think about how selfish these people are that they'd rather go shopping or sit down to eat in a restaurant than to stay home, safe, and keep others safe. I really hope Governor Ivey does not do this until our numbers begin to lower. Don't get me wrong, I would love to go shopping or to the beach, but our health is most important.

Working in a nursing home has had me become more aware of certain things. I have been more aware of staying away from Walmart and grocery stores, and to wash and sanitize my hands frequently. If I were to get one of the residents sick I would be heartbroken. I hope these people who are willing to go out into public knowing they are at risk are okay with knowing they could be endangering others' families. I work a lot this week and it is finals week. If I get through all of this I am going to need a nice break.

Day 25: April 23, 2020

Georgia is reopening their economy. I believe the virus will only worsen with the opening of all the stores and populated areas. In Alabama, it seems like the virus is only getting worse and more people are being diagnosed with it in counties very close to my home. We were required to sign a paper at work saying we will let others buy our groceries and do our best not to expose ourselves to the virus so that we will not endanger the residents at the nursing home.

This school semester is almost over and thankfully my grades are still okay. Despite the large change from in class to online, I've still managed to keep my grades up. My boyfriend's family finally got their pool ready for this summer so I am just awaiting the hot days where I can just lay by the pool and tan. We are trying to plan a beach trip for when the virus is over so hopefully that will be soon. We are also planning a trip to Gatlinburg for this fall since our cruise got canceled.

Day 27: April 25, 2020

I am off work this weekend so we had a cookout at my boyfriend's house. Someone gifted them with a Boston butt so we ate that and grilled chicken. I love spending time with his family especially his little nephew, Bailey. He is so sassy and adorable. His 'gotcha day' is next weekend on May 2. He was adopted into their family, but he seems like he is perfect for their family in every way. Tomorrow, Sunday, I take my last final of this semester in Chem II. I haven't studied much because my professor has not been very good at communicating with us this entire semester, even when we were in class.

I am making my family dinner tomorrow. My mom and I went and got groceries yesterday for the next two weeks, and there were so many people in the stores. We do not go to Walmart unless it's time to buy groceries, so we have to make special precautions like wearing masks and carrying wipes to wipe down the carts to keep sanitary. I am so excited for this semester to end so I can breathe, lol. I still haven't found anywhere to live next semester so I may just stay at home and commute. My parents made me a deal that if I stayed at home we could renovate my room and redo my walls and flooring and everything. See you on monday!

Day 29: April 27, 2020

As my last entry, I am reflecting on the past few weeks and the range of emotions this has set upon me. At first I was fearful, but now I am sort of thankful. The quarantine has let me spend more time with my family, friends, and stay at home. I love shopping, going to the movies, and spending time with the ones I love. This time has shown me that shopping and spending money on unnecessary things will never bring me joy. Spending time with the ones I love is what I have neglected and I am so glad that this time has brought me back to my roots.

Not only am I thankful for spending time, I am thankful for nature more, as well. I am not sure if this was a part of God's big plan for all of us, but it was so needed for the environment. The skies are more clear than I can remember. It is so humbling to me that the people in China (in high populated areas) are seeing the stars for the first time in years. For the first time in a long time, the plants and factories that usually run 24/7 and blowing pollutants in the air are closed down. I have been able to reconnect more with so many things I forgot I loved, and to this quarantine I am thankful. Of course I am sympathetic to those who have been directly affected by the virus, but I also believe God does everything for a reason, including this.

In this COVID Journal, I am talking about the things that have directly affected me due to the virus. I talked about my work life, what I spent time doing, and schoolwork. At the time of writing this I am 19 years old, a Freshman at Jacksonville State University, and a Pre-Med Chemistry major. I covered the time period of March 30, 2020 to April 27, 2020. While writing, I have moved from Jacksonville back home to Snead, Alabama. I have not left the county I reside in since the quarantine has begun.