

My COVID-19 Narrative
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The COVID-19 crisis has completely transformed the realities of so many individuals. My family's reality has shifted to one filled with fear and uncertainty, but also love and understanding. My father lost his job earlier this month and will have no income for the foreseeable future. My mother is now trying to homeschool both of my younger brothers while teaching a fourth grade class of 30 students online. The older of my two brothers struggles with some pretty severe behavioral issues and his frustration and anxiety has only been magnified by this terrible situation. But here is where the love comes in. My parents have started card game and movie nights consistently in an effort to give my brother something to look forward to. My other brother has been building blanket and pillow forts with him and although these two typically can't spend more than five minutes together, they have recently been spending a lot of time at the kitchen table doing homework together. I have been facetimeing him nearly every day to check up on how he is doing. Sometimes all he really wants is for someone to listen to his fears. Sometimes he is even happy to listen to mine.

My reality has shifted too. As an RA on campus, I am told to make sure that residents from different dorms aren't spending time with each other, even though they are more than the likely the only people either of them have seen for weeks. I am even told to stay six feet apart from the three remaining RAs on my staff who I consider to be my family. I hate that I am finishing my junior year so segregated from all of my professors and classmates. My internships were cancelled this summer along with a \$3500 study abroad trip to Italy to study the history of mathematics that I will likely not be refunded for. It breaks my heart that I didn't get to say goodbye to my residents - the 20 brightest and most incredible humans I've ever had the pleasure of knowing - and now Quad B is just a quiet, lonely building with creaky pipes and scattered belongings. But here is where the love comes in.

The love is in Corrine the math professor showing us her house rabbits during our class zoom meetings and in Pascale the french professor sending us funny videos on the daily to keep our spirits up and Christa the other math professor giving us a tour of her house plants. The love is in Emily the dining hall lady for making us each baskets of goodies for Easter and rootbeer floats on the days when the sun decides to peak out. The love is in Sue and Rhonda the custodians when they rescued all of the dying plants trapped in the locked common spaces. It's in Thomas, the resident director of Langford, for inviting me to play 'ultimate croquet' in front of Montana Hall and in my best friend Jianna when she makes me laugh everyday until my stomach hurts and when she made gelato with me because I couldn't go to Italy. The love is in me too. So much love and appreciation for every person I have the pleasure of interacting with these last two months. So much love and appreciation for everyone who is battling their own silent battle that I cannot begin to comprehend. Maybe that is one good thing that has come out of this. We now understand the value of human interaction and authentic connection. I hope it lasts long after this all ends because, although I have never felt so alone in all my life, I have also never felt SO MUCH LOVE.