

# Aiden

Age 16  
Grade 11  
Somers High School  
Somers, New York



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## **What were your thoughts when the first COVID-19 cases were being diagnosed in China?**

At first, COVID-19 wasn't recognized as an immediate threat to the United States and didn't gain national attention. No one could have predicted the magnitude of the situation. But, it was reassuring to note that this wasn't the first time a virus had taken over the country. Viruses such as the Spanish Flu, the Zika virus, SARS and Ebola all took a significant toll on the country and the world. I can safely say that it came as a surprise when students across the country were told that their spring break would be extended by at least four weeks.

## **How have things changed for you and/or your family since the outbreak?**

It's now not unusual that a trip to the kitchen might be the most exciting thing you would do all day. Birthday parties have turned into birthday processions with cars flicking down the street and kids waving from their windows. The entire country has relied on their phones and computers to communicate with family and friends, using apps like "Zoom" to catch up with friends. Concerts are only virtual. Mass is streamed on Youtube. Me and my family haven't left the house in over a month. I wouldn't be surprised if this changes life as we know it for good.

## **For you, what is the worst thing about this?**

It's been hard to keep busy. Not being able to leave the house has been a surprisingly uncomfortable change. Also, School is a lot less structured which makes it challenging to get work done especially, for someone who likes to procrastinate.

## **In your experience so far, what, if anything, has been positive about this?**

Being able to spend more time with family is really nice. I'd be lying to if I said I don't enjoy being able to sleep until noon.

## **Tell us about a moment or experience during this time that you will never forget.**

New Yorkers rushing to their windows to sing, dance and most notably, cheer on all the health care workers on the front lines of this crisis. The NYPD and FDNY also honored the health care workers in their own way by standing outside local hospitals and cheering in between shifts. The country is really coming together to help out anyone who needs it. New York was hit the hardest by the pandemic and Westchester of all counties was hit first. The state hasn't seen anything comparable since the terrorist attacks on 9/11. With that said, I occasionally tune into the major news networks at 11:30 am, where Governor Andrew Cuomo delivers a talk every morning. He delivered a heartfelt message to the people of New York saying "We're gonna get through it because we are New York, and because we have dealt with a lot of things,... We are united... We are New York tough... New York loves everyone. That's why I love New York... And at the end of the day, my friends... Love wins, always." I get the chills listening to that talk. He also told a story of a farmer in the Midwest who was living on his farm with his family. He had surgical masks stored in his house and had one extra that wasn't needed. He decided to send that extra mask to New York along with a note. Governor Cuomo held the mask in one hand while reading the note in the other. He read this not during his 11:30 am talk on the major news outlets for the world to hear. The stories of acts of selflessness and kindness are the ones I will never forget.

## **What would you tell someone in the future who asks what it was like to live through the 2020 pandemic?**

Prepare. Don't take anything for granted. Live everyday like you might not see it for a bit. Wear masks. Keep your distance. Be respectful. Let the professionals do their job. Sit tight. We'll be back and we'll come back stronger.