

TROJAN TIMES

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE PUBLICATION



What It's Like Having Brain Surgery

On April 2nd, 2011 I was in a bad accident. My family and I went to a golfing range to start golfing for the first time. My brother was helping my mom and all of a sudden I was hit in the head with the golf club. I had emergency surgery to take the pieces of skull fragments that had fractured when I was hit. The days I spent in the hospital were some of the hardest days of my life. Not only was I in a lot of pain I also could not see any of my friends and only a few people in the hospital. On the first day at the hospital I had a bunch of testing and scans done to see if I had any permanent damage done to my brain. Luckily in my case I was perfectly healthy and would eventually return to better. When I was there, I met a bunch of new people and saw a lot of my family I didn't see too often. My mom's cousin who lives in Florida came up to see me who I would normally only see on Christmas. I also got a lot of get well cards and presents to help me feel better. You never realize how much you are loved when something very bad happens to you. On the 4th day I was there I was moved from the ICU (intensive care unit) to a less emergent floor which had video games, board games, and an air hockey table. It was nice to be out of the ICU because they came in every 3 hours to ask you the same questions and give you your medications if you needed any. On the last day I was at the hospital it was Easter (and my brother's birthday) which means I was in the hospital for 6 days. So in the morning they came and did their rounds and asked the same questions scene I've gotten out of surgery which were what's your name? How old are you? Where do you live? And what's the day of the week? Then the Easter bunny came around and placed eggs in your room to do a scavenger hunt to make it feel like you weren't sick. When I was discharged and went home, I came home to a bunch of signs saying Welcome home Maddy and my grandparent and cousin. The next 2 months were going to be the hardest days of my life. I had to stop taking medication. The only medication I could take was aspirin and a seizure medication. When I finally got to go back to school, it was the end of the school year and I could not do much. I had to eat lunch in a different room so I wouldn't get sick and I could only be there half the day and if I got sick I had to leave early. What I learned from having brain surgery is that you can't take life for granted and live life to the fullest because you never know when it will be your last day.

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Covid & Mental Health

BAILEY SHEPARD

The coronavirus has been a stressful experience for many of us. Some may be struggling with anxiety and depression because of the impact of this pandemic. The pandemic has taken a hard toll on some people. I as a person, had never personally struggled with anxiety or depression, until this pandemic. I feel, because I was not able to see my friends, being stressed about passing junior year, and was working during the climax of the virus (still am), my anxiety had gotten to the best of me. Eventually, it began to take over my mind and the way I would think. For a while I went through a time where I struggled, bad. I was constantly overthinking things, I was always sad, I was thinking negatively about everything, I was always miserable and I had no motivation to do anything. I let my negative thoughts take over my mind for quite some time. I finally realized I did not want to live like this anymore, so I did something about it. I started a routine for school work and making time to work at my job, I began thinking more positively, I started spending more time with my family and friends and I was finally happy again. Yes, it took some time to get back where I was, but honestly it was extremely worth it. I began to understand how to feel happy and joyful. I finally understood what it meant to live life to its fullest and I'm glad I did. I still have some bad days here and there, but the good days outnumber the bad ones.

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COVID LIFE FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

By: Samantha Robertson

Covid has been a huge part of my life since it hit the United States pretty hard in March. It has had a huge impact on everyone's lives and it has changed my life in many different ways.

March 13th is a day I will never forget. It was ironically Friday the 13th and we thought that it was going to be any other normal Friday but were we all wrong. That day was so chaotic and anxious. Around 8:50 in the morning, our school principal came on the announcements and told us to prepare ourselves for about a two week break. At that time, most of the schools around us shut down for around two weeks and we would come back after spring break. He told us to take home our supplies and papers to be successful to do online school for two weeks. I thought nothing of it and everyone was assuming we would be back after spring break. The teachers were running around all day and getting all of the work together for us to do during that two week span of time. It was very stressful for them and the students. We got talked to and instructed on what to do in every class during this break. We left school that day not knowing if we would go back to school that following Monday because at this time. They haven't shut school down for sure yet. On that Sunday, we got a call saying that we won't be returning to school for two weeks. I was so happy that we had an extended break and so was everyone else. Since then, I haven't stepped foot in the school.

