

My life was altered in March of 2020. This pandemic created an unimaginable world. The cause of the COVID-19 pandemic still remains a mystery. My experience began on March 12, 2020, when my school gave us two weeks off to allow time for this illness to pass. As we have since discovered, this two-weeks expanded into a month, two, then the entire summer off. When first hearing that school was going to be cancelled, I was excited. It must be every kids dream to be off from school for a long period of time. This news that made me excited soon turned into the news of being locked in my house for the next three months.

My life personally drastically changed. Weeks before the lockdown, my grandmother was diagnosed with lung cancer. She was continuing her treatment while staying as far away from health centers as possible. My family would help begin her anti-nausea medications from home along with her IV medications to keep her hydrated before another round of chemo. We knew this cancer would not be an easy fight, but we were not prepared for the additional challenges COVID- 19 added for our family.

I was fortunate enough for my grandmother to have lived with my family and I throughout my life. This made seeing her and caring for her very convenient for my family. My aunts and uncles, on the other hand, were not able to see their mother during her best and worst days because they were also locked in their houses. My grandmother suddenly and quickly began declining in her health. My mom needed my sister and I to step up to help care for her mother during the beginning of the pandemic. My aunt also needed to leave her own family to come care for her mother.

My grandmother sadly did not make it through the end of the pandemic. She got COVID-19 and needed to go to the hospital. At this time, the hospitals were filled with COVID-19 cases which made them very confined to patients only. For us, this meant we could not all be with my grandmother in her last hours. Following my grandmother's death, my family was left to grieve all alone. We could not honor her with services or give her a proper funeral because we still needed to distance ourselves from others.

Every family has a different version of how the COVID- 19 pandemic effected their lives. I believe, similar to my experience, many people would say theirs was lonely. Luckily, we had technology to keep us connected with our friends and families who we were not quarantined with, but this will never be the same as forming face to face connections and I will never get that year back.