

## **Margaret**

Age 16

Grade 10

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? Did you expect it to spread to the US?**

I was aware of the outbreak of a new disease in Wuhan in early January. I was really worried then because there was (and still is) no known vaccine or cure. I hoped that China would manage to keep the disease under control but I had a feeling that its arrival in the United States was inevitable due to China's prominence in the manufacturing industry and its influence in the global economy.

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

My Dad who used to commute to the city every day is now working from home. My brother and I are doing all of our schoolwork online. I rarely leave the house and when I do it's to take a bike ride around the block with my brother or get the mail and the newspaper. My parents have to be more careful when they go shopping now and put on masks (cloth ones, not the ones the medical professionals need) and disinfect the shopping cart handle. I've been sleeping in a little later than I could when I had to go to school. All the news reports are about the coronavirus.

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

Not having as big of a variety in food. Going from a different lunch every day to a bologna and cheese sandwich every day is harder than expected, especially because I can't eat with friends. We also used to get takeout often but now it's all homemade or pre-made food. Besides that, wish I could help the medical community and New York State more.

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

I haven't personally seen this, but I've heard reports of clear skies over China and cleaner water in Venice. I've also been growing closer with my brother. I love how connected the world feels right now. It's amazing to see everyone united against a common enemy. It really feels like a global community.

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

The last day we were in school was around Thursday the 12th of March. My friends and I were waiting for the late bus to the middle school to tutor students. I remember sitting in the high school library and jokingly saying "this may be the last time we see the high school." We were all joking about it. When we went out front to wait for the late bus, I patted one of the pillars in front of the school and said goodbye. I haven't been to the high school since then. I don't think I'll forget about how all the toilet paper sold out either.

### **Pretend it is the year 2050 and another pandemic is looming--what would you tell someone who has just asked what it was like to live through the 2020 pandemic?**

Make sure to have the appropriate protective equipment and sanitize in an efficient manner. Stick to a routine and don't fall behind on work. Now that you'll be staying at home, it's the perfect time for a new hobby; learn a language, cook more, learn an instrument or craft, read, etc. Set up a time each week to see your friends so you can catch up with each other and play games. Last but not least, don't panic!