

An Unexpected Spring Cleaning

As the pandemic began to take full effect in my home town of Palisades Park, I was initially overjoyed at the prospect of a 2-week break from school. However, 2 weeks soon turned into a month, which turned into the rest of the school year, which extended into the summer. I began to realize all that I had taken for granted. My family's favorite restaurants, my friends' favorite hangout spots, and my favorite places to visit were all indiscriminately shut down. I felt helpless and alone. I remember idling around my house for a few days after hearing that the quarantine would be extended, trying to swallow the reality of being stuck at home. I started to feel a new burst of hope when I decided to clean my room on a random afternoon in April.

What started as a simple cleaning turned into a full-on remodeling, as I played with the endless ways to arrange my dresser, desk, bed, and instruments. After a day of rearranging, washing laundry, and bringing out summer bed sheets, not only was I left with a clean room, but an inspiring revelation: even when I'm stuck at home, I have the power to take action. I felt empowered. Even if each action is small, I am not helpless. I am capable of finding the bright side of any situation. Though I was stuck at home, online schooling took up considerably less time than actual school, and without sports, I was free for most of the day. My schedule soon became waking up, eating breakfast, and getting my classwork done before trying something new for the day.

I next tackled music mixing, a skill I had long wanted to learn so I could record songs with my band. Music production had always seemed intimidating; in the past, I had

procrastinated learning because I didn't know where to start, but foreign concepts soon became familiar tools I applied to my daily mixes. After diving into music production, finally understanding technical terms, and trying, failing, and trying again, I realized that nothing is ever really impossible. Skill is a combination of learning and practice, and quarantine gave me a surprising opportunity to do just that.

Today's situation is much different from how it started out. I was lucky enough to stay home, clean my room, experiment with music production, and finish the school year with only a few hiccups. Today, however, I worry about more than just being stuck at home or not being able to eat at my favorite restaurant. I worry about the Black Lives Matter protests, the ominous second wave, and what all of this chaos means for the future. Instead of idly watching Youtube videos, scrolling through social media, or reading clickbait articles, I now try my best to learn more about our current events and support racial equality and police reform. I hope we all put in the effort to learn and practice, which we can do right from our bedrooms.