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#REL101

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Life throughout the pandemic was interesting for my family. 2020 was when we moved to a new state, our daughter was starting kindergarten, and my husband and I returned to college to finish our degrees. When the lockdown first began, I remember having an uncomfortable feeling. I did not know how to respond. Everything had become virtual overnight. It was insane! Even my weekly classes at the gym were virtual. My daughter had to complete her very first year of school through zoom in a place where she did not personally know any of her classmates since we were new to the area. It was a rough time for everyone involved.

My husband's school went virtual for the rest of the time up until the spring of 2021. I could return to in-person classes in the fall of 2020 with a mask mandate at my college. I do not know if I will ever forget walking into my first night of in-person classes, and my teacher was wearing a hazmat suit. I was homeschooled growing up, so this was my first experience even being in a classroom that wasn't my child's school. It's a memory that will last me a lifetime, that's for sure.

At the time we were living in the suburbs of Atlanta when the protests against police brutality after George Floyd was murdered began to get more violent, we were living in between two very different groups of opinions. While many supported the movement, many would make racial slurs about the matter. We also lived in the district of Georgia under Marjorie Taylor Greene. You can imagine how being a political moderate resides in a community that thinks so highly of her views. It was nerve-racking.

The lockdown brought on many different emotions. My husband and I both hit major depressive lows, our relationship struggled, and finances became a worry when the tenants renting from us couldn't pay rent due to being unemployed. We were left to pay three mortgages. It was a stressful time.

There was so much sadness and depression, riots, and chaos throughout all this time. It's hard not to look back at that time frame and think of only all the terrible things. There were still lots of good that came out of that timeframe. We were given the opportunity to teach our children the importance of race and what exactly white privilege is. We spent countless hours as family playing games or watching movies, things that we are guilty of being too "busy" to do. We also welcomed our 5<sup>th</sup> and final child to the family.

Even though 2020 was a dumpster fire of a year, I'm thankful for the time I spent with my husband and children. Those are days I'll never forget. I will attach a few pictures from our time in quarantine below.