Every two weeks, the governor of New York would tell us if we could go back to school, or if it got pushed back another two weeks. Every time it approached the two week announcement mark, I would get my hopes up and disappoint myself once again because he would continue to push it back. Masks became mandatory everywhere we went. I got sick of them real quick and now, it's become an everyday essential thing. It's a part of my life now and Covid has single handedly changed my life. Softball is my outlet and is the one thing I look forward to and love to death, and it got put to a screeching halt for about three months. I was devastated and heartbroken because I missed the game and my friends. We missed out on tournaments, games, practices all because of what we thought, was a stupid virus. May approached and we weren't back in school at all. Everything was online and it was so difficult to get used to and hard to adapt so fast. I felt awful for the teachers because some don't know how to use technology well and they struggled. We didn't do zooms or google meets at this time. We got sent a week's work to do and submit it before the week was over. I enjoyed this because we could work at our own pace during the week and space it out. I stayed at my best friend's house for most of May and June. In June, softball started back up and we ended up finishing our season which I was thrilled about. We didn't return to school in June, we just continued to do online school for this period. In total we were off for around three months. Summer break started and we were hoping Covid would blow over but it didn't.

Summer was pretty rough. My brother's trip to Myrtle Beach got

cancelled, we couldn't go to concerts or any of the trips we planned to go on. I was so upset and angry at everything. I became very lazy and didn't do much during the summer. I played softball, ate, slept, and hung out with one person all summer. Everyday felt like it was on repeat and I was so sick of it. I was in a very low point to the point where I didn't want to get out of bed and all I wanted to do was sleep. Covid has had a huge impact on my mental health and physical health. My parents got worried because I barely ate. I had no appetite and I stayed up till five o'clock in the morning because my sleep schedule was so messed up. I would get better for about a week then I would fall right back into my same habits and same dark hole I was in. I tried to keep myself occupied but it was difficult. I missed my grandparents and I still do. They live in Canada along with my aunt, uncle, and my two cousins and I haven't seen them in person since Christmas of 2019. Being away from them has been hard and emotionally draining but I'm still pushing through.

September approached and I really had hopes that we were going to return to school. The superintendent decided that it would be a good idea to go completely remote until after thanksgiving break. I personally wasn't a fan of this because I really wanted to see my friends and get back to a normal lifestyle. Everything seemed so off and I didn't understand why we couldn't go back. Mostly all of the schools around us went hybrid and they at least got to go a couple days a week to school. It took a bit of getting used to logging onto the google meets and doing online work because at the end of last school year, we didn't do the meets or work together to get the work done. I actually enjoy online school and working from home. I get to sleep a little longer and I still see my friends, just in a different way. We don't have to wear masks from home either so that's a plus. Some things are very hard to grasp and learn while we are online. I am a hands on learner so it is hard for me to do art and photography from home because I would rather have people show me in person how to do it and get some help from the teacher where she can show me what to do and how to fix it rather than hearing it and trying to do it. Covid has had a toll on everyone whether it's bad or good. It's been a couple of stressful and anxious months but I'm ready to get back to a normal lifestyle hopefully very soon.

Whether or not we believe it or not, Covid is still a huge issue right now and it will be for quite some time sadly. I miss being able to go to stores and places in public without a mask. I miss being able to freely go to school and taking those days for granted without knowing that I wouldn't step foot in school for seven months and counting. I miss being worry free about anything and everything. I really don't know what the future holds for this virus. I can't wait till the day we can go to school again and can go to stores without masks. That feeling will be indescribable, but for now, we won't know for some time.

#BlackLivesMatter

By Connor Wozniak

Black Lives Matter, plain and simple, but yet people want to argue with this statement. In 2013, #Blacklivesmatter was founded in response to the murder of Trayvon Martin. He was shot by George Zimmerman, who was not put into prison for his actions and the jury found him not guilty due to “self-defense”. Trayvon was only 17 years old when he lost his life, and George Zimmerman is roaming free to this day. Trayvon was unarmed, and had a package of Skittles and an Arizona Iced Tea in his bag, and to this day he has not gotten his justice.

Black Lives Matter is a movement and a Global Organization to end racial injustice and bring equality to African Americans, and other ethnic groups in America and all around the Globe such as Canada and the UK. This movement is so important to human society because innocent people are losing their lives, due to white privilege. As white people we should be using our voice to help people who cannot help themselves because of what society has pushed on to people of color.

