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Anonymous Carleton Staff Member

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2020 a year that no one could predict

Anonymous Carleton Staff Member

How has the pandemic changed your daily life?

The pandemic changed my daily life in several ways. First, I went from physically going to work each week day to working from home and only seeing a few of my co-workers via zoom meetings. Since I started working from home, I learned that I could sleep bit later, not having a commute or really getting ready for work. Going to work in sweats was acceptable. My family became my work mates. My son and his finance live with us and they both started to work from home in March too. My granddaughter then started to learn from home. Having several of us trying to teach kindergartner while completely our own jobs has been a challenge and with the new school year about to start we will be challenged again with her starting first grade. My son and husband both lost their jobs in the spring, so she will have dedicated teachers at home when she isn't is school physically.

In March all the gyms closed and having to keep motivation up and learning new ways to work out without all of the equipment provided at the gyms has been a challenge. In June when the gyms opened, my family and I did not feel safe going back, so we still workout at home and try to keep healthy with our workouts.

Another way the pandemic changed our lives is socially. We do not see our friends. We talk to them over Facebook or messaging, but we do not see them. I have some friends who I can tell that this is taking a mental toll on.

Because we have socially distanced, we purchased yard games for the family to play on nice summer evenings. When it was cold we challenged ourselves to puzzles to keep busy and even took breaks from work to get a new perspective at times by working on the puzzle. We completed over 10 and sent them to my in-laws in Pennsylvania and they sent the ones they had completed so we could have more entertainment.

Finally, the other items that comes to mind when I think about how life has changed is wearing masks out in public and hand sanitizing. In the beginning we were sanitizing our mail and food packaging from the store before bringing it in the house. I bleached all of my bathrooms for weeks. I do still deep clean but not always with bleach. Disinfectant wipes and Lysol is used quite a bit.

What positive things or unexpected moments of joy have come out of this experience?

Oddly, my husband loosing his job. We have figured out how to live on unemployment and my wages. Thankfully, I am the one with the health insurance. My husband's job had him working 12 plus hour days without great pay and he worked the weekend too, so seeing him was rare. Now that he has been home, not only have a lot of outstanding chores been completed, but he cooks dinner, and we spend the evenings together on the front porch after spending family time with others. We are able to have more time to talk and think about the future. We have the

weekends where we can go up to our cabin and even go camping. We had not gone camping in 18 years and we had a blast. I feel that my husband and I are now looking forward to retirement even more and the time we will have together to do what we want.

What has been the hardest aspect of this experience?

The hardest part has been not being able to see all of my friends. I have also had the experience of meeting online my biological family and we keep saying when all this is over we have to meet. I feel like that is unobtainable at this point. But beyond that is seeing friends in a downward spin mentally and not being able to be right there for them. Working through others' grief of passing family and only being able to do so much.

What are you nervous and/or excited about for the coming academic year?

I worry that this pandemic will not be under control and with all the students together, that the pandemic will have a way to gain more control over us and not just that people will get ill, but that we will lose people due to others' cavalier attitudes and actions.

What is something you think should be preserved in public memory about this time?

In the United States, the pandemic became a tool for conflict. I believe the level of protests and outcries we are seeing has a direct relation to the pandemic and sadly the way our country handled it. It uncovered the great divide that had been widening in the country over the last 4 years.

What do you think we as a society should learn from this going forward?

Science doesn't have a political viewpoint. Science is fact and listening to facts is how we should make decisions with regards to health and a pandemic.