The Unexpected Virus

Spring semester 2020, my first semester at Cal State Long Beach. This is a moment many students look forward to. I felt lucky to be accepted at one of the best Universities in California, I could not wait to get to know the campus and make new friends. But the semester was cut short due to Covid-19. I was bummed when we were told not to report to campus and that our classes were all transitioning to online only. In addition to having my education paused while our courses transitioned to online, my job was also told to close down. When I found out mostly everything besides essential places were going to close down as part as the “stay at home” order, I was worried and in disbelief.

The Covid-19 did not just shut down our education and our job, it also created fear in many of us. During the first few weeks of the shut-down, essential stores were chaotic. I remember going to Ralphs one afternoon with my sister to buy bread for a sandwich we wanted to make, and the shelves were nearly empty, the line to pay was ridiculously long. That is when it hit me. Seeing the shelves nearly empty, no cases of water in sight, and the amount of people standing in line to pay for their carts full of groceries was terrifying. At that point, my sister and I decided to grab a cart and grab anything we could find to have food at home. Milk, eggs, water, bread, and toilet paper were the main items that were hard to find at any grocery store. Not to mention, cleaning supplies like Lysol, bleach and hand sanitizer being sold out everywhere and continue to be hard to find.

The first few days of the Los Angeles shut down seemed awfully long and boring. I remember thinking to myself “how am I going to get through this.” My daily routine was taken from me in a blink of an eye. I had no homework to work on, I had no job to report to, I could not see my friends. Luckily, I still live with my parents, so my living situation did not get affected like it did for others. But I do have bills and loosing my job created a great amount of fear. I did not know how I was going to pay for my bills with no income coming in. The worst part was not knowing when all of this was going to end. Unfortunately, it is still not over, but at least places are slowly opening back up, including my workplace.

People, including myself want things to go back to normal. But many believe that things will never go back to normal. We have to get accustomed to wearing face masks everywhere we go, including restaurants. My job requires us to work with a face mask on as well. Working an 8-hour shift with a face mask is irritating. I work at a Kohl’s retail store. My job position requires me to shop for people that place online orders. This means I have to walk the entire store multiple times to find people’s orders, I have to pack each order and then assign it in its designated area. Doing all of this with a mask on makes it hard for me to breath also causing me to get headaches through out the day. I understand face masks are supposed to protect us from Covid-19, but it has become something I have not gotten used to.

Although this has been an unfortunate situation for many of us, I try to see the positive side of this pandemic. One of them being, the safety restrictions that have been placed throughout the Los Angeles County. I like having the 6 feet apart restrictions and the cleaning and sanitizing that is required at retails stores, restaurants, banks etc. I think the importance of cleaning and sanitizing was being forgotten at many places. I am glad it is being implemented again. I also saw the shut-down as finally having the time to spend an entire day with the family. Even though we could not go anywhere towards the first phase of the Covid-19 shut-down, my whole family was finally in one place. We spent one day building a puzzle, another day playing video games, cards games and we watched a couple movies as a family. It reminded me of my childhood when we use to spend a lot of time together as a family. It’s like I always say, there is always a positive in every negative situation. I just hope a vaccine is found soon because I cannot wait to throw these masks away.