The Black Lives Matter Movement has blown up since 2013 due to the murder of George Floyd. On May 25th 2020 in Minneapolis, George Floyd was arrested for supposedly giving a cashier a counterfeit \$20 bill. George was being held to the ground by 3 policemen while repeating saying “I can’t breathe”, after being held to the ground for 8 minutes and 46 seconds he was killed due to suffocation by Officer Derek Michael Chauvin. Days after George Floyd's death protest began to rise for the policemen involved in Floyd's death to be put under trial, and behind bars, for murdering George. These protests began to grow bigger and spread like wildfire for the injustice for everyone who's been killed due to police brutality against African Americans. The protest lasted for months, and government officials tried stopping the violence of this protest by using Tear Gas, and shooting rubber bullets at peaceful protesters, making the situation even worse.

To this day we still don't see justice for George Floyd and many other African Americans such as, Briana Taylor, Trayvon Martin, Ataliana Jefferson, and many more. The system is so corrupt and racist, that innocent American citizens were killed, due to police brutality. Change needs to happen. We must speak up and change the world for the better, or we will continue to experience these racial injustices. I strongly encourage you to donate to #Blacklivesmatter, by going to blacklivesmatter.com and help out the cause. People need to speak up about racial issues and put an end to police brutality!

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**



What Is My Relationship With Masks?

By Lexi Zogaria

Masks are a very important thing to preach wearing for the safety of those around us. On the other hand I strongly dislike them... I would never not wear a mask out in public because I understand how we are in the middle of a pandemic, but for me having to dance for 5 hours every day with a mask on is a little much. One, it makes it 10 times harder to breathe and our stamina is destroyed by the end of the night. Second, I feel like that would be super bad on your respiratory system because you are only breathing in what's under your mask for that long. I'm perfectly fine with wearing a mask for a short amount of time, but in my opinion wearing one during extreme physical activity is very stressful. Not only does it impact my physical needs, but my mental needs because I'm constantly worried and I get in my own head about the pandemic. By doing this, it has also made a positive impact though. There has not been anyone showing symptoms or tested positive at my studio. Another thing is wearing them just at a grocery store or for a short period of time has been a lot easier. I try not to let it bother me as much anymore.



Quarantine...MY Perspective!

By Sofia Haak



Quarantine was difficult. It was unlike any event many others and myself have ever experienced before. It was a time full of many emotions and days that felt endless. But it also taught me to never take even the most normal simple things like school and seeing my friends for granted. On March 13, everyone in New York State was alerted we were to be on lockdown for two weeks, or so we presumed. Little did we know that day would change our lives for the next few months. That day I went along my daily routine having high hopes this would resolve itself. My father picked me up off the bus, we talked about our day, and we even went out to eat. Throughout the day, however, my hopes began to decline as I read notification after notifications for closings. "Attention Dancers, Unfortunately our season has come to halt" etc. I couldn't bear to read the rest. My hopes were very slim but still a part of me felt having hopes was all I could do. For the next week I enjoyed time at home. No school, no dance. I was actually spending time for myself for the first time in a while. However by the second week I was over the "me" time. I couldn't stand another day looking at these beige walls and crawling into bed at 8pm only to sit on my phone for the next 4 hours. Eventually the time came where my friends and I were able to see each other and I don't think we have ever talked so much and hugged each other as tightly as we did that day. As things began to open such as stores, the dance studio summer came around. I was actually starting to have hope that one day, soon, things would be like they have been for the past 14 years of my life. Then we got the news that school would not be re-opening. I can't even describe how I felt. I was angry that everything that allowed me to be a kid was being taken away from me, I was upset that I wouldn't see friends. I eventually came to terms with it as it is October 22. If I went back in time and told myself I would experience this in my life I would have laughed. You don't realize how fast things you love or are so certain would always be there can be taken away from you. Covid has really taught me a lot. Especially that I hate sitting in my house for 2 weeks straight.

Quarantine was difficult. It was unlike any event many others and myself have ever experienced before. It was a time full of many emotions and days that felt endless. But it also taught me to never take even the most normal simple things like school and seeing my friends for granted. On March 13, everyone in New York State was alerted we were to be on lockdown for two weeks, or so we presumed. Little did we know that day would change our lives for the next few months. That day I went along my daily routine having high hopes this would resolve itself. My father picked me up off the bus, we talked about our day, and we even went out to eat. Throughout the day, however, my hopes began to decline as I read notification after notifications for closings. "Attention Dancers, Unfortunately our season has come to halt" etc. I couldn't bear to read the rest. My hopes were very slim but still a part of me felt having hopes was all I could do. For the next week I enjoyed time at home. No school, no dance. I was actually spending time for myself for the first time in a while. However by the second week I was over the "me" time. I couldn't

BLM

The Riots and Black Lives Matter

JA'VAUGHN DIXON

I think that the Black Lives Matter movement is an important topic that's going on all over the world. BLM is a political and social movement that first started after the unfair death of Trayvon Martin he was killed by a cop, unfairly. After that death, it sparked a whole movement starting from African Americans seeking justice for a young black man that was killed while walking home. He was just coming from the store. Throughout the time BLM movement began to become suppressed or forgotten about until recently, when cops killed another black American who was screaming for his life right before he died. He was innocent and had no weapons but the cops still killed him publicly. After that, Americans started protesting everyday seeking justice for George Floyd. This started the movement back up again. People were furious that another African American died wrongly at the hands of law enforcement because of a 20 dollar bill. People started rioting everywhere, breaking and entering into stores, assaulting cops and fighting in almost every city. \$1 billion was lost due to riot damage over America. This put a lot of cities in bankruptcy, especially cities where protesting and looting were heavy. In Portland, New York, Minneapolis, and Chicago, the government took a loss of \$1 billion dollars because an officer decided to kneel on a man's neck for nearly 9 minutes like there was any possible way he was going to survive. I think that what is happening in today's world is the only way black lives will maybe become equal to others. It seems like violence is the only way to catch the public's eyes and I think the BLM movement has been doing just that. They are catching the public's eye and shining what has been wrongfully happening for years into the light. BLM is not all violence though. A lot of famous athletes and actors have been taking their place in BLM without using violence. Instead, they use their fame to promote BLM.



Covid is Ruining Lives

By Madison Surdej

At the end of the school day, I was sitting in my 4th block class just waiting for them to announce that we had the two week break. Announcements came on and they told us to prepare our things for two weeks. The two week online school went by and I was ready to go back so I could see my friends. They told us we weren't coming back for another two weeks. This went on all the way up until summer. The last day of school before online was March 13th 2020. I was so happy. Summer time came around and I thought it wasn't that serious and that we were going to go back for our 10th grade year. Summer of 2020 wasn't all that exciting. My family and I weren't allowed to go on our yearly camping trip to Darien Lake with a lot of friends and family. I was devastated. I always look forward to going on this trip and it was taken away from me by Covid. I wasn't even allowed to see some of my friends for a while and I grew apart from one of my best friends. Covid really affected my social life and I'm still getting used to the way things are these days. I didn't really do much during summer this year and I was looking forward to going back to school. I was wrong, here I am on October 9th, 2020 and I'm sitting at my desk at home doing google meets and homework through google classroom. Sitting at home each day thinking about what's going to happen with homecoming, football games, the fire, class day, homecoming week, pep rallies, etc. It all makes me want to break down and not talk to anyone. I look at quarantine as that it ruined our lives. Nothing is the same anymore and as kids, we can't go out and do the things

we love or play the sports we wished to proceed in life. Quarantine is really messing up kids' lives and they are not able to go to games and have the time of their lives. I've never been to an NFL game and I was supposed to go this year but now I can't.

From my perspective, having to do school in quarantine is much harder due to the fact that I don't have a teacher there to help me right away if I need help. Wearing a mask every time in a store or anywhere I go when I'm with people really makes things difficult. If I'm walking into a store and I forget my mask in the car, I have to go back and get it. Life is just so much more difficult during Covid life and I hope that people follow the rules so we can get back to our normal lives and not have to worry about masks, hand sanitizer etc. I hate how I have to live my life like this. I can't play the sport I love until March even if we go back. Life is just so much harder for me and I miss the way I used to be taught and the way I do things in life. Covid took away the sport I loved to play the most, the sport I wanted to succeed in and took away the friends I was making throughout the year. It took away my ability to learn and better myself throughout life. It took away my family vacations. There are so many other things Covid took away from me and these are things in my life that I will never forget.