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Capturing Quarantine: Student Pandemic Experience Journal

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Public History Timeline

January 1, 2020, my sister turned 49 years old, and as usual we brought the New Year and her Birthday in celebrating and having fun. Not knowing what the months to come will bring.

January, February, and March I was still in school as a Cosmetologist working hard to finish school while looking for a new place to live.

March 3, 2020, I moved into a better apartment and a better environment . But things were still very strange. I continued my work at school on my client's hair when suddenly students stopped coming to school. The rate for students declines drastically. And the government was saying it is a state of emergency. They were still trying to find out if they wanted the students to go inside the school.

The middle of March is when the decision was made to keep kids at home for online learning, but cosmetologist was still debating were we fall in that order.

In March I can remember going to the store and seeing the shelves completely empty. Traveling to different parts of the city and suburbs and witnessing the shelves completely bare. Our family started to panic. Because we have family all over Chicago and the Suburbs and to think that wherever we went, the shelves looked completely bare. This became a time of panic. Wondering how long this situation is going to be like this. We made a plan that when one of us see items , we would pick it up for the family and we would just have to give the money to the person who bought it.

March 17, 2020 is when I took my last client at school. It was a sad day because I knew I would be graduating soon and would not see any of them again. I started going to their house to do their hair until the virus completely shut things down and everyone had to social distance.

April ,May ,and June I was online completing the rest of my courses because we could not go back in the school. I can remember sitting at home and wondering how I was going to get through the next month because I did not prepare myself for this situation. I did not stock up on items when I should have, now I am worried. I felt that the next shipment they get at the stores I would be one of those people stocking up on items.

Then they made a rule that you can only get a certain number of items at a time. So, I started calling around and going to different areas to get the essentials I need, lots of cereal, milk, canned good and noodles just in case there was a shut down at the power plants for electricity and water. I can still be able to feed my family. With the things I can quickly put in the microwave. There was compete panic, people were assuming there was going to be a shut down in the water supply and even at the gas and electric company. So, I stocked up on things that I could put in the microwave, or they could eat out of a can.

June was a challenging month as well. My daughter graduated from 8th grade, and she was not happy . They canceled everything for her . so, she was kind of sad. Then we had the George Floyd murder, and Riots. Which was completely sad on top of all the other emotions we were going through. I am deeply saddened that this happen to him, but I am glad they caught it on tape because, who knows how long corrupt officers would probably be getting away with this type of behavior, if it was not for this tape being exposed. The day after the riots in Chicago . I faced my own kind of racism from my local grocery in the Southwest Suburbs outside of Chicago.

When an employee refused to help me because of her racist attitude toward the riots. I asked her where their bottles of waters were, and she looked at me and kept walking. So, I walked after her repeating excuse me excuse me . Can you tell me where the bottles of water are? She just kept ignoring me. To make a long story short I stopped going there and found another place to shop.

July 2020 is when I finally graduated and though it was not what I expected. I was still very proud to have completed the course. But like my daughter who graduated in June from elementary school I did not celebrate, and I did not have a graduation.

August 2020 my mom's birthday was also different. Even though we celebrated we were all covered up and distancing ourselves as though we never knew each other. It still turned out okay. At the end of August my son made 16 and there was no big celebration, but he understood. And I appreciated that. We were also covered up for his birthday and social distancing as though we never knew each other. But he was excited to reach 16 so I took him out to the arcade and for dinner.

September 2020 I was looking forward to the kids going back to school. That idea was quickly shut down by more government mandates and rules. Fortunately, I had a chance to escape being sheltered 24 hours a day because I was able to go to school for a while until Columbia College Chicago shut it down around Thanksgiving.

October 2020 was also a strange month. The usual Halloween celebration or trick or treat fun was canceled. And people were staying in the house which is what my family did. We just got lots of candy and watched lots of movies.

November 2020 is my birthday, and I did not go to Vegas for my yearly trip to celebrate my birthday. I started my Christmas shopping online a month early so my kids can have something to open on Christmas day. The next week or two Thanksgiving came, and the family gatherings were also cancelled because of Covid-19. What usually brought everyone together at my mom's house made everyone stay at home because of the government mandates. So cooked our own feast.

December 2020 was the month of Christmas; I started my Christmas shopping early and bought my decorations early. I started decorating my house in the beginning of December trying to get in the Christmas spirit. I knew this was a family tradition, I wanted to keep no matter what. Christmas comes, my house is decorated, I cooked a large dinner for my family and the Christmas spirit is here. But the Celebrations were still canceled. This year was a Crazy year all wrapped up in and Scary year because I did not know who was going to make it to see a new year. Without being sick. I thank God we all made it to see another year.

January 2021 and yet the Celebrations were still limited. It was a different time for my family and myself. My sister turned 50 years old on the 1st of January. She was extremely happy to have made it through all those years. We were all

extremely happy. Especially because she is the oldest and we have all been through a lot in our life. But this year was a strange year. Even though the family got together for the yearly New Year's Eve celebration and the New Year of my sister birthday celebration all in one. A lot of people stayed away. There were people in attendance, but they were not hugging and joyful like all the other years, we brought in the New Year and her birthday. The next day I flew to Vegas because I did not do anything for my birthday. So, I brought New Year's Day in at Las Vegas.

February 2021 relaxed at home with the family and continued the online school. At Columbia College Chicago

March made a year since I moved into my apartment and still could not use the amenities that I looked forward to when I moved here.

April and May 2021, I am just anticipating no more snowstorms and I am fed up with digging my car out of the snow. I hurt my hand trying to dig my car out of the snow that was piled up on my car. I finally get my car out, and just like the empty shelves from the panic of everyone buying in bulks at the stores from the beginning of the pandemic. I went to find a snow shelve and I could not find one in any of the stores I went to. I had to borrow one from my mom until I could get one from the store.

June 2021 I am excited because I know the snow has passed and the sun is going to start shining so maybe I can use the exercise room and the pool now. But it has been hard because I started a new job. The kids also got their first Covid -19 shot and I am making sure they are alright. Trying to make sure the side effects do harm them. My family and I also had a tornado scare. Because of a tornado that was approaching our town. I thank God, it did not hit us because it turned around and went somewhere else.

July 2021 the pool is now open, but I have not been because I started a new job and have not had the time. Hopefully I can take the family out to the pool and enjoy the weather. Before it stops for the year. I also got my first vaccination, and I was not feeling well. I must get the next one in August I just hope the second time is better than the first time, because I was weak and nauseous for almost a week and a half with the first shot.

August 2021 work is slow I am juggling a new job and getting my kids ready for school in the second week of August. It is also the month my mother turns 68 . so, my sisters and myself are going to have her a luau. To help her enjoy her birthday this year. I am also scared because the virus cases are constantly rising, and this pandemic might not be over. Hopefully it is. I guess I must wait and see.