

COVID-19 Through My Eyes

March 2020: This month was the month that everything I knew changed, the month where the school plays that I and my cast members worked so hard on was stopped, the month where the schools' shut down, and the month where the world stopped. We were forced to go into quarantine due to Covid-19, we at this time did not have much information about what this was or what caused or spread it. I was a senior in high school, my teachers would tell us that Covid was not that bad that it was like the Flu, many weeks later we found out that this was not the case and that Covid was much worse. Our classes stopped for about a week before we switched to online school and had to do everything online. There were many difficulties in that itself as my sibling and I did not have access to laptops and did not have wi-fi. Luckily, we were able to go to the school and get laptops to be able to keep up with our classes. Towards the end of the month the oldest of my siblings was getting sick and ended up going to the hospital and was told it was most likely Covid and to go into quarantine. She was in quarantine in my bedroom while the rest of my family all huddled into the living room of our 2-bedroom apartment.

April 2020: This month was the worst month of my life. The first couple weeks my grandparents were feeling ill and not feeling well. We were starting to learn about the symptoms of Covid and one of the main symptoms was being unable to breathe. My grandma was the first to be taken to the hospital in an ambulance as she was unable to breathe and in pain, my grandpa who was also feeling unwell, did not accompany her as he did not want to go. My mother and I had gone to the hospital a couple of times between this time also being told that it was most likely Covid, but as they did not have enough tests available to be sure we were just told to go home and quarantine. I was in bed for about a week with no strength but as my family and I had no space to really quarantine I had to wear a mask at home 24/7. My grandpa would call us and tell us that he was not feeling well and was not able to breathe properly, a couple days later he was also taken to the hospital on an ambulance my uncle had called as he was not doing well. My mom, siblings, and I would call them every time we could and let them hear our voices as we could not hear anything else then mumbles as they did not have the strength to talk. My grandma at first was the one to seem to not be doing well however as days went on my grandpa was the one deteriorating fast. He was put on a ventilator to keep him alive and breathing. The weeks before my grandpa was put on the ventilator and passed away from Covid my mother was in and out of the hospital, his concern was always about my mom and whether she was doing well and if she was okay, he would ask my aunt about her. She never told my mom that he asked about her and still to this day does not know that his concern until he was unable to speak and breathe was her. He passed away before knowing she was okay. The day

he passed away my mother and I had gone out to get her medications and when we returned my aunt was the one who called and broke the news to her. I will never forget the way she reacted and the way my siblings and I looked at each other and just knew what had happened. My grandma was in rehab as she was still unable to breathe properly, and we had to break the news to her a couple of weeks later as we were not sure if she would be able to handle the news.

May 2020: This month was difficult as my family, and I were still grieving the passing of my grandpa and we were struggling financially as my father was unable to work as his health was getting worse. My family and I had to come together and arrange where to take my grandpa as the hospital gave us 2 weeks to find somewhere to take him. I was not doing well mentally; I was unable to grieve in a healthy way as I felt like I had to be the strong one and keep smiling and encouraging my mom to get better, so I kept all my feelings to myself. I felt like I couldn't show how I was feeling as my mom was also grieving and was worrying about her siblings who had also gotten Covid and were struggling. I stopped doing my schoolwork and just did not want to do anything. My older sister had emailed my school and let her know what was going on and it was because she let my teachers know that I was able to make up my work and graduate on time. I was able to get a job and started working as much as I could to be able to distract myself from what I was feeling and to also support my family as much financially as I could.

December 2020: Fast forward a couple of months I have been working for a couple of months and studying at this point. I had started college in August and was studying remotely while also taking care of my family. In November my grandmas' sister ended up catching Covid and was taken to the hospital. She unfortunately did not get better and in December she passed away. My grandmas' sister was the one to encourage my grandma when she was in the hospital with Covid, and my grandma and mom felt guilty for not being able to give her enough encouragement compared to what she gave.

March 2021: As things started to slowly open my family and I had planned to have an actual funeral for my grandpa with my family members and say a proper goodbye before sending his ashes back to his hometown (although we have still been unable to, and it is now September 2021) where he loved to visit whenever he could.

September 2021: We are now in September over a year has passed and my family and I, though not as much as before, still grieve my grandpa's loss as we used to be able to go over to his house and just chat with him. I receive therapy to be able to grieve and be able to come to terms and to be able to tell this story without breaking down and having a panic attack each time I remember it. As the holidays approach again it will be yet another hard one as we will be

reminded of him when he is not here to celebrate it with us and be able to do the traditions with us. Like having a big feast on Christmas and being able to eat grapes as we did in 2019 on New Year's. Although we grieve his loss we still have all the beautiful memories with him and will always treasure them